

AUGUST WELLNESS:

POSITIVE THINKING FOR STRESS REDUCTION



Research has shown that optimism and positive thinking can provide a variety of health benefits, including increased life span, lower rates of depression, better cardiovascular health, reduced risk of death from cancer and better coping skills during times of stress. For the full list of benefits listed by the Mayo Clinic Staff, click on the link below.

It is still being explored as to why those with a positive attitude obtain health benefits. However, one theory is that positive outlooks enable better coping skills during stressful times.

One way of checking to see if you have a positive outlook is to observe at your “self-talk”. Self-talk consists of the thoughts that you have about situations. Does your self-talk lean towards an optimist outlook? If your thoughts are more negative than positive, that can keep you from optimism and it can add stress to your life. One simple example of negative self-talk, found in the article by the Mayo Clinic Staff, is saying to yourself: “It’s too complicated.” A positive alternative to that would be saying: “I’ll tackle it from a different angle.”

Recognizing negative thinking can be the first step in changing outlooks to be more positive. There are several common forms of negative self-talk that can assist in identifying it. An example of one of these forms is “filtering”. This is when the positive aspects of a situation are filtered out, leaving only the negative aspects to be focused on.

Another example is called “polarizing”. This is when a situation is looked at as either completely good or completely bad, without considering that it may fall somewhere in the middle.

Knowing the forms of self-talk may help you realize that your outlook can be changed by stopping the negative thoughts and seeing if they can be replaced by positive thoughts. Additional forms of negative self-talk are listed in the Mayo Clinic article.

The Mayo Clinic Staff also offers tips on how to incorporate positive thinking. One rule listed is to simply talk to yourself as you would talk to someone else. By practicing this rule, you may realize that you often are hard on yourself and say things that you would not say to others. Instead, try talking to yourself in a more gentle and encouraging manner.

For additional tips on positive thinking, and to learn more about identifying negative self-talk and implementing positive self-talk, click here to reach the article by the Mayo Clinic Staff:

[Positive Thinking: Stop Negative Self-Talk to Reduce Stress](#)