

# FOREVER ACTIVE

PERSONALIZED FITNESS AND WELLNESS FOR MEN 50 +



## Developing a Positive Attitude for Positive Change

### Introduction

I am sure you have heard the old saying, “you are what you think.” There is a lot of truth to that old adage. Health research supports the theory that your attitude has a direct and powerful effect on your physical well-being. World class athletes have known for years that having a positive attitude toward training and competition, and visualization of their performance and success helps them achieve their goals.

One of the biggest challenges for older adults is maintaining a positive attitude as chronic illnesses and cognitive decline affects their functional ability to live a high quality of life. This functional decline deteriorates the older adult’s self esteem, weakens their perceived ability to be socially accepted and heightens psychological stress which in turn contributes to them developing a negative attitude toward their life.

This newsletter will focus on mental strategies to help an individual overcome many of the physical and psychological barriers that hold them back from enjoying and living a fulfilling and productive life. The same strategies that an elite athlete uses to achieve success can be utilized by everyone, including the older adult, to enhance their quality of life. Active aging requires not only physical re-conditioning but often mental re-conditioning as well.

### 10 Simple Tips for Developing a Positive Attitude

1. Choose to be happy. When negative thoughts enter your mind, do your best to substitute them with happy thoughts
2. Look at the bright side of life. It's a matter of choice and repeated attempts.
3. Choose to be optimistic.
4. Find reasons to smile more often. You can find such reasons, if you look.
5. Have faith in yourself, and believe that the Universe can help you.
6. Associate yourself with happy people.
7. Read inspiring stories.
8. Read inspiring quotes.
9. Repeat affirmations that inspire and motivate you.
10. Visualize only what you want to happen, not what you don't want.

### Did You Know

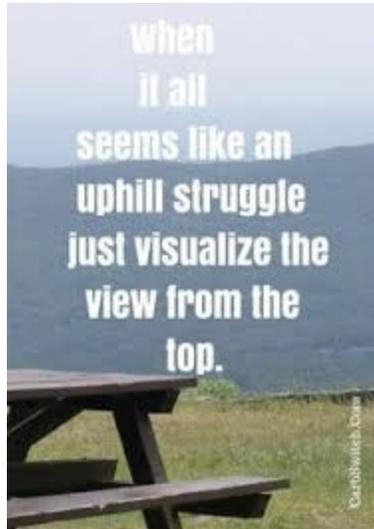
#### 5 Ways to Face any Challenge

1. **Create a vision of what you want to accomplish** - what it will look and feel like to you when you have done it.
2. **Create a plan**– be specific with respect to time, effort, strategy and action plan. Write it down. Do not be afraid to modify it numerous times as your planning and actions proceed.
3. **Control your emotions**— You can not always control the barriers and challenges that present themselves but you can always control how you react to them. Look at obstacles as opportunities to overcome something special. Always attempt to put a positive spin on the situation. It will be easier to think through and overcome that way.
4. **Ask for help**– look at others who have accomplished the same thing. How did they do it. If possible, ask them. Most people are very willing to share their experiences.
5. **Be persistent**— Nothing worth while ever comes easy. Use each failed opportunity as a learning experience and remind yourself that with each failed attempt you are that much closer to succeeding.

## Visualizations and Affirmations

### Visualization

You use visualization everyday but are unaware that you are doing so. When you visualize something, whether it is a long-term goal or a physical movement, you “preset” your mind and body to accomplish that goal. A common day example is lifting a kettle of water. You may anticipate that it is full and will sub-consciously engage your muscles in anticipation of its weight. If, in fact, it turns out to be empty, then you will over shoot the lift and have to quickly readjust your muscles to control the lift. Visualization helps prepare you for everything you do. Based on your experience, and by using all of your senses, if you visualize as specifically as you can on the process of accomplishing a task and on what it will be like to complete that task you will be much more likely to be successful or be better prepared to adjust your behaviour or performance as needed.



Visualization is a powerful tool to achieve short-term and long-term life goals such as losing and maintaining weight loss, achieving and sustaining a healthy life style or feeling happier and better about yourself daily.

### Affirmations

These are positive **present tense** statements that are aimed at shifting the mind to a more positive way of thinking now. Their purpose is to draw on an inner strength that you didn’t know existed. Research on athletic performance has shown that the mind often sabotages the body into quitting due to fatigue long before the body’s physiological resources are depleted. You can use affirmations in everyday life to assist you to accomplish a difficult task. Affirmations like, “only 10 more minutes”, “I am strong”, “I want this done now”, “I can focus a little longer” are ways that you can refocus your mind on accomplishing your present task. By achieving your present goals, it improves your level of self confidence so you will try more challenging endeavours which enhance your quality of life.



### Resources

1. The Power of Positive Thinking: 10 Traits for Maximum Results. By: Dr. Norman Vincent Peale
2. The Creative Visualization Workbook. By: Shakti Gowain
3. Affirmations: The Power of Positive Affirmations to Change Your Life. By: S.S. Shin

## **The Power of Positive Emotions**

Positive thinking and emotions are about much more than just being happy or displaying an upbeat attitude.

### **Negative Emotions**

Researchers have long known that negative emotions narrow your mind and focus your thoughts and as a result limit the options you see around you. A good example is anger, a negative emotion that can consume you to the point where you can't think about anything else. Stress is another negative emotion that can build up to the point that it paralyzes you from performing regular every day activities appropriately.

### **Positive Emotions**

Researchers from the University of North Carolina published a landmark paper in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol 95(5), Nov 2008, 1045-1062. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0013262> that showed that positive emotions broaden your sense of possibility and open your mind, allowing you to build new skills and enhance your life. In other words, when experiencing positive emotions like joy, contentment and love, a person sees more possibilities in his or her life.



### **How do you get Yourself to be Positive**

Anything that sparks the feelings of joy, contentment, and love will do it. This could involve talking or hanging out with your best friend, doing a favorite hobby or exercising. Three specific things that researchers have found to be effective in producing positive emotions are:

1. **Meditation** – People who meditate daily display more positive emotions than those who do not. They display increased mindfulness, purpose in life, social support and decreased illness. For more information on Mindfulness meditation check out these articles on the Forever Active web site;
  1. <http://forever-active.com/micro-mindfulness-meditation/#more-1185>
  2. <http://forever-active.com/introduction-to-mindfulness/#more-1084>
2. **Writing** — Research has found that individuals who keep a journal and write about positive experiences on a daily basis have elevated mood levels and fewer illnesses.
3. **Play** — Schedule time to play or explore in your life. Give yourself permission to smile and enjoy the positive benefits of doing something fun.

### **Summary**

Negative and positive emotions produce polar opposite physiological reactions. The former narrows your focus and limits your ability to adapt and cope with nuances of everyday living. The latter opens up your mind to new possibilities and experiences. Meditation, writing and playing are three ways that you can build contentment, happiness and positive emotions in your life. Find what works for you and do it daily. Your health depends on it.