

HOW TO BECOME POWERFULLY POSITIVE

A GRATITUDE JOURNAL



INTRODUCTION

I believe that happiness comes from your outlook on life and it's constantly changing, but it is naive to believe that you can be happy 100% of the time. I think this is why so many people struggle with the concept of being happy. I am a happy person but I make sure I take in and experience all the emotions that life has to offer, because life isn't a highway— it's a rollercoaster of emotions and sometimes that rollercoaster seems too much, but I can guarantee that when you get to the end you will want to do it all over again.

If you had to eat chocolate cake every single day for breakfast, lunch and dinner do you think the chocolate cake would be that special or that you would appreciate it if someone bought you a chocolate cake on your birthday? Yeah probably not, what's the point of eating chocolate cake if you have nothing to compare it to or contrast that sickly sweet with deliciously salty?

It's the same with happiness, if we were happy all the time it would lose its touch, along with the fact that being happy 24/7 is near impossible! I can promise you that when I stub my toe or crash my car, happiness is not the first emotion that overwhelms me.

So, if that's the case, what is the key?

A positive mindset. This is the ability to find the good in every situation, even if it doesn't make you happy. When my grandfather passed away he had been in a lot of pain and was struggling more than he would ever let on, while it was an awful time and I still miss that beautiful, kind-hearted man more than words can describe, I was grateful and happy that he was no longer suffering.

When I was told about my surgery it took about a day for me to see through the emotional fog and focus on the positives. These being:

- 1. I have actually been given a chance to fight for my life, unlike so many young people who die in car crashes or are murdered.**
- 2. I am going to own this by having the most fabulous eyepatch collection the world has ever seen because when life gives you lemons you need to throw them back in life's face.**

For me it's easy, I naturally find the positives in all situations because I have been training my mind to do so for years. But I wasn't always this way, I started out believing that gratitude was some silly concept that only my granny and other old people cared about. It took years of Granny lecturing me with her famous words "having an attitude of gratitude will change your life" which I responded to with over-exaggerated eye rolls (I was 14 at the time) and retorted with statements like "what would you know about being a teenager in the 21st century?"

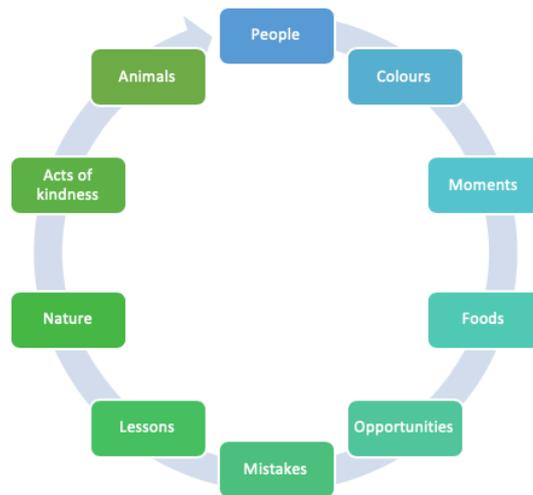
One day, my granny presented each of her grandchildren with a small book and asked us to just start with writing down one thing every day that we are grateful for or that has made us smile. I complied, not because I believed it would change my life, but because I knew it would make my granny happy. When I started, I really struggled, I didn't really know what I was grateful for so I found 1 new thing that made me smile every day. To my surprise within a few short weeks my list was growing, I was finding the task not just easier but far more enjoyable. After a couple of months, I was writing lists so long it blew my mind, I actually had to start restricting myself to the top 3 otherwise I could just keep going. I was incredibly surprised to see what a difference this little task made to the way I thought and perceived the world. I was able to find the good in every situation, open my mind to new opportunities and adapt to change quickly. No longer was my mind focused on what was wrong or the what ifs.

I truly believe that if every person started by just listing 1 thing that they are grateful for or 1 thing that makes them smile every day, you can very quickly change your tune. You will start to see everything in a new and far more positive light and it's exciting and beautiful.

Positivity is a powerful mindset with a side effect of happiness. Trying to be happy isn't going to make you happier you need to delve down deeper to the cause and change your attitude and your outlook before you can find that happiness that you are desperately searching for.

WHAT IS GRATITUDE?

It is the simple art of being thankful and appreciating what is present in your life. There are so many areas to be grateful for, some of my favourites include:



The one thing I have found is the more specific I get when writing down what I am grateful for the more I feel it and appreciate it. For example: I am grateful for my mum vs. I am really grateful that my mum helped me out today by cooking me dinner because she could see I had a lot on my plate. It made me feel so loved and meant that I could focus on writing my book instead.

Practising gratitude every single day has changed my life. It allows me to become present to the moment and appreciate every single thing I am blessed to have. When I become present, I am no longer focused on my regrets of the past, nor the wants of the future but it allows me to embrace everything I have right now. By doing this it creates a growth mindset, it allows me to look at all the endless possibilities and I am more resourceful.

The other thing I love about practising gratitude is when I am in a state of appreciation it diminishes the crippling, unresourceful feeling such as stress, anxiety, sadness, anger.

We are part of a society that is driven by wants and when we get what we thought we wanted we quickly move on to find something else we want or “need” before we’ve even truly appreciated what we have. This is the same for material things as it is for achievements or goals. We live by the ‘if then’ lifestyle; if I lose 10kg then I will be happy, if I get this promotion then I will be successful. We are allowing external circumstance and references guide how we feel.

When you start using gratitude you are putting yourself in the driver’s seat and recognising what is important to you, what you are blessed with, what opportunities you have been given.

The way I have laid out this journal is to have a daily check-in with 4 questions as well as a fortnightly check-in that has 10 questions.

Daily:

These questions shouldn't take more than 10 minutes to answer and are designed to be answered as reflection of your day. The reason for this is because I find it's my favourite way to end my day, looking back on it with a positive note. It calms my mind, takes me away from technology and allows me to go to sleep with a clear mind. Practising gratitude consistently, day after day rewires your brain over time to subconsciously pay attention to all the beauty that life has to offer. I've harped on about gratitude, but here are the other areas of focus and a little explanation of why they are important to look at too!

Celebrating your wins:

What are the things you are proud of? Take a moment to recognise the little things you've done well today and do a little dance or pat yourself on the back. Too often we are focused on where we're going that we forget to recognise how far we've come.

Laughter:

One thing that always strikes me is the lack of smiling faces I see around, so many people are looking at the ground, focused on what's wrong in their life. Find stats on laughter- so many people have forgotten how to laugh, like really laugh, belly laugh, rolling on the floor laughing, tears dripping down your face laughing. Fake it... if you can't find something to laugh at in your day, fake a laugh... soon enough you'll be laughing at yourself for your fake laughing.

Challenges:

We will all have challenges in life, that's part of it. But we can choose to fixate on what's wrong or we can tap into our resourceful side and find a possible solution, once you find one you'll find more. They both take the same amount of energy BUT one is going to make you feel stuck, stressed and down, the other will help you move forward. Facing challenges is also where we can learn some of our biggest lessons in life and can create the most growth for us.

Fortnightly reflection:

These questions dig a little deeper and allow you to look back on all the beauty that has happened over the past 14 days. There are 10 aspects that will be focused on here from random acts of kindness, to achievements, to memories and so much more. This reflection time requires you to put aside 30 minutes so that you don't race through it but actually allow yourself to embrace this process fully.

The last statement on this page says I am...

I am, is the most powerful statement you can make, it is claiming whatever is said next as part of your identity, part of who you are. So be careful with what follows because it can either build you up or tear you down. The way we talk about ourselves and to ourselves is one of the most critical points to focus on. When you make a mistake, what is your first internal reaction? I am a failure! Or is it more along the lines of I know I am amazing regardless of this, what have I learned for next time?

DAILY:

What are 3 little wins from today?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are 3 things you are grateful for today?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What is something that made you laugh or smile today?

Any challenges? (if so what is a solution?)

FORTNIGHTLY:

What's your favourite memory that you've created over the last 2 weeks?

Who is the coolest person you've met? Why?

What are you most proud of?

What is the most beautiful thing you've seen?

What's the kindest thing you've done or bared witness to?

Who do you love and appreciate?

What has been easier than you expected?

What has been tougher than you expected?

What's the funniest thing that's happened over the last 2 weeks?

What's the biggest lesson you've learned?

I am...



Powerfully Positive, Ridiculously Resilient