**Positive Thinking**

**Do not be conformed to this world,**

**but be transformed by the renewing of your minds,**

**so that you may discern what is the will of God.**

***(Romans 12:2)***

As the slaves on the ship keep rowing the oars in unison, one says to the other: “On the plus side, this is great for your abs.” *(Mike Peters, in Mother Goose & Grimm comic strip)*

**Accentuate the positives, medicate the negatives. *(Amy Sedaris, actress)***

Positive thinking is not about expecting the best to happen every time, but accepting that whatever happens is the best for the moment. *(Lori Schneider, first woman with multiple sclerosis to summit Mount Everest)*

**A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort. *(Herm Albright, author)***

**A man stopped to watch a Little League baseball game and asked one of the youngsters what the score was. "We're behind, 18-0," was the answer. "Well," said the man. "I must say you don't look discouraged." "Discouraged?" the boy said, puzzled. "Why should we be discouraged? We haven't come to bat yet." *(Bits & Pieces)***

**When my wife and I moved to El Paso, Texas, from the East Coast, we fell in love with the change of scenery: the desert, the beautiful sunsets, the wonderful Southwestern vistas. When a native Texan asked what we thought of the area, I told him that I was impressed with the climate and the scenery, but I missed the beach. “But we have lots of beaches near El Paso,” he said. “We just lack an ocean.” *(Tom Sims, in Reader’s Digest)***

**When pointing out a mistake by another person, always consider the person’s feelings. Milton Berle was dining with his wife, Ruth, in a Hollywood restaurant, when a waiter put too much pepper on her salad. Mrs. Berle tasted it and said, “Hmm. Needs more salad.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**To be positive is to be mistaken at the top of one's voice. (*Ambrose Bierce)***

**Laughter and tears are both responses to frustration and exhaustion. I myself prefer to laugh, since there is less cleaning up to do afterward. (Kurt Vonnegut)**

**The little cares that fretted me, I lost them yesterday  
Among the fields above the sea, among the winds at play;  
 Among the lowing of the herds, the rustling of the trees,  
 Among the singing of the birds, the humming of the bees.  
The foolish fears of what may happen, I cast them all away  
Among the clover-scented grass, among the new-mown hay;  
 Among the husking of the corn where drowsy poppies nod,  
 Where ill thoughts die and good are born, out in the fields of God. *(Elizabeth Barrett Browning)***

**Ziggy: “Ah, caffeine, the power of positive thinking.” *(Tom Wilson, in Ziggy comic strip)***

**My sister was in charge of baking a cake for her husband and me, who shared the same birthday. Unfortunately the cake didn’t turn out as expected. Since she didn’t have time to make another, she brought her crumbling creation to the party. “I call it the ‘forty-something cake,’” she explained. “It’s beginning to fall apart.” *(Elizabeth Bayless)***

**The Bright Side: Call me corny, call me square . . . But I still like books with happy endings . . . I still like movies where the heroes and heroines keep their clothes on . . . I still get a proud flutter in my heart when I see the American flag waving in a free breeze . . . Despite what the cynics say, I still think a happy marriage is the nicest thing that can happen to two people. Call me corny, call me square . . . But I still like early-morning dawns, and the whisper of a summer breeze . . . I like the sound of the ocean surf! . . . and the symphony of children playing in a schoolyard. I still firmly believe there are more good people in the world than there are bad people . . . Despite the merchants of gloom and doom, I still think the human race is going to be around for a long time . . . And I sincerely think that people will get better and better as the world grows older. Call me corny, call me square . . . *(Dan Valentine)***

**Positive thinking can make depressed people feel worse. In general, researchers found, repeating a phrase like, "I'm a lovable person" only lifts your mood if you have high self-esteem to begin with. People with a poor self-image find the phrase so unbelievable that it reminds them of how they really feel -- not lovable -- and thus makes them feel worse, says psychologist Joanne Wood. "Positive self-statements, despite their widespread endorsement, may backfire for the very people who need them the most." *(The Week magazine, December 25, 2009 - January 8, 2010)***

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**In the village of Kewaskum, Wis., a car crashed through the window of a hair salon. After the window had been replaced, a sign was taped to it: “Drive-in Closed. Walk-ins Welcome.” *(Joanne Raczkiewicz)***

**Our church choir was raising money to attend a music competition and decided to have a car wash. To our dismay, after a busy morning, the rain began pouring down in mid-afternoon, and0 the customers stopped coming. Finally one of the women printed this poster: “We wash,” (and with an arrow pointed skyward) “He rinses!” Business was soon booming once again. *(C. L. Brooks, in Reader’s Digest)***

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**Because our job is such a big part of our self-image, a career setback can make us lose perspective. Career consultant and author Tom Jackson encourages laid-off workers to change their language about themselves. For example, when a steel mill is forced to shut down, the worker who has spent his whole life at that plant may look in the mirror every morning and say, “I am an unemployed steelworker.” In this way, he is telling himself he is a failure. If, says Jackson, we can get him to look in the mirror and say, “I’m not an unemployed steelworker – I’m a human being with options,” then he has been set free in a powerful way. *(Andrew J. DuBrin, in Reader’s Digest)***

**When Pablo Casals reached 95, a young reporter threw him the following question. “Mr. Casals, you are 95 and the greatest cellist that ever lived. Why do you still practice six hours a day?” Mr. Casals answered, “Because I think I’m making progress.” *(Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, in A 2nd Helping of Chicken Soup, p. 254)***

Cheerful thought: Sooner or later, things will get so bad that something will have to be done. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)*

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**A football coach gave this advice on how to deal with failure: “When you’re about to be run out of town, get out in front and make it look like you’re heading a parade.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Ray Meyer, the legendary basketball coach at DePaul University, led his team to 37 winning seasons. One year, when his team dropped its first game after 29 straight home-court victories, we asked how he felt about it. His reply: “Great! Now we can concentrate on winning rather than losing.” *(Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus, in Reader’s Digest)***

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**My wife and I enrolled Molly, our lovable but dumb cocker spaniel, in a ten-week obedience class. At the end of the term Molly had made little progress. We re-enrolled her, but at the end of the second course Molly was still noticeably behind her canine classmates. The instructor, perhaps determined to succeed with our dog, offered to let her repeat the course for the third time at no charge. That evening I heard my wife on the phone with her mother. “Guess what?” Marcie said. “Molly was the only dog in her class to get a scholarship!” *(Al Lucci, in Reader's Digest)***

**Count your life by smiles, not tears. Count your age by friends, not years. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**The power of positive thinking has a dark side, a new study has found. A host of self-help books and pop psychologists advise people to repeat positive statements to themselves, such as “I’m getting better and better” or “I’m good at this.” But when Canadian psychologist Joanne Wood asked study subjects to repeat the phrase “I’m a lovable person” while performing a menial task, she found a curious phenomenon. The mental affirmation did indeed improve the mood of people who started off with a relatively high self-esteem. Subjects who did not think highly of themselves, on the other hand, felt worse – much worse. Wood concludes that people who think poorly of themselves find saying the opposite so unbelievable that it only reminds them of how they really feel. Positive affirmations, Wood tells Psychology Today, “may backfire for the very people who need them the most.” *(The Week magazine, July 3-10, 2009)***

**Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has many; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some. (Charles Dickens)**

**As the couple sits on the shoreline wearing their winter coats, one says to the other: “Don’t think discomfort. Think off-season rates!” *(Joseph Farris, in New York Times)***

**No matter how bad things are, they can always be worse. So what if my stroke left me with a speech impediment? Moses had one, and he did all right. *(Kirk Douglas, in Esquire)***

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**When Thomas Edison was asked why he kept trying to make a new type of battery after failing so often, he replied: “Failure? I have no failures. Now I know 50,000 ways it won’t work!” *(Andrew J. DuBrin, in Reader’s Digest)***

**On December 9, 1914, the great Edison Industries of West Orange were practically destroyed by fire. Mr. Edison lost two million dollars that night and much of his life’s work went up in flames. “My heart ached for him,” Charles Edison (Thomas’s son) told me. “He was 67 -- no longer a young man -- and everything was going up in flames.” He spotted me. “Charles,” he shouted, “where’s your mother?” “I don’t know Dad,” I said. “Find her,” he bade me. “Bring her here. She will never see anything like this again as long as she lives.” The next morning, walking about the charred embers of all his hopes and dreams, Thomas Edison said, “There is great value in disaster. All our mistakes are burned up. Thank God we can start new.” *(Norman Vincent Peale, in Favorite Stories of Positive Faith)***

**There is no failure, only feedback. Thomas Edison would never have succeeded in creating the light bulb if he had been sidetracked by the thousands of “failures” he experienced in its development. Instead, each experiment provided important feedback that drew him closer to a successful result. Colonel Harland Sanders, at a ripe old age, experienced over one thousand rejections for his now famous chicken recipe. The cleaning product Formula 409 -- you’ve got it -- had 408 “unsuccessful” attempts before the final product was developed. Clearly, successful people have more “failures” than failures do. *(Eric Allenbaugh, in Wake Up Calls, p. 111)***

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**Henry Ford was once asked what he would do if he lost his entire fortune. Without a moment’s hesitation, he said he would think up another fundamental human need and meet it by offering a cheaper and more efficient service than anybody else. He said that he would be a millionaire again within five years. *(Mark Fisher & Marc Allen, in How To Think Like A Millionaire, p. 64)*After being laid off from five different jobs in four months, Arnold was hired by a warehouse. But one day he lost control of a forklift and drove it off the loading dock. Surveying the damage, the owner shook his head and said he’d have to withhold ten percent of Arnold’s wages to pay for the repairs. “How much will it cost?” asked Arnold. “About $4500,” said the owner. “What a relief!” exclaimed Arnold. “I've finally got job security!” *(David E. Sees, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Guard Against Evil: If you persisted in going to sea in a leaky boat, you'd know you had no excuse to offer when the boat sank under you. Yet you go about with leaks in your consciousness through which you allow negative thoughts to enter. Your consciousness must be sealed against such evil apparitions as selfishness, thoughtlessness, jealousy, pride, vindictiveness, anger, and the like, just as your boat must be sealed against the water on the outside. It is never the water in the ocean that sinks ships. It is the water that gets in where it has no business to be. *(Don Spencer, in Catholic Quote)***

**If you've habituated your mind to notice the bad, you've got to work to find the good. Ask yourself: What can you appreciate right now? What could the upside be? How might this turn out well? How can you contribute to a positive outcome? *(M. J. Ryan, in Habit Changers)***

**When Louise Hay was diagnosed with cervical cancer at age 50, she believed it had been caused by lingering resentment she had over sexual abuse she'd suffered as a child. Declining medical treatment, she set out to best the disease through diet and positive thinking. Within six months, the cancer was gone -- a recovery Hay drew on to become a widely read self-help author. Claiming "love is the most powerful stimulant to the immune system," she built a self-improvement empire and brought hope -- misguidedly, doctors said -- to AIDS sufferers. *(The Week magazine, September 15, 2017)***

**If you concentrate on finding whatever is good in every situation, you will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul. *(Rabbi Harold Kushner)***

**Let’s suppose you find yourself in a rut of negativity, so bogged down in negativism that there seems no way out. If your habitual thinking is really not what you want to express into life, there is an answer and, best of all, it works. It is called The Law of Reversal. If you will just write down your problem and then write down its opposite (the affirmative) and make a promise to yourself: This is the route I am going to take from now on. This is the way I think. This is the way I choose to act, you will find that it works very easily. You will then begin to follow your new direction – as long as you do not resist it. The key is a sincere desire to establish a new pattern of thinking. This is what we mean by changing your consciousness. *(Cornelia Addington)***

**"I'm thinking of leaving my husband," complained the economist's wife. "All he ever does is stand at the end of the bed and tell me how good things are going to be." *(Jay Trachman, in One to One)***

**Long live optimism: If you look on the bright side, you’re more likely to live longer than pessimists, a new study says. University of Pittsburgh researcher Hilary Tindle surveyed nearly 100,000 women, ages 50 to 79, about their outlook on life, then tracked their health for several years. Women who answered yes when asked such questions as, “In unclear times, I usually expect the best” were categorized as optimists; pessimists were those who affirmatively answered questions such as, “If something can go wrong for me, it will.” All were healthy at the start of the study. After eight years, the most optimistic women were 9 percent less likely to have developed heart disease, 30 percent less likely to have died of heart disease, and 14 percent less likely to have died of any cause. Women who scored high in “cynical hostility” were at even greater risk of dying in general. “When you look at all of the risks, pessimists had everything in the wrong direction,” Tindle tells CNN.com. “The question is, can we take these ingrained attitudes and teach that individual to modify them?” *(The Week magazine, August 28 – September 4, 2009)***

**Charley Pell, University of Florida football coach, told his players: “Think positively! Like an 85-year-old man who marries a 25-year-old woman, and buys a five-bedroom house near an elementary school. Think positively!” *(L. M. Boyd)***

**A strong positive mental attitude will create more miracles than any wonder drug. *(Patricia Neal, Oscar winner)***

**People who feel positively think differently. They think better. *(Deborah Norville, in Thank You Power: Making the Science of Gratitude Work for You)***

**You're going to go through tough times -- that's life. But I say, "Nothing happens to you, it happens for you." See the positive in negative events. *(Joel Osteen)***

**She was old in years but young in spirit. Although she got around on crutches and in a wheelchair, she was a dynamo. She ran a highly successful real estate business, served on the town council, and regularly helped charitable causes in various capacities. One day a new friend asked what had put her in the wheelchair. “Infantile paralysis,” she replied. “In the beginning, I was almost completely paralyzed.” “It’s obviously still a serious disability,” said the friend. “How do you cope, how do you do all the things you do?” “Ah!” she said with a smile, “the paralysis never touched my heart or my head.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**A minister had just started his Sunday sermon when there was thunder, lightning, and rain, which poured down in torrents. “Isn't the Lord wonderful," the minister said to the congregation. “While all of us sit in here dry and comfortable, He's out there washing our cars." (Bits & Pieces)**

**Sir Walter Raleigh, one of nature’s true noblemen, was so composed when he went to the scaffold in the Tower of London that he took his pipe with him. He turned to his executioner, ran his thumb over the sharp edge of the axe, and remarked: “This is a sharp medicine but it is a physical for all diseases.” (Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 45)**

**Lucy: Violet, do you really think that Charlie Brown is as hopeless as you make him out to be?” Violet: “He’s worse! He has no redeeming features whatsoever. I just can’t think of enough bad things to say about him!” Charlie Brown: “I’m infinite!” (Charles Schulz, in Peanuts comic strip)**

**Will Rogers’ stage specialty used to be rope tricks. One day, on stage, in the middle of his act, he got tangled in his lariat. Instead of getting upset, he drawled, “A rope ain’t so bad to get tangled up in if it ain't around your neck.” The audience roared. Encouraged by the warm reception, Rogers began adding humorous comments to all his performances. It was the comments, not the rope tricks, that eventually made him famous. (Bits & Pieces)**

**Whenever I’m disappointed with my lot in life, I stop to think about little Jamie Scott. Jamie was trying out for a part in his school play. His mother told me that he’d set his heart on being in it, though she feared he would not be chosen. On the day the parts were awarded, I went with her to collect him after school. Jamie rushed up, eyes shining with pride and excitement. Then he said those words that remain a lesson to me: “I’ve been chosen to clap and cheer.” (Marie Curling, in Guideposts magazine)**

**A little boy was overheard talking to himself as he strode through his back yard, baseball cap in place and toting ball and bat. “I’m the greatest baseball player in the world,” he said proudly. Then he tossed the ball in the air, swung and missed. Undaunted, he picked up the ball, threw it into the air and said to himself, “I’m the greatest player ever!” He swung at the ball again, and again he missed. He paused a moment to examine bat and ball carefully. Then once again he threw the ball into the air and said, “I’m the greatest baseball player who ever lived.” He swung the bat hard and again missed the ball. “Wow!” he exclaimed. “What a pitcher!” *(Robert Schuller, in Life Changers)***

**Tom Selleck has kept the cast and crew of “Magnum P.I.” in high spirits for the past five years. In an interview with Richard Hart on “PM Magazine,” he said, “It’s my job to come to the set and be positive, no matter how I feel. A lead actor in a show can drag everybody down with him in about five minutes. I’ve been on enough sets in the past fifteen years, doing little parts, and have seen it happen. I caught myself saying things like, ‘If I’m ever lucky enough to have my own show, that won’t happen.’” (Reader’s Digest)**

**One Sunday I asked our pastor to announce that the church softball team had won its league championship. As he did, he asked team members to stand up. Although there were usually ten to twelve of us at Sunday service, I was embarrassed to see only four of us standing. Not missing a beat, the pastor continued, “And what is most amazing is that they won with such a small team.” (Jeff Lake, in Reader’s Digest)  
Baseball’s All-Star Game in July of 1966 was the first national event held in St. Louis’s Busch Memorial Stadium. The temperature soared to 110 degrees in the city that day and reached 125 degrees on the playing field. Casey Stengel was asked to comment on the new arena. He thought for a moment, grinned and said, “Well, it certainly holds the heat nicely.” *(Joe Pollack, in GEO)***

**Dr. Herbert H. Clark, s psychologist from John Hopkins University, discovered, that it takes the average person about 48 percent longer to understand a sentence using a negative than it does to understand a positive, or affirmative sentence. This is confirmation of something every successful person knows: the secret of good communication is positive affirmation. It is not what you won’t or can’t do that interests people, but what you will or can do. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Wife to husband: “Our vacation isn’t a total loss, dear. Most people go a lifetime without ever seeing icicles on palm trees." *(Franklin Folger, North America Syndicate)***

**I had been a heavy smoker since I was a teenager, but to my surprise was able to quit “cold turkey.” However, my weight shot up, and I felt very self-conscious. When a friend congratulated me on giving up cigarettes, I exclaimed, “But look at all these added pounds!” Her reply was one I’ll always treasure. “Oh, my dear, don’t worry about that!” she said. “Just think of all the extra years you will have in which to lose them.” *(Vernice S. Shirley, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Extra Cheese: I have arrived for the positive-thinking workshop. The class is half empty. *(Mr. Nick Harvey, in Reader's Digest)***

**There’s a well-known Zen parable about the man who was crossing a field when he saw a tiger charging at him. The man ran, but the tiger gained on him, chasing him toward the edge of a cliff. When he reached the edge, the man had no choice but to leap. He had one chance to save himself: a scrubby branch growing out of the side of the cliff about halfway down. He grabbed the branch and hung on. Looking down, what did he see on the ground below? Another tiger. Then the man saw that a few feet off to his left a small plant grew out of the cliff, and from it hung one ripe strawberry. Letting go with one hand he found that he could stretch his arm out just far enough to pluck the berry with his fingertips and bring it to his lips. How sweet it tasted! Tigers either way. In such a situation, one looks for blessings. *(Philip Simmons, in Learning to Fall: The Blessings of an Imperfect Life)***

**Get a check-up from the neck up, and get rid of our stinkin’ thinkin’. *(Zig Ziglar)***

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