



Staying Positive in Today's Environment

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Hope



As long as we're here, there is hope

With all the doom and gloom of the pandemic, the roller coaster stock market and the social unrest, it is easy to get down in the dumps nowadays. But there is hope.

When I see Dennis and Nathan cutting the grass under the bright sun, clear blue sky and fluffy white clouds here at the Towne House, there is hope.

When my housekeeper arrives to sanitize, disinfect and keep things tidy, there is hope.

When the servers deliver my dinner and they smile and wish me a good evening, there is hope.

When Diane wields the scissors around my mask (and my ears) to do away with months of hair that has grown way too long, there is hope.

When the Allen County Public Library abides by the protocol to deliver new books, there is hope.

When the flowers in Marcia's Garden continue to bloom and add color to the day and my life, there is hope.

When Natalie, Ann Marie, Kim and Bethany mount the snack attack and treat us with coffee, cookies, wine, cheese and other goodies, there is hope.

COVID-19 has invaded our lives and turned the world upside down.

But we are still here, and there is hope!

HELEN PYLES
Fort Wayne

Unfortunately, there is no “Silver Bullet” that can make us see the glass half full instead of half empty. We need to Train our Brain to be more optimistic.

I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination.

Negative self-talk

Positive thinking

I've never done it before.

It's an opportunity to learn something new.

It's too complicated.

I'll tackle it from a different angle.

I don't have the resources.

Necessity is the mother of invention.

I'm too lazy to get this done.

I wasn't able to fit it into my schedule, but I can re-examine some priorities.

There's no way it will work.

I can try to make it work.

It's too radical a change.

Let's take a chance.

No one bothers to communicate with me.

I'll see if I can open the channels of communication.

I'm not going to get any better at this.

I'll give it another try.

LOOK FOR THE SILVER LINING

None of us have been through a global pandemic so it is hard to know what to expect.

- **Train our brain to Adopt an Attitude of Gratitude** - paying attention to life's positives can train you to see more and more of them, which will help you learn to be more grateful. You might feel blessed that good weather allowed you to get out for an afternoon run; that a stranger lent a helping hand; that you made it to the bus on time, or that your kids offered to do the dishes. Adds perspective when you approach things through the eyes of gratitude.
- **Create a Happiness Bank** – What makes you happy; what's good about you? If a colleague compliments you, jot it down. Have it to pull out to remember next time you are feeling negative.
- **What's Your Silver Lining?** My friend recently suffered an optical stroke. It came on suddenly and she lost eyesight in one eye. Her attitude is that it could have been worse. The stroke could have left her whole body paralyzed.

LIVE IN A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT – *It is essential to have influences in your life that support you and lift you up instead of dragging you down.*

- **Surround yourself with positive people** – Set boundaries when spending time with negative people, better yet, avoid if possible. It's like a crab when you put a crab in a bucket, it can't get out on its own. You place a second crab in there, and they try to climb over one another to get out. Ultimately they both die. Negative people will pull you down.
- **Limit negative information sources and time you spend on it** – News can take a toll, determining what is accurate and what fake news is. You don't need to hear every unpleasant detail from dawn to bedtime. Choose one trusted source and listen sparingly.
- **Take a fast from social media / unplug and reconnect.** Set aside a no electronics time each day.
- **It's important to keep a routine** – Maybe sleeping in and wearing pajama pants all day was ok for a few days but it's important that you follow a routine, be productive and use your time wisely. Get up at the same time you normally would.

- **Implement the 5 second rule** – Every time you feel like you are slipping into a negative thought, count down from 5 to 1 refocus and rephrase your thoughts. 54321
- **Look for the good in others – and hang with them.** Be less judgmental. The more that you see think and do that reflects peace, happiness and positivity, the more it will influence your mood and outlook. Give a daily-shout out, Praise a coworker for a job well done, give the benefit of the doubt; look for positive intentions behind actions. Once you start looking for the good in others, it makes it easier to be less cynical. Start looking for one good trait or action in each person you meet or interact with daily.

WHAT IS THE WORST THAT CAN HAPPEN?

- Your brain inflates every scenario into something catastrophic. Things are rarely as bad as you think. Will this matter in 5 years or even 5 weeks?
- **Express feelings** – Don't hold in what your concerns are. Share them with those you love and enjoy the support they provide.
- **Reduce worries** – Easier said than done, but my favorite quote is to put your worries in your back pocket with a hole in it. Worrying will not extend your life by even one hour.
- **This too shall pass** – the old saying holds true. Grant yourself grace.

HELP OTHERS

- **Share a kind act** – Check in on a neighbor, write a thinking of you or thank you note to someone and brighten their day, drop an unexpected gift in the mail.
- **Support our local businesses** – Many of our local restaurants and organizations are hurting. Patronize them or help market them with a shout out on FB.
- **Health Benefits** – Helping others makes you feel good. It boosts happiness, reduces depression, and provides purpose.
- **Practice what we preach** – I know we are preaching to the choir, these are the same reasons we tell our volunteers to volunteer. But we would do well to heed the advice ourselves.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF – *This is one area that you do have control over! Basic habits can have a huge effect on your mind and body.*

- **Eat Healthy** – Incorporate fruits, veggies and whole grains into your diet.
- **Exercise** – Aim for at least 3 times a week, take the dog for a walk, go biking.
- **Sleep** – This is where routine comes in to play. Go to bed at the same time, get up at the same time, no blue screens one hour before bed. Try a calming activity before bed, sleep in a cool, quiet environment. Allow your brain and your body to recharge.
- **Posture** – Sit up straight at your desk, take frequent breaks to walk around. Be good to your body, it's the only one you have.
- **Nature** – It's the best time of the year to be out and appreciating nature. Store up the vitamin D and fresh air and put it in your happiness bank.
- **Breathe** – Slow down. Focus on breathing in and out. Breathe in through your nose to the count of 5 and count to 5 as you exhale out through your mouth.
- **Treat Yourself** – You deserve it! Whether a small ice cream cone, a long bath, or taking time to read a book, take time for you!
- **Connect** – with family and friends, on FaceTime or Zoom. Make space in your schedule for breaks, lunch and chatting at the water cooler (texting with friends).

START YOUR DAY IN A POSITIVE WAY – *It sets the tone for the rest of your day. Anyone who has overslept or whose car wouldn't start in the morning knows that the rest of the day is downhill.*

- **Listen** – to uplifting music or podcasts
- **Read** – Inspirational stories, quotes or scripture
- **Meditate** – Not for everyone but allows you to focus your attention, quiets your thoughts.
- **Exercise** – A great feeling to have it accomplished for the day.
- **Make a Healthy Breakfast** – start out with protein such as eggs or a smoothie to get going

LIVE IN THE PRESENT – CONSTANTLY REPLAYING MISTAKES OR FAILURE WILL DRAG YOU DOWN.

- **Don't get lost in the past** – Unless it is to get hope from past resilience. We have endured major life disrupters such as JFK getting assassinated, the economic downturn in 2008, the events of 9/11 – we survived just as we will today.
- **Or obsess about the future** – there is little you can do to change it.
- **Take time to live in the moment** – Live mindfully and don't wish your life away. Drive a different route to work. Actually look for shapes in the clouds, see the butterfly on the flowers, listen to the crickets, and inhale the newly cut grass, feel the sun, rain and wind on your skin.

FIND HUMOR

- **Smile** – It's amazing how contagious a smile is. If someone doesn't have one, give them one of yours. You can even see it with a mask on!
- **Watch a funny video** – Jump on YouTube and watch bloopers, cats playing, or whatever makes you laugh! Bookmark it for your happiness bank.
- **In all situations, find the humor.** - Allow yourself to experience humor in even the darkest or most trying situations. Remind yourself that this situation will probably make for a good story later and try to crack a joke about it.
- **Joke of the day** – Start a new tradition and share it with co-workers and family or on FB.

SMALL CHANGES DO ADD UP

- **Start a gratitude journal or get an online app** – Close your day, every day, with a positive acknowledgement of something you accomplished, learned or are grateful for. It will help dilute some of the negativity you've absorbed and remind you that not everything is bad or depressing.
- **Take advantage of found time** – Paint that room, clean the closet, finish that scrapbook, complete any project that you've been procrastinating on.
- **Practice Random Acts of Kindness** – It's fun to do something nice for someone anonymously. Leave an envelope for your Amazon delivery person or with your curbside grocery attendant. Thank the custodians in your building for their efforts to keep things safe.
- You can "Do your part" – By wearing your mask, washing hands, social distancing, staying home, you are protecting your neighbors and those most vulnerable - you can still make a difference.

100-year-old Briton knighted by Queen

On a day infused with emotion, Queen Elizabeth II tapped the blade of a sword once owned by her father on the slender shoulders of 100-year-old Tom Moore, making a hero of a nation a knight of the realm Friday.

Moore captivated the British public by walking 100 laps of his garden in England and raising some 33 million pounds for the National Health Service in April. The queen knighted him with the traditional sword tap, but the World War II veteran was not required to take a knee before the monarch. Instead, Moore steadied himself against his now-famous walker and wheeled himself across the grass to stand in front of Elizabeth.

The ceremony was staged outside of Windsor Castle west of London, where the 94-year old queen has been sheltering during the COVID-19 pandemic alongside her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh.

