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how to stay



POSITIVE!

The secret to a happy and successful life is having the skills to stay balanced and feel positive

BY ALICIA POWER



GETTY IMAGES

After 30 years of mentoring people in empowerment and self-development I have realised that understanding the hidden world of feelings is the first step to success.

Let's examine feelings for a moment. Imagine you have just had an argument with your lover and you feel sad and upset. Perhaps you have heard bad news about a family member's health and your mind starts racing in panic. Have you ever wanted to switch off the sadness, the panic and the upset? Have you ever wished you had more control over your feelings?

It is important to understand that emotions are not 'bad'. In fact, in my opinion, the most important part of the human psyche is our ability to have feelings, because they can ultimately guide us in our life more unerringly than our logic. The key with feelings is to observe them as if they are tools, indicators to help us enjoy and steer our lives. However, it is also important to keep a close eye on them to ensure they don't derail our clear perspective.

Although unpredictable, feelings are here to stay, they are part of us and we cannot simply ignore them. Yet while we may want to wish them away, it is useful to keep in mind that emotion helps us discern, choose and notice what we prefer. We like some experiences because they make us happy, and we don't like others because they make us unhappy or uncomfortable. These feelings are practical indicators. However, the times when we feel 'ambushed' by intense emotion and find it hard to cope are when we might wish for a fast switch to change that experience and find balance.

ATTITUDE!

WHAT ARE FEELINGS?

Scientists study bio-chemistry and brain wave patterns on EEG monitors to try and understand emotion. However, there is also wide evidence that looking at the components of a system does not always help one completely understand that system. The human psyche is extraordinarily complex. One example is the action of electromagnetic waves of energy that constantly interact with the subtle energetic envelope surrounding every person. Quantum scientists tell us these waves are packed with information. It is amazing to think that this volume of data is being subliminally transmitted to each of us every second.

Most of us are not aware that we are constantly affected by this invisible input and yet it influences our moods, our decisions and our everyday experiences. This shows how little control we have over many of the underlying reasons for our surfacing feelings! This is also the reason why feelings can remain unnoticed until they grow into a strong emotion.

Here is a possible example of the effect of this type of invisible transmission: Your partner is concerned about an issue at work. They prefer not to discuss their business problems, however you immediately feel uncomfortable when your partner arrives home. You dismiss this feeling because it is subtle, yet over dinner you experience an unusual reaction of strong anger towards your partner. Your first instinct of discomfort was ignored. Yet after a short time the subtle worry in your partner's thoughts is transmitted to your 'energy envelope' and eventually rises to the surface where you finally notice it as anger. Such subtle energy wave transmission is one of many reasons emotions are triggered. However, the focus is to observe emotions as indicators of hidden stress



ISTOCK/DRA_SCHWARTZ

and anxiety. In this way we can easily navigate through complex reactions, relationships and circumstances.

WHY ARE FEELINGS IMPORTANT?

Strong emotional reactions can motivate us, change our opinions, stall momentum and even change our life. Emotions drive our strong beliefs, our dedication and commitment to people and causes. Emotional reactions can even break up long-term relationships, destroying years of investment of love, courage and perseverance. Emotions can have such a life-changing effect that it is worth taking a moment to observe and understand them more deeply.

A key aspect to emotions is they can surface suddenly without us being able to control them. Usually we try to control emotions AFTER we discover and feel them. They can erupt, burst

we can find our lives becoming balanced and positive. Learning about our emotions leads to understanding ourselves more deeply and to making clearer choices without the cloud of intense emotion.

One important reason to study our emotions is that our decision-making is affected by the feelings we are having in that key moment. For example, if we are anxious while choosing how to respond to an important business or family situation, our decision may be shortsighted and create a less than optimal result. Our emotional state can directly affect the results in our lives.

FEELINGS ATTRACT

Recently, a documentary called 'The Secret' interviewed spiritual teachers who described a concept they termed the "Law of Attraction". They explained that when our attitudes are positive we

particles that act in a similar way. Thus the Law of Attraction also governs our physical natural world – and we humans are as much a part of nature as a tree or an animal.

Science tells us quantum waves create the energy blueprint of our physical form, our physical surroundings as well as our inner reactions. Does that mean as our thoughts connect with that background blueprint they directly affect the physical world we live in? It seems so. Also, does it mean that positive thoughts can directly influence positive physical circumstances? Again, it certainly seems so, according to this extraordinary Law of Attraction.

So how can we stay positive? This is the important question. Positive attracts positive, negative attracts negative. How can we control those underlying emotions and reactions that are constantly affecting our attitudes, decisions and experiences?

POSITIVITY TOOLS

As a self-development coach, one of my favourite pastimes is the study of how to stay positive. With years of practice I have become proficient at staying clear and balanced while accepting my real feelings and acknowledging the hidden truths they are indicating. It is so important not to ignore our feelings as they are our greatest guide to the truth of a situation. However, there is also no need for our feelings to control us.

Therapists and psychologists have developed wonderful positivity tools such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Positive Psychology, Psychotherapy, Inner Child Therapy, plus so many more. These are proven ways of changing our perspective to help create positive attitudes and feelings. (See box on page 50.)

It is also interesting to note that studies show that prayer and strong faith, whatever religion or belief we subscribe to, keeps us buoyant, happy with lower anxiety levels.

Another key to staying positive is to be involved in a supportive network of friends and family. In fact, psychologists have found this to be the single most important element in maintaining happiness and emotional balance.

POSITIVITY FROM YOUR DIET

According to health professionals 'feeling down' has a lot to do with not enough of the bio-chemical serotonin being produced by the hippocampus (a section of the brain). Also, experiencing low motivation can be directly due to an adrenalin/noradrenalin deficiency in the body. The good news is that it is now known that these essential chemicals can be triggered by our attitudes and beliefs. So using the therapy

These skills can help us feel more in control to choose practical options in moments of crisis

out without us knowing they were even there. One reason is because they are born deep in our unconscious mind and are often influenced by reaction patterns from our historical conditioning.

SHOULD WE 'MANAGE' EMOTION?

Because emotions are so unpredictable and difficult to control we can sometimes feel quite powerless over them. However, there are excellent skills and tools we can use to work with emotions in empowering and positive ways. These skills can help us feel more in control to choose practical options in moments of crisis. By observing and managing emotions correctly,

literally attract similar experiences, in this case positive experiences. The Law says positive attracts positive and negative attracts negative.

You can imagine us all watching our attitudes and what we are thinking! "Whoops – there goes a negative thought – I'd better be careful in case I attract a negative experience!" I guess some people could become obsessed with this idea.

The principle behind the Law of Attraction is based on Quantum Physics, which has scientifically proven that 'like attracts like', that quantum waves of a certain frequency attract similar quantum waves. This law not only applies to energy waves but also to physical subatomic



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tools above as well as those outlined further in this article, can directly stimulate the correct chemicals for happiness.

A key point to note is that serotonin is made from the amino acid tryptophan and needs certain vitamins and minerals to help this conversion. If one of these nutrients is low or missing from our everyday diet, serotonin production decreases and can lead to negative moods or depression. Foods rich in tryptophan combined with high carbohydrate food are the right stimulant for serotonin production. This means a serving of protein-rich food such as fish and white meats, beans, cheese, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds eaten with carbohydrates such as vegetables, fruit or whole meal bread ensures a constant supply of tryptophan.

THE ULTIMATE TOOL – SPIRITUAL ENJOYMENT

If happiness attracts more positive circumstances, this following tool is worth studying as it opens reservoirs of joy. Seeking positivity can open the potential in becoming 'spiritually' happy. As our life becomes more enjoyable through being more positive, a simple joy can begin to grow and stabilise inside us. As this joy accumulates we can become more giving and nurturing to those around us. Often this spilling-out of positivity can be directed towards our wider community, triggering an even deeper level of enjoyment. Becoming a positive contributor to our wider community can profoundly satisfy what I regard as our soul, and can grow a deep, permanent sense of spiritual fulfillment. So our ability to stay balanced and monitor our negative emotions can eventually lead to a wider breadth of opportunity, of contribution, and of the ultimate positive state of soul-level satisfaction.

SPIRITUAL HAPPINESS TOOLS

1. Breath Technique

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) was originally developed for the treatment of particular psychological disorders but its strategies are now used by large numbers of people to help them feel happier and more in control over their lives. The principles of CBT are easy to learn, and it is highly suitable for use as a self-help tool by management of daily stress. *Change Your Thinking* is a great book by Sarah Edelman PhD (ABC Books) on CBT. www.moodgym.anu.edu.au

Positive Psychology is the study of three main areas: positive emotions, positive individual traits and positive institutions. Understanding positive emotions entails the study of contentment with the past, happiness in the present and hope for the future. Understanding positive individual traits consists of the study of the strengths and virtues. Understanding positive institutions entails the study of the strengths that foster better communities. www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu

MORE PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR STAYING POSITIVE

- + Observe the 'tone' of your thinking. If it is becoming negative clean your energy field. Also use Cognitive Behaviour Tools to keep balanced.
- + Exercise each day.
- + Write a 'Joy List' and commit to action these items.
- + At the end of each day write down what you feel grateful for.
- + Treasure your friendships and family and spend time with them.
- + Focus on your lovers and partners. The love between you keeps your heart happy.
- + Spend as much time with children and animals as you can, as their natural joy is infectious.
- + Spend time in nature, the ultimate healer.
- + Use listening to music to calm your mind & spirit.
- + Sing to send waves of cleansing energy through your body.
- + Laugh.

Here is a simple yet powerful everyday way to trigger happiness. The breath is an extraordinary positivity tool as it carries within it 'life force'. Eastern spiritual systems call this force 'prana' or 'chi'. Every time we draw a breath we also breathe in this Life Force. If you have never thought about this I am privileged to introduce you to a new, powerful tool for instant bliss, a pure, natural high. Spiritual Masters throughout the ages have taught humanity how to place our attention on this Life Force to lead us into deep 'transcendent bliss'. We could call this a classic doorway out of negative thinking, and the perfect switch or tool for happiness, as it lies within our every breath.

Exercise: Place your attention on your breath and keep it there. After a short while you will notice a deeper force pushing the breath in and out. Place your attention on that force. In this technique your attention is all important.

Placing your attention on the breath for a focused time can quiet the mind and help you feel calm, relaxed and centred. After a short time this mental stillness can lead to a simple feeling of joy and even love.

2. Mind Stilling Meditation

Exercise: Put all distractions aside and sit quietly focusing your attention on the breath. As you

follow the breath your mind may continue to chatter. Allow it to run while constantly bringing your attention back to the breath. Gradually (after about 15-20 minutes) your mind will become more still. It is here that you will begin to feel a sense of peace and happiness.

When your mind is quiet, the Life Force can be focused on more easily as it pushes each breath in and out. Placing your full focus on the Life Force can switch on profound feelings of spiritual love and wellbeing.

3. Cleaning Your Subtle Field

The subtle energy envelope surrounding each person is a catch-all for both positive and negative electro-magnetic energy waves around us. It is useful to be aware that if we are around people who are negative or depressed their thought waves may transmit to our own energy field. Here's an exercise to clean negative energy from your 'energy field'.

Exercise: Imagine holding a doll-size version of yourself and push it into the centre of a bright sun. Now pretend you instantly 'know' where dark energy is located inside or around the outside of the doll's figure. Ask your 'spirit angels' to pull the dark energy out of your aura. Repeat this entire process until you see your 'doll body' clear of dark patches. 

Emotional Freedom Technique is based on new discoveries regarding the body's subtle energies. It has been proven successful in a variety of clinical cases and emotional, health and performance issues. www.emofree.com and www.eftdownunder.com

Psychotherapy is the study of your emotions so that once understood, they can be healed and released. www.psychotherapy.com.au

Inner Child Therapy is the study of the 'child aspect' of yourself which helps release conditioned fears and emotions. www.findatherapist.com.au

Soul Mentoring is a course trains you in staying clear, positive and soul fulfilled using easy tools and skills via home study audio files. www.soulmentoring.com/e_audio_course.htm