Good habits that serve our health include, among others, a positive attitude and positive thinking about ourselves. They contribute to our mental and physical well-being. That's why today we will focus on positive thinking training.

1. Positive Thinking Training... About Ourselves

* Learning to change negative messages/thoughts into supportive messages
* Understanding the technique of calming the racing thoughts

What is thought? Simply put, a thought is a product of the mind. Throughout the day, we create tens of thousands of thoughts. They influence our emotions and behaviors. Thanks to them, we can feel better, be more confident, and be happier. But they can also make us sad, anxious, or frustrated. Thoughts vary. We create thoughts that support us, encourage us to take action, not to give up, and then they are positive thoughts. We also create thoughts unpleasant to us, discouraging, blaming. And then they are negative thoughts.

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| **Thoughts** | |
| **Positive thoughts**  encouraging action, motivating, amusing  (illustration of a smiling boy with outstretched wings) | **Negative thoughts**  critical, blaming, causing anxiety, uncertainty, helplessness  (illustration of a tired, sad boy, hunched over with folded wings) |

Attachments 1 - Interactive Exercise

Negativ thoughts often like to come back even though we don't want them to. They become intrusive. The way we think about ourselves, others, and the surrounding world is somewhat dependent on what we listen to, watch, read, and talk about.

Illustration: book, people talking, radio, TV, computer, headphones

Negative thoughts can also arise when we worry about something. Sometimes we worry about events over which we have no control, for example, we saw an unpleasant situation, watched a sad movie, or the test did not go as we hoped. When we are afraid of something or blame ourselves for something, we also produce negative thoughts. The more we don't want to think about it, the faster these thoughts come back to us and stay with us longer.

Our brain is constructed in such a way that we cannot think positively and negatively at the same time. Therefore, we automatically make a choice. Usually, we don't tell anyone about these unpleasant thoughts because we believe they are true, and additionally, we are ashamed or believe that no one will understand us. Generally, we don't deal with thoughts. We don't consider whether they are positive or negative.

Illustration 1: A focused boy assembling a car model with the thought bubble "I'll try again" and a complete car model.

Illustration 2: A discouraged boy next to scattered car parts with the thought bubble "I give up".

Interesting Fact

Positive thinking is not easy for humans because it is not in their nature. What does it mean? It means that in ancient times, difficult living conditions caused humans to constantly be alert, fight for survival, and look out for danger. This survival code remained in the mind and makes it easier for us to notice the worse sides of situations than the better ones.

Illustration: A prehistoric man standing in front of a cave, looking around cautiously, holding a spear or another primitive weapon. There is a forest all around, a fire burning inside the cave, and other people sitting around the fire.

However, we can make thoughts be on our side. The brain is plastic. We can change our way of thinking through exercises. In other words, we can "teach the brain" to think positively.

* The sooner we start, the better for us. Scientific research indicates that positive thinking:
* strengthens resilience
* reduces stress and anxiety levels
* improves mood
* increases self-belief and confidence
* teaches coping with difficult situations (seeking solutions rather than complaining)
* contributes to achieving success

How to do it? I invite you to an extraordinary training. You don't have to get up or dress in sportswear. Read the following tips.

* Every day, try to find one thing that made you smile, put you in a good mood. It could be the beautiful sky, a friend's smile, the teacher canceled the test, a classmate explained a math problem, or the school lunch was exceptionally tasty today. We can find many sparks of goodness around us throughout the day. We can also write them down in a specially designated notebook. Day by day. You can also write them down every day on small pieces of paper and collect them in a box. Written goodness has greater power. ☺️ After a month, open the box or the notebook and see how many positive things happened to you this month!

Let your brain be like a detective. Teach it to find something good in a difficult situation. We meet different situations every day. Some are joyful, others sad. That's just the way it is. However, don't focus on what was difficult and sad. In every situation when you felt bad, sad, or annoyed, ask yourself these two questions:

* Did this situation teach me something?
* What conclusions can I draw for myself from what happened?
* Every day, find 3 reasons for joy, events, situations that were pleasant and good for you. Parents or siblings can help us with this. During a conversation, it's easier to remind ourselves of such pleasant situations and tell other family members about them. Over time, you can extend the list.
* Magic words. They exist. Thank you..., I'm grateful for..., I'm happy when..., I laugh when...; You can suggest a game of magic words to all family members. Whoever says the most of them during the day wins. The magic of these words lies in the fact that they need to be completed. So we create a magical sentence. And it's a fun family game.
* Implement the practice of gratitude into your life. What does the practice of gratitude involve? Every day, you notice the good around you and thank for it. At the beginning, let it be 3 reasons to be grateful. Then you can extend the list. It quickly dispels complaining and whining. Scientists even called it one of the ingredients of happiness. And that means that if you practice it, you will feel happier.
* Gratitude journal. A good practice is to create a beautiful notebook and write down every day what we are grateful for. At the end of the day, find a time and place where no one bothers you and think about what happened during the day, what you can thank for. Then write it down in the notebook. These can be circumstances, situations, events, things, maybe people, that made you feel good, improved your mood or well-being. Maybe you heard something that motivated you to act. Maybe you saw something that amazed you. It's worth thanking yourself too ☺️, for example, for completing all the household chores, for not forgetting about a deadline, if you have a pet at home, for going for a walk with it, for helping your parents at home on your initiative, or maybe for listening attentively to a friend, or for noticing a sad look on a friend's face and comforting them. There are many possibilities.

Sometimes, a lot of thoughts "fly" through your head. Everyone experiences such a situation. It's natural but exhausting. It happens, for example, when we stress about something or wait for an important event. We can calm down what's going on in our heads in a very simple way. When this rush of thoughts comes, find a quiet place and focus on a detail in your immediate surroundings. It could be a flower on the windowsill, a pattern on the wallpaper, a book cover, a picture on the wall, a ring on your finger. Direct all your attention to the element you chose. Focus only on it. Analyze carefully what you see for a few minutes. Don't forget to breathe ☺️

**Be patient. Acquiring new skills takes time. You won't even notice when you'll become a Master of Positive Thinking.**

Attachment 1 - worksheet

In the exercise, you will find examples of negative thoughts that we often create in our minds. Try to replace them with positive messages that will improve your mood and motivate you to take action.

"I could have done better"

"I am ugly"

"I am incapable"

"I definitely won't succeed"

"I messed up as usual"

"I am worthless"

"It's my fault"

"I give up"

Attachment 2 - Interactive Exercise

In the exercise, you will find examples of negative thoughts that we often create in our minds. Replace them with positive messages that will improve your mood and motivate you to take action (Column II). The answers are hidden in the third column. If you need hints, uncover them.

I wrote the test as best as I could.

"I could have done better"

I accept myself as I am

"I am ugly"

I will learn.

"I am incapable"

I deserve everything best

"I am stupid"

I will give my all, and that's what matters most, not the outcome.

"I definitely won't succeed"

"I messed up as usual"

I am valuable

I have the right to make mistakes and be wrong

"I am worthless"

It's not my fault

"It's my fault"

"I give up"

I’ll try again, just differently