

# The Power of Positive Thinking Summary

By Norman Vincent Peale

Is it enough to just think positive thoughts?

*The Power of Positive Thinking* is one of the first self-help books of its time, and has sold over 5 million copies. Despite being controversial, it remains a classic guide to harnessing a positive mental attitude to lead a happy and healthy life.

The book is divided into chapters that deal with one aspect of positive thinking. Individually they can be applied to improve parts of our lives that need work; however, if used collectively, they give strategies to live a more fulfilling and joyous life. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale offers pragmatic advice that we can apply to help us deal with thought processes and mental strain.

Published in 1952, *The Power of Positive Thinking* has become a cult classic in the self-help genre. It combines anecdotes, biblical case studies, and practical guidelines that purport to help readers be more positive and optimistic. Peale advocates for the use of affirmations and visualization techniques, in order to achieve a heightened sense of clarity and positivity. The claim is that if applied correctly, we'll lead meaningful and fulfilling lives.

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale was an American theologian born in 1898. He became a pastor and popular motivational speaker who wrote over 40 books. *The Power of Positive Thinking* is his most significant and successful offering, and was a *New York Times* bestseller for nearly three and a half

years.

We'll briefly look at some of the key insights from this modern classic, and why its teachings continue to inspire millions of people. If you're of the Christian faith, this seminal book on positivity and mental strength may have some of the answers you're looking for. If you don't lean towards religion, this book may still offer some valuable insights on positivity and self-confidence.

## Controversy Around the Book

Despite receiving high acclaim from millions of readers and followers, as well as political leaders, there has been a lot of criticism around the text.

Researchers and health professionals are dubious about the claims, but nonetheless, the book has achieved worldwide recognition. One of the major issues is that much of *The Power of Positive Thinking* relies on unverified sources. So much of it relies on personal anecdotes and stories, and therefore it's difficult to determine the authenticity of the information.

Mental health experts worry about the "think positive" bandaid that negates some of the seriousness around depression and mental illness. While positivity is good, toxic positivity is in danger of promoting the idea that we can get over any hardships if we change our mindset.

Nonetheless, the followers of Peale and his message are adamant that the book has been life-changing for them.

# First Things First

Peale believes that there's no obstacle or challenge that can't be overcome with positive thinking, religious faith, and spirituality. Whether it's relationships, problems, poor health, or a lack of direction and purpose, the teachings in *The Power of Positive Thinking* aim to overcome everyday difficulties and hardships.

Peale lists a set of rules to deal with anxiety and self-doubt, and encourages us to have a faith-based ethos. We need to visualize success and think positively to block out any negativity. Obstacles can be overcome with an authentic mindset and not mimicking or copying others. Repeating daily affirmations around God, and working with a counselor, makes us stronger and more centered. Finally, developing respect for ourselves and around God's power, allows us to thrive and lead a more positive and purposeful life.

We need to have faith in ourselves and God. Self-confidence is one of the most important precursors of achieving our goals, so leaning towards any inferiority needs to be stamped out as quickly as possible. Having a relationship with God improves self-confidence and self-actualization.

The power of self-belief is absolutely crucial, and we all need to believe in ourselves and what we have to offer. All of us have a unique range of skills and values. Peale explains that it's good to be humble, but we should also be confident in our abilities. Success and happiness come from having confidence in what we believe we can achieve.

# The Serenity to Accept the Things I Cannot

# Change

Serenity comes from developing a sense of calm and peace.

When you're in a cluttered or messy environment, how do you feel?

Most of us battle when we're in messy spaces and tend to feel anxious and overwhelmed. Our minds are precisely the same. Clarity and calmness can be achieved through visualization and reading faith-based texts. At the center of this is God, who remains an integral part of power and energy. Meditation and sitting in silence are a way of achieving serenity and adopting a state of grace in our everyday life. We should avoid negative conversations and should try not to spiral into guilt or shame. We cannot change many things, so we need to learn to accept them and try to reframe the experience.

There's no point fretting or worrying, so when we find ourselves agitated, we should slow down and let God guide us. Peale argues that worrying is a habit that can be broken. First, you need to believe in yourself and the power of God; then you need to empty your mind and replace the worry with hope, courage, and God's energy.

## You Can Increase Your Energy

Many people argue that 90% of running is mental. We often convince our bodies that we're tired, which significantly impacts our physical performance. The suggestion is to be engaged and mindful when it comes to our bodies. But how do we do this?

The overarching takeaway is that when we're passionate and enthusiastic about what we're doing, we're more likely to have high energy and commit to a task. Peale suggests that we tune out the noise of contemporary life and get in sync with God's natural rhythms. He also encourages us to explore a range of interests and hobbies, and focus on things other than ourselves. Finally, we need to rid ourselves of fear and self-doubt so we can dive into life head first.

## **Great Expectations**

The power of happiness is in our hands. If we're upset, we should turn to God as he will heal any physical or mental issues we may have.

Happiness is a choice and a habit that we can get into. The more we cultivate optimism, the happier we'll be. Again we need to turn to God to forge a strong sense of mental fortitude, but we should also visualize what makes us happy. The suggestion is to write a list of things we're grateful for, and whenever we're feeling miserable, we should recite our happiness list.

Another way to embody happiness is to have a clear sense of expectations and hopes. Visualizing a future helps us to work towards this dream and to have a strong sense of purpose. When we expect the worse, we create doubts, and doubts decrease our ability to realize our dreams.

For anyone who has ever been in sales, you'll know that it's not always the most straightforward job. Sales relies on having a tremendous amount of self-confidence and optimism. Peale met a salesman who transformed himself from someone who was negative and self-defeated,

to a sales machine. How did he make this extraordinary leap? The salesman explains that driving around, he spent a lot of time with his thoughts. Once he changed his mindset from being negative, and started incorporating positive affirmations into his journey, his whole world changed, and his business grew from strength to strength.

To cultivate optimism and faith in the future, we should turn to the Bible for guidance and remember that there's enormous power in God.

## **Courage To Change The Things I Can**

Problems and obstacles are absolute certainties. All of us will experience pain and hardship of varying degrees of seriousness. Peale offers a range of "faith-based" techniques to help us pragmatically deal with these.

Offering up your problems through prayer and having faith that God will solve your problems is one way we can gain more control when faced with uncertainty. Clarity comes from prayer and having faith. Having a relationship with God is one of the best ways to get through life's challenges, as he will guide you through turbulent times.

Peale asserts that you can heal or cure health problems, illness, and heartache with faith and belief. He tells the story of a group of businessmen who were at a conference. One of these men struggled with crippling anxiety and needed medication to help him combat the negative feelings. One of the businessmen he was with, advised that he read from the Bible and gave him a few of his favorite comforting verses. The results were amazing, and the anxious businessman no longer needed any of his medication and was able to restore his easygoing attitude.

# Being Likeable and Living Through God

It's important to be liked and to develop strong relationships. Having solid relationships is a massive part of the human experience. The key to developing good relationships is coming across as authentic and natural.

The idea is to make people around you comfortable and at ease. People feed off our behaviors and emotions, so others will follow suit if you exude a cheerful and easygoing nature. Build people up, be generous with your time and compliments, and try to see the best in people.

Peale argues that a lot of unhappy and depressed people have the option to change. By living through God, we're able to change how we view the world and ourselves. Praying regularly and developing a strong sense of faith will lead to an abundant life.

## In Conclusion

This book aims to help regular people live better lives. It covers everything from relationships, well-being, likeability, health, and overall fulfillment.

At the heart of it are biblical teachings. The Bible has always been seen as a practical text that offers moral and ethical lessons. Peale explains that we should dig deeper and use it as a text to help us live more positively, gracefully, and with a greater sense of awareness and purpose. If we combine biblical teachings with prayer, the author assures us that we will change our lives in profound ways.

*The Power of Positive Thinking* is a system based on the Christian ethos, and Peale asserts that it has helped thousands of people strive towards living the best version of their lives. He says that it's a 'simple and scientific system of practical techniques of successful living.'

The key message of this book is that all of us have the power to rise above obstacles and hardships. We just need to believe in ourselves and have faith in the power of positive thinking.