

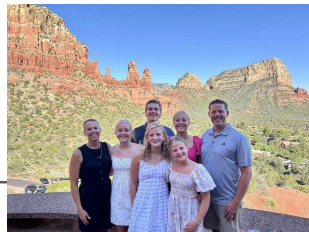


THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING ON PATIENT & EMPLOYEE HEALTH: *Presenting the Evidence & Research*

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About me...

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- Physical Therapist for 23 years, BS The Ohio State University 1999, DPT Arcadia University 2019
- Director of Clinical Excellence and Home Health Physical Therapist at Therapy Advantage, Inc.
- Facilitator of Parkinson's support group for 12 years
- Live on a farm with my husband and 5 children in western Ohio in Shelby County

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Objectives:

- ▷ Define the benefits of positive thinking
- ▷ Explore the science & research about positive attitudes and physical health status.
- ▷ Identify “hot topics” in employee wellness & retention
- ▷ Making it happen: Identify ways to implement daily positive practice into your clinical & work settings.

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1. OUR HEALTH

Let's discuss the science behind positive thinking

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The health benefits of positive thinking

Researchers continue to explore the effects of positive thinking and optimism on health. Health benefits that positive thinking provide include:

- Increased life span
- Lower rates of depression
- Lower levels of distress
- Greater resistance to the common cold
- Better psychological and physical well-being
- Better cardiovascular health and reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease
- Better coping skills during hardships and times of stress

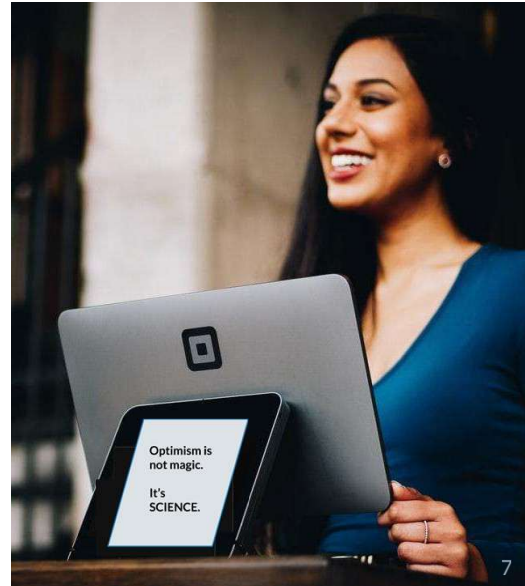
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What we know...

The mechanism for the connection between health and positivity remains not fully understood, but researchers suspect that people who are more positive may be better protected against the inflammatory damage of stress. Another theory is that hope and positivity help people make better health and life decisions and focus more on long-term goals. Studies also find that negative emotions can weaken immune response.

What *is* clear, however, is that there is definitely a strong link between “positivity” and health.



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Prove it to me.

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Research on reducing mortality

Harvard T.H. School of Public Health¹

- ▷ This study found that women who were optimistic had a significantly reduced risk of dying from several major causes of death — including cancer, heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease, and infection — over an 8-year period, compared with women who were less optimistic.
- ▷ The study analyzed data from 70,000 women enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study, a long-running study tracking women's health via surveys every two years. Not only did they examine participants' levels of optimism but also considered other factors that might play a role and affect mortality risk, such as race, high blood pressure, diet, and physical activity, etc - and how optimism factors into this.
- ▷ The survey results were based answers to the chosen tool, "Life Orientation Test - Revised". The measure has shown to have good validity and reliability. Using a 5-point Likert scale, respondents were asked the degree to which they agreed with 6 different statements. Example of one of these statements, "In uncertain times, I usually expect the best."
- ▷ Based on these responses, the women were divided into 3 categories; the top quarter (25%) where the women who identified themselves as the most optimistic and the bottom quarter, the least optimistic.

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Research on reducing mortality

Harvard T.H. School of Public Health¹

- ▷ The most optimistic women (top quarter) had a nearly 30% lower risk of dying from any of the diseases analyzed in the study compared with the least optimistic (bottom quarter), the study found. The most optimistic women had a 16% lower risk of dying from cancer; 38% lower risk of dying from heart disease; 39% lower risk of dying from stroke; 38% lower risk of dying from respiratory disease; and 52% lower risk of dying from infection.
- ▷ While other studies have linked optimism with reduced risk of early death from cardiovascular problems², this was one of the first well-established to find a link between optimism and reduced risk from other major causes.
- ▷ This study was funded by the National Institute of Health.

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Research on reducing mortality

The Jackson heart study... the latest in research⁶

- ▷ Article published in January 2022 issue of *Preventive Medicine*.
- ▷ Optimism has been associated with reduced mortality risk among Caucasians, but prior to this study, evidence for this relationship was previously limited among African-Americans, who overall life expectancy is shorter.
- ▷ The study's baseline data was obtained from 5306 African-American adults over a 4-year period from 2000-2004.
- ▷ Optimism was associated with a 15% lower mortality rates among African-Americans in the Jackson Heart Study over 18 years of follow up.
- ▷ Positive factors, such as optimism, may provide important health assets that can complement ongoing public health efforts to reduce health disparities, which have traditionally focused primarily on controlling/managing disease risk factors.
- ▷ According to a recent systematic review in 2019 by Rozanki et al⁷, 9 studies have consistently reported strong associations of higher optimism with reduced mortality rates. Again, optimism may be a seriously relevant and doable target for preventive interventions.

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Research on improving immunity

A study of optimism and immunity with law students⁵

- ▷ First year law students who answered "less optimistic" to survey questions correlated with weaker immune response to viral loads. Participants were given skin insults and CMI (Cell Mediated Immunity) response was studied.
- ▷ Study was conducted over 4-year time period.
- ▷ It is well-known that optimistic expectancies have a number of improved psychosocial effects. The results of this study add evidence that optimistic expectancies also affect immunity and, potentially, health. Importantly, this is the first evidence that expectancy change correlates with immunological change on a cellular level.

A study on immune response in women with breast cancer⁸

- ▷ Results suggest that interventions aimed at reducing stress and enhancing optimism in women with breast cancer might promote optimal immune response.
- ▷ Smaller study but this also showed changes on a cellular level from whole blood samples from post-operative breast cancer patients.

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WORKFORCE HEALTH

Hot topics in employee wellness & retention

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Hot Topics

Employee Retention

Employee Health -
Physical & Mental

Employee Satisfaction/Happiness

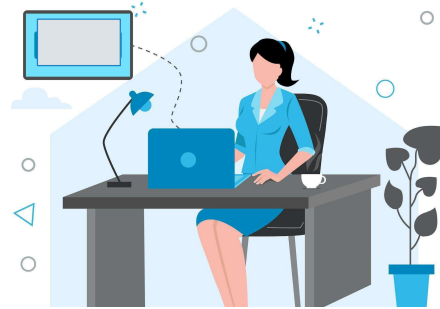
Task Performance

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Employee Retention

- We are in a time period in our labor market now being referred to as "The Great Resignation"
- By November 2021, our nation's "quit rate" reached a 20-year high
- According to a nationwide survey conducted in February 2022⁹, **57%** of those who quit a job in 2021, state that feeling disrespected/unappreciated at work as reasons for quitting
- Disrespect can come in various forms: not being informed/involved about changes, lack of employee engagement, lack of appreciation or recognition for job well done and also lack of reprimand for poor performance → result is UNHAPPINESS.



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Employee Satisfaction/Happiness

Why is happiness at work so important?

- Job satisfaction is a key predictor of turnover rates
- Research proves that happiness raises nearly every business and educational outcome (sales, productivity, task accuracy, etc) as well as the myriad of health improvements already discussed
- Shawn Achor - positive psychology expert, author of *The Happiness Advantage*, motivational speaker
- Explores the theory of how a positive brain fuels success in work and life - a great read or listen



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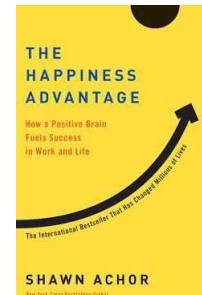
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Employee Satisfaction/Happiness

"The single greatest advantage in the modern economy is a happy and engaged workforce."

- Shawn Achor

- Write down three new things you are grateful for each day;
- Write for 2 minutes a day describing one positive experience you had over the past 24 hours;
- Exercise for 10 minutes a day;
- Meditate for 2 minutes, focusing on your breath going in and out;
- Write one, quick email first thing in the morning thanking or praising a member on your team.



Gratitude, focusing on positive experiences, exercise, meditating, and random acts of kindness are all ways to change the pattern through which your brain views work.

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Task Performance

- Labor studies show that companies with highly engaged employees can see **21%** higher profitability⁹
- The Harvard Business Review investigated the ROI and impact of employee happiness and found that happy employees are **31%** more productive than their unhappy counterparts. Not only that, but accuracy on tasks is improved by **19%** meaning that happy employees make fewer mistakes¹⁰
- Also, simply **WRITE IT DOWN**.



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Employee Health - Physical & Mental

- Mental health is a big focus in today's post-pandemic world
- Healthcare providers are affected by "Compassion Fatigue"
- Need to build and maintain positive employee/leader relationships
- Need to facilitate a positive work culture. Audit the people around you.
- *"You are the average of the 5 people you spend the most time with."*



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3. SOLUTIONS

Let's discuss how you can boost your bright side

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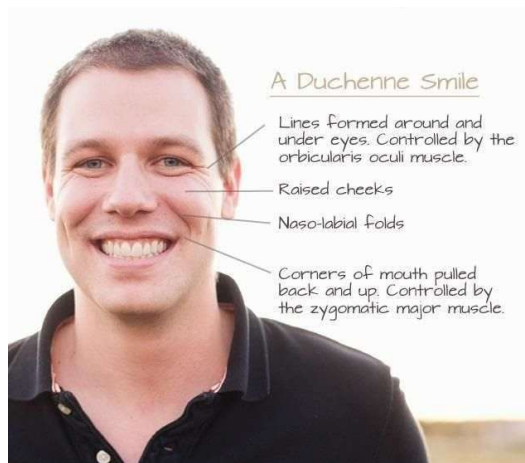
Simply smile more.

- ▷ A University of Kansas study⁴ found that smiling (even fake smiling) reduces heart rate and blood pressure during stressful situations.
- ▷ In the study reported here, we investigated whether covertly manipulating positive facial expressions would influence cardiovascular and affective responses to stress. Participants naive to the purpose of the study completed two different stressful tasks while holding chopsticks in their mouths in a manner that produced a Duchenne smile, a standard smile, or a neutral expression. Awareness was manipulated by explicitly asking half of all participants in the smiling groups to smile (and giving the other half no instructions related to smiling).
- ▷ Findings revealed that all smiling participants, regardless of whether they were aware of smiling, had lower heart rates during stress recovery than the neutral group did, with a slight advantage for those with Duchenne smiles. Participants in the smiling groups who were not explicitly asked to smile reported less of a decrease in positive affect during a stressful task than did the neutral group. The smiling groups also performed better during the task.
- ▷ ***These findings show that there are both physiological and psychological benefits from maintaining positive facial expressions during stress.***



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Standard smile

Duchenne smile

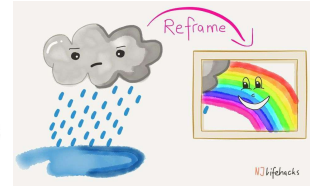


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Practice reframing.

Cognitive reframing is a technique used to shift your mindset so you're able to look at a situation, person or relationship from a slightly different perspective.



Examples:

- ▷ Instead of stressing about being in a traffic jam, appreciate the fact that you can afford a car and you get to spend a few extra minutes listening to music or an audio book, accepting the fact that there is nothing you can do about the traffic.
- ▷ Instead of worrying about the loss of a business deal that was lost, think about what you learned from that relationship, the gratitude you feel for the connections you did make and the future opportunities to meet new people
- ▷ **Ask yourself, "Is there another way to look at the situation?"**

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Your Thoughts Matter!

INSTEAD OF:

TRY:



I'M A MESS!	→	I'M HUMAN.
I CAN'T DO THIS!	→	I CAN DO HARD THINGS.
I'M A FAILURE!	→	I'M LEARNING.
WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?	→	WHAT IS THIS TEACHING ME?

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Build resiliency.

Resiliency is the ability to adapt to a stressful and/or negative situation.



- ▷ Maintain good relationships with family and friends.
- ▷ Accept that change is a part of life.
- ▷ Take action on problems rather than hoping they just disappear or waiting for them to resolve themselves.

We cannot always prevent adversity and stress from happening in our lives. But by having a plan for how we can increase our resilience, we can minimize the negative effects.

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Use gratitude.

Gratitude is a **SUPER POWER!!**



- ▷ Gratitude is something YOU have control over.
- ▷ Consider incorporating gratitude programs for your business model
- ▷ Reduce **"deficit thinking"**... shift from "I have to" to "I get to" mentality
- ▷ In times of stress or uncertainty, insert a gratitude activity... almost 100% effectivity!!!

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Move more.

Incorporate regular exercise or physical activity into your day.
Incorporate the help of a physical therapist for development/progression of an individualized plan.



- > Many, many studies have demonstrated the positive association of exercise and our physical and mental health.
- > Exercise is something YOU have control over.
- > Exercise produces physiologic changes in our bodies at the cellular level.
 - Promotes repair of damaged cells
 - In addition, the latest research confirms the "neuroprotective" benefits of exercise
- > Physical therapy is covered as a part of most insurance plans. You should consider it as one of your "wellness appointments" each year.

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Sharing a bit of our own positivity with you!

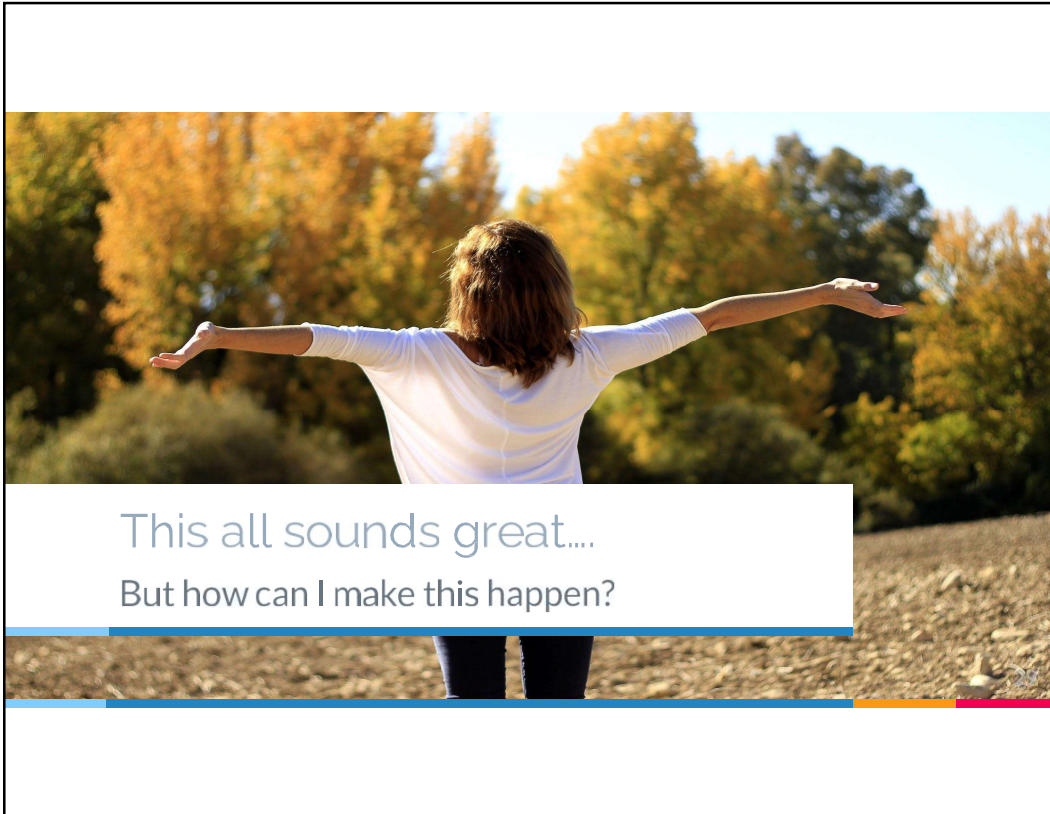
Meet Dwight!!!

<https://vimeo.com/497983149/005b425d76>



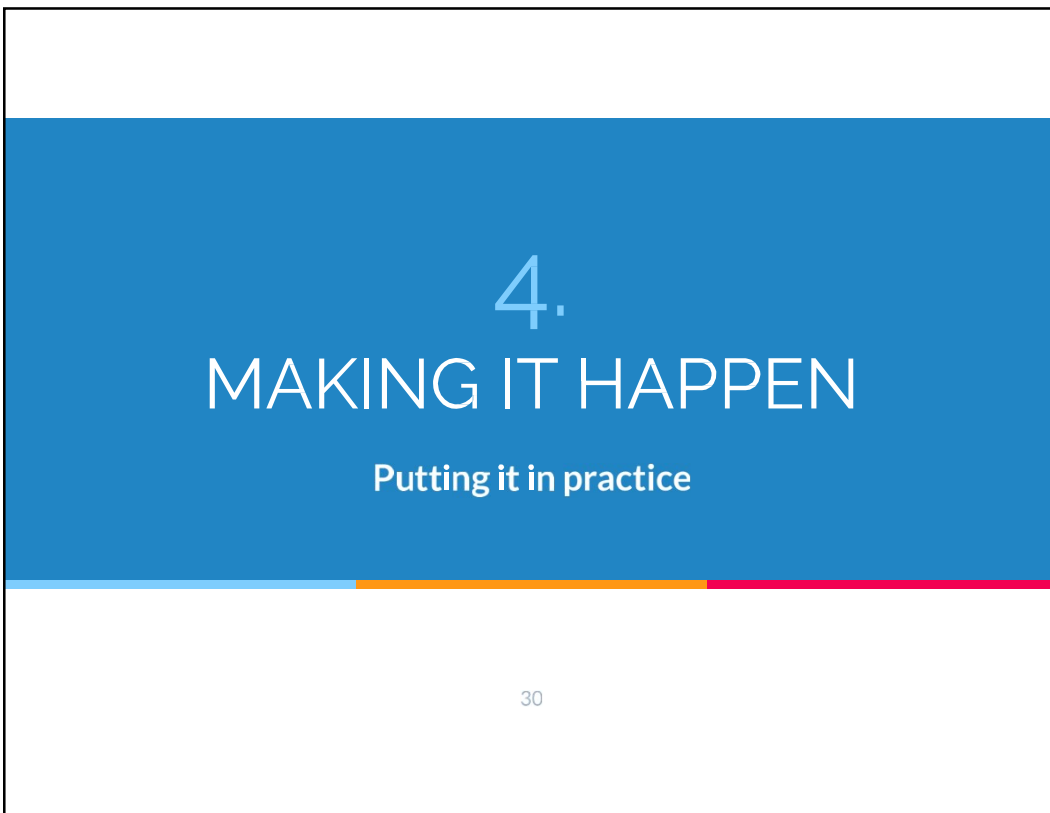
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This all sounds great....
But how can I make this happen?

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Simple Tips for daily positive practice

Choose Your 5

1. Begin the day with a positive affirmation.
2. Start a gratitude journal.
3. Engage in regular exercise.
4. Do something nice for someone else.
5. Smile often.
6. Enjoy small pleasures.
7. Take responsibility.
8. Be proactive.
9. Have a purpose.
10. Stop expecting life to be easy.
11. Visualize what you want to happen.
12. Limit your complaints.
13. Use only positive words.
14. Find the humor in situations.
15. Be curious.
16. Surround yourself with positive people.



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Ask for help if you need it.

- ★ Enlist the help of a family member, friend or co-worker to help you work toward your positivity goals.
- ★ Discuss with your physician regarding referrals to needed disciplines to help achieve your health and well-being goals



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Thank you!

questions?

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