

# The positive viewpoint

*“Reflect upon your present blessings – of which every man has many – not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.” -- Charles Dickens*

I was fortunate to find the above quotation in today's email, because it helps me drill home what I want to write about during this holiday season.

So here it is: No matter what we've been through, or where we might be going, each of us should have a positive viewpoint about our life.

We should concentrate more on what we've been given, the lessons we've learned, the people we love (and have loved), the blessings we have, and the opportunities that come our way, each and every day.

We should think less about the troubles that have long gone, the problems that may have once happened, the insults and slights that may have once come our way.

We should look forward, not backward. We should concentrate on giving, not getting. We should spend our days looking for the next opportunity, not concentrating on opportunities we may have missed.

In short, we should orient our lives toward the positive. We should look at our lives from a positive viewpoint.

And now's a good time to start.

As I write this piece, we're nearing the end of an old year, the beginning of a new one – but no matter when you read these words, it's always a good time to begin. That's because this approach to life is so important, that it's essential we start our journey now – not tomorrow.

We must not let a negative viewpoint enter our lives. We should continually orient our path toward a positive destination. After all, if you were setting off on a trip, once you set your destination, you'd head for it – you wouldn't just wander all over the countryside.

A positive attitude is essential – and that includes looking at our lives through a positive point of view.

How can we start? Here are six basic steps that can help get you on the right track:

1. Change your language where it refers to yourself and others.

You're not "pigheaded," you're "determined." You're "detail oriented," not "picky."

For every personality characteristic you have, there is a negative way to express it, and a positive one. Choose the positive characteristic. Look for other positive characteristics in yourself and others.

2. Change your reading material.

Read more, in and out of your discipline. Some of the greatest insights I have ever gained were taken from other disciplines, not my own.

3. Upend your daily schedule.

Start earlier or work later. Take lunch or skip it. Sit with different people, eat at a different restaurant. Walk during lunch, or stay inside and read a good book. Whatever you do ordinarily, change it in some way.

4. Count your blessings.

This is powerful stuff. Detail your blessings. Don't recognize them? Start with your friends, your family, your mentors. List them, and go from there.

5. Look for the opportunity in every difficulty, not the difficulty in every opportunity.

Assume things will work. Assume you can do anything you put your mind to. Once you've made that assumption, look for the opportunity, and develop a method to make that opportunity work.

6. Say "thanks" -- a lot.

Nothing helps you develop a positive attitude as much as showing gratitude. We can even make a little ditty to illustrate that point:

"Positive gratitude = positive attitude."

Developing a positive viewpoint on life is essential. Start today, and energize your life.

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