

# What Separates Chronically Positive People from Everyone Else

By Steve Rizzo

Anyone can tell you that one key to living a happy, successful life is having a positive attitude, especially during adverse times. I know that sometimes there just isn't justification for all the unfortunate things that happen to us—but I also know that we all have what it takes to deal with misfortune. That is what acquiring a positive attitude is all about. It's about fortifying yourself for a fight with a very real enemy: your own negativity.

I know this is much easier said than done, and I know that sometimes it seems impossible to stand tall and be positive when it feels like your world is falling apart around you. Yet this attitude is something that is attainable—and it's worth keeping sharp. Who knows, your life may depend on it someday.

The word "positive" seems to frustrate a lot of people. I hear people say, "How do you expect me to be positive when nothing in my life is working?" or "It's easy for you to be positive and feel blessed—you didn't lose someone you love, you didn't lose your job."

Maybe we should consider a more realistic interpretation of what it means to be positive. Being positive isn't always a Disney movie. It isn't always about feeling good, because oddly, it's healthy to feel bad sometimes—that means you're not a robot. Are you with me? Being positive doesn't mean that we should always smile and enjoy every moment of our lives. Give me a break! It's knowing that sometimes it's OK to cry, mourn and feel sad, get angry and lose your temper. And being positive doesn't mean we never make mistakes. It's that we learn from making these mistakes and move forward with an optimism that we are better people for having made them—richer, deeper and more resilient than before.

People who are generally positive have problems just like everyone else. What separates the chronically positive from everyone else is that they know that their problems are simply part of the process of life. After, and sometimes during, a crisis, positive people respond to a habitual mechanism that enables them to pay attention to parts of their lives that don't make them want to spontaneously burst into tears in the middle of the produce aisle. They find a way to shift their perspective and hold on to the

things that bring them joy. Pain is unavoidable, but to a person with a positive attitude, that's all it is: pain. It's simple, temporary and often uncompounded by doubt and comparisons to past experience.

Positive people instinctively know that adversity is necessary in order for them to grow. We are here on Earth to experience, learn, grow and become the person we are meant to become. It can't be stressed enough that the filter through which you view experience ultimately determines who you become. How we choose to experience what happens to us, be it good or bad, will determine what we learn and how we grow. If we can comprehend this, it will help free us from feeling victimized when times are tough, and just maybe help you to compare a challenging situation with a pop quiz in Life 101, rather than, say, the apocalypse.