OPINION

A positive mindset can lift your day and elevate your career. Thirteen ways to make it happen

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One person's upbeat outlook at work can light up the entire office, influencing not just their own productivity but also uplifting the team's morale. Just as often, disapproval and pessimism in a single person can spread like wildfire, dampening the collective energy of the entire group. But a positive attitude at work does more than just make the days more enjoyable; it catalyzes heightened performance, sparks creativity and opens doors to career opportunities.

On the personal front, positivity is closely associated with improved well-being, both lessening stress and furthering job satisfaction. At the team level, a positive vibe from even one member can foster a more compassionate and collaborative environment, making targets seem attainable and difficulties manageable. A positive mindset can not only lift your day from average to excellent, but can also elevate your entire career trajectory.

Start with self-awareness

Staying positive always starts with self-awareness – catching those moments when you're veering into negative territory, be it a skeptical outlook on a project or a cynical reaction to feedback. Eliminating negative thoughts isn't realistic, but recognizing and then consciously pivoting toward a more constructive frame of mind is entirely possible.

Then take deliberate action

Once you've spotted the signs, take purposeful steps to combat the negativity. Here are 13 specific things you can do to foster a more positive state of mind.

1. **Begin each day with a few minutes of reflection:** What are your intentions for the day? This exercise will anchor you in a positive mindset. If you are so inclined, there are technological tools that can help.
2. **Practice gratitude:** One easy way is to write down one professional circumstance you're grateful for each morning. It can be something as simple as appreciating a supportive colleague or being thankful for a learning opportunity.
3. **Engage in physical activity:** Exercise releases endorphins, the body's natural mood uplifters. Take a walk, attend a yoga session or go for a swim. Nature has been shown to improve mood and reduce stress, so if you can combine your activity with the outdoors, even better.
4. **Deliberately limit your exposure to negativity:** Reduce the time you spend with individuals or on activities that drain your energy or stir up negative feelings. Try limiting your social media surfing.
5. **Set realistic goals by breaking down your tasks into achievable "chunks":** The satisfaction of ticking off items on your to-do list can create momentum and be a powerful mood booster.
6. **Give yourself positive reinforcement by acknowledging your efforts and successes, no matter how small:** Completed a challenging task? Take a moment to celebrate.
7. **Build positive relationships:** When you cultivate a network of supportive colleagues, they can be a terrific source of positive energy. Even a brief conversation can significantly improve your mood.
8. **Do things you enjoy:** Dedicate time to hobbies or interests that bring you pleasure and fulfillment, whether it is reading, gardening, painting or something else.
9. **Listen to uplifting music:** Music is known to profoundly affect mood. Create a playlist of songs that inspire positivity and listen to it when you need a mood boost.
10. **Perform acts of kindness:** When you do something nice for someone else, it

creates a positive feedback loop, and you'll enhance your overall sense of well-being.

11. **Stop seeking perfection:** Once you accept that making mistakes is part of being human, you'll see that perfection is unattainable. Far better to embrace a "good enough" approach to most things, and get rid of self-imposed pressure.
12. **Reframe negative thoughts:** Practice cognitive restructuring by challenging and reframing negative thoughts into more balanced, positive perspectives. Look for the silver lining. What is good about or what good can come out of the current disappointment? Perhaps you're catching a problem before it becomes even worse. When you view setbacks as learning opportunities, and not as defeats, your overall outlook of the situation will shift.
13. **Prioritize your well-being:** Learn to recognize the signs of when you might be falling into a funk, and step away to give yourself both mental and physical space. It could mean merely shifting focus to another task, all the way to taking some time away from the workplace.

Don't be afraid to use helpful tools

You don't have to go this alone. While technology can sometimes be the source of stress, it can also benefit you. Apps can facilitate meditation and intention setting to anchor you in a positive mindset. Fitness and activity trackers can track progress and offer motivation. Digital organizers can help to "chunk" tasks, set realistic goals and celebrate achievements. There are apps to help you discover new interests and hobbies; and to remind you to prioritize well-being. Just start searching online.

Embracing positivity in the workplace is more than just smiling through challenges; it is about cultivating a mindset that sees opportunities in obstacles. Find a way to integrate some of these strategies into your work life; you'll not only uplift your workday but also set the stage for future career success.

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