

## TIPS FOR POSITIVE THINKING

How you think has a profound effect on your physical and emotional health. People who constantly see themselves and life in a negative light, work themselves into a state of low self-esteem and depression. They also burden their bodies with unrelenting stress.

The way we think is not inherited. It is a learned response and may be situational. It is a habit we develop over years of absorbing the attitudes of those around us... co-workers, clients, family and friends.

### **COMMON DISTORTIONS**

**EXAGGERATING:** “I just can’t get myself to do any work around the house ... my whole marriage is falling apart.” You over-estimate the size of your problems at the same time you underestimate your ability to deal with them. You jump to conclusions without any evidence and then believe those conclusions are correct.

**IGNORING THE POSITIVE:** “Sure the meeting went all right, but I forgot to discuss an important point.” You tend to be impressed by and remember any negative events.

**PERSONALIZING:** “Everybody at the party kept looking at me because I’m gaining weight.” You tend to think that everything revolves around you ... a major distortion of the facts.

**EITHER/OR THINKING:** “Either I get this promotion, or I’m a complete failure!”

**OVER-GENERALIZING:** “Nobody likes me ... They are all out to get me ... Nothing ever turns out right.”

**JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS:** There are 2 points to this distortion:

1. Fortune telling: “The boss hasn’t given me my evaluation yet. It must really be bad!”
2. Mind reading: “She’s ignoring me. I must have done something wrong!”

### **HOW TO SHED NEGATIVE FEELINGS**

1. Negative thoughts almost always contain gross distortions. Recognizing distorted thought processes is the first step. Start listening to the way you talk to yourself.
2. In order to reshape these negative self-defeating thought patterns, ask yourself how realistic are they? Ask yourself if you are exaggerating or over-generalizing. Think if a more factual, balanced outcome. What is more likely the truth?
3. Take action. Do something you enjoy each day and think of how good it felt or how well you did it. Create opportunities to feel good about yourself.

The EFAP is available to help  
and can be reached by calling  
1-800-461-5558