

# Oughton Health

Oughton Primary School Health & Well-Being Newsletter

Edition 4 Autumn 2019



Welcome to the fourth edition of our newsletter, Oughton Health, our very own newsletter with a focus on promoting good health, both physical and mental, as well as general good well-being. In this edition, we focus on the importance of having a positive attitude and aim to explore its importance on our health.

Each of us has a set of messages that play over and over in our minds. This internal dialogue, or personal commentary, influences our words, actions, habits, relationships and ultimately, in the words of Lao Tzu, the destiny of our lives (see box to right). For many of us, our self-talk is balanced; we are able to congratulate ourselves when things go well or, if they don't, we consider what went wrong and tell ourselves we will get it sorted for the next time.

However, too often the pattern of self-talk we develop is negative. This internal seed of negativity causes a ripple that extends to all corners of our daily lives. We will walk around with a dark cloud hovering close-by, and view all glasses as half-empty. Our conversations always revert to all that is wrong with the world, and we are constantly expecting the worst.

If left unchecked, this negative approach to life can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Concepts such as the law of attraction, "you reap what you sow," and "birds of a feather flock together", speak to the magnetic power of our thoughts. Many studies confirm the correlation between positive thinking and success and more ominously, the opposite for negative thinking.

## Keep the right people around you

Keeping positive can sometimes be tiring or, when things become overwhelming, seeing the positive in life can be truly challenging. Equally, it can sometimes be hard to stay positive when those around you are adopting the 'glass half empty' mantra. It was once said that you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with (Jim Rohn). There is an inherent truth to that, as we, as social creatures, pick up on the habits, behaviours, and attitudes of those around us. Basically, if we want the strength and positivity to get through anything, we must keep our circle of friends and associates as healthy as we can. Wherever possible, it is important to consider which relationships are working for us and which are causing us to change our character. In these situations, it is advisable to remove these toxic relationships from our life, regardless of how tough it may be; this could be temporarily or permanently. In situations such as work where we may not have control, we must learn how to practice positivity so it spreads to those around you.

So how else can we begin to brighten our view of the world, and infuse more positivity into our thought patterns? Although quite simple, the six steps overleaf can make a profound impact on our approach to life, and ultimately create a more positive outcome.

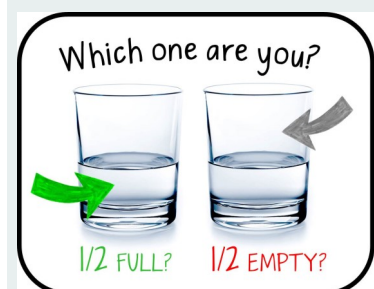
## IN THIS ISSUE:

- The importance of a positive frame of mind on our mental health

## Watch out for our next issue:

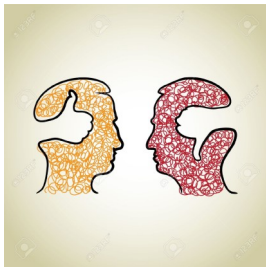
- The importance of talk

*"Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habit. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny."*  
— Lao Tzu



*"We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorns have roses."*  
— Alphonse Karr

**“What is the difference between an obstacle and an opportunity? Our attitude toward it. Every opportunity has a difficulty, and every difficulty has an opportunity.” – J. Sidlow Baxter**



**When you are joyful, when you say yes to life and have fun and project positivity all around you, you become a sun in the centre of every constellation, and people want to be near you.” – Shannon L. Alder**



**“Believing in negative thoughts is the single greatest obstruction to success.” – Charles F. Glassman**

ATTITUDE IS CONTAGIOUS...



IS YOURS WORTH CATCHING?

## **Six Steps (to becoming a ‘glass half full’ thinker)**

### **1) Practice Gratitude.**

One of the quickest ways to shift our focus away from negativity, judgment, and disappointment is to list the things in our life for which we are *grateful*. Be grateful to be gainfully employed, to sleep in a bed each night, for the sun that comes up each morning, for the barista who greets you with a smile, for the people that love and care for you, and for a body that lets you experience life each day. Practicing gratefulness can cause almost an immediate shift in our perspective. Keeping a daily gratitude journal, even digitally, can help remind us to keep life’s blessings at the forefront of our mind. Another strategy is to have a *gratitude partner*-someone who can support us in our journey to positive thinking. Each day, text, email or tell each other three things for which you are grateful. Think of this person as your accountability partner for your path to healthy thinking.

### **2) Two Steps Forward.**

Initially, it might be hard to stop the negative flow of thoughts. This shift takes time. Be patient with yourself, and first just try to observe your thought patterns. See if you can catch yourself judging others, focusing on failures, complaining about work, or criticizing yourself or your body. When you observe these thoughts, take a moment to counter each negative thought with two positive observations or gratitudes. Think of it as taking two steps forward after your one step back.

### **3) Positive Posture.**

The mind and the body have an intrinsic connection - each has a profound impact on the other. If you are struggling to move your mind into a more positive perspective, try moving your body there first. Try standing up straight, shoulders back, chin held high, stretching your arms out as wide as they can go. Feel powerful. Feel positive. Carrying yourself with “positive posture” will encourage your mind to feel more positive as well.

### **4) Smile.**

Another way for your body to “trick” your mind into being more positive is through smiling. The simple act of smiling, even if you don’t necessarily have anything to smile about, can instantly change the way you feel internally. Whether you are walking down the street, sitting at your desk or driving in your car, *smile*. You will be amazed how your mind reacts. Even better, try smiling at a neighbor, colleague or stranger you pass in the hallway or on the street. Did they smile back?

### **5) Ditch the Crabs.**

If you put a crab in a bucket, it will easily climb out. Put a second crab in the bucket and you’ll find neither of them will escape. Once one starts to escape, the other will pull it back down into the bucket. In other words, surround yourself with *positive people*. It’s hard to maintain a positive perspective if you are constantly pulled down by the negativity of friends, family, or co-workers. If you get trapped in a negative conversation, gracefully try to change the subject to something more positive. However, if you are surrounded by a bucketful of negative crabs, it may be time to reevaluate your circle of friends in an effort to be surrounded by uplifting individuals.

### **6) Do Something Kind.**

Putting time into your daily routine to help someone else can provide amazing perspective and fill you with positivity. Strive to do one nice thing for someone else each day. Call a family member or friend in need of a kind word, compliment a stranger, go out of your way to help a co-worker complete a task or even make an extra cupcake when you are baking and drop it into a neighbour.

Life is not always easy, and sometimes it feels like everyday is an up hill struggle. However, it is our own perspective that ultimately determines how we get through - if you can change your perspective to a ‘glass half full’ then you are heading in the right direction!

*Six Steps taken from Gregory L. Jantz, PhD, founder of The Centre, A Place of HOPE in the U.S. and best selling author of 28 books related to mental wellness and holistic recovery treatment.*