



Career Management Column:

“Stay Positive and Be Happy, in Career and Life”

By: Rita Balian Allen, Rita B. Allen Associates, March 2015

We have all heard the phrase, "look at the cup as half full rather than half empty". There is much truth in that concept and it illustrates an important choice we make in determining our happiness, and ultimately our success in career and life. Whether it is about getting through a difficult winter, traveling through the trials and tribulations of life, or pursuing our career peaks and valleys, it is essential to be optimistic and look at the positive in every situation. Stay positive and be happy - these are such true, powerful words I have grown to live by! It is as simple as that, even though not always simple to practice. We are the only ones who own our happiness and make that choice every day. Just think of all the possibilities and advantages if we were to always have an optimistic outlook!

"Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow."

~ Helen Keller

"Positive anything is better than negative anything."

~ Elbert Hubbard

Yes, it is much easier said than done. If we choose not to stay positive throughout every step of our journey in life and career, however, then what is the alternative? We all know the alternative is not a sustainable place to stay. Life is complex, unpredictable and full of change on a daily basis which plays a heavy role in our ability to look at things from either a positive or negative lens. This makes an even more compelling case for why it is essential to stay positive and optimistic in all situations, no matter how challenging or difficult. Think of the disadvantages of not doing so and the path the alternative leads us towards.

There are many theories and studies around optimism and the impact it can have on our ability to succeed and lead fulfilled lives. Developing our social intelligence and emotional intelligence can be an effective place to start. In fact, optimism is one of the elements used to assess our emotional intelligence quotient in the highly regarded EQ-i 2.0® assessment tool. Emotional intelligence is our ability to identify and manage our own emotions as well as recognize that of others and groups. It represents the communication path between the rational and emotive sides of our brain...and how well we are able to manage that communication path. It suggests

there is a direct link and connection between our level of optimism to our happiness and even goes as far as to say optimism is an important element of emotional intelligence that plays into all of the other elements required to develop our emotional intelligence, also known as EQ. In addition, many studies have indicated that EQ can be a predictor of personal and professional success.

Managing a successful career also requires a high level of positivity and the ability to stay optimistic. We continue to face and experience change in the workplace which is the only constant we can expect today. In order to embrace change and manage demands effectively, we must be able to maintain a positive attitude and outlook even during adversity. By doing so, we are able to uncover different approaches, tap into unfound potential in ourselves and others, as well as manage stress. People who are positive and optimistic not only leave strong and lasting impressions on others, but exhibit behaviors that are contagious. They will likely get the promotions and be equipped to advance in their careers consistently growing and developing. Not only are they content and fulfilled, they are progressing forward and setting strong examples for others!

Managing our mind, body and spirit sets the foundation for staying positive and being happy. The truth is, we all have the ability to do this, some perhaps more easily than others, but it starts with the desire to shift our mindset to then build upon. Let me share some suggestions to help do so.

Tips and Strategies for Staying Positive and Being Happy:

- ✓ Make a list of the positives in all scenarios while identifying best and worst case
- ✓ Laugh and smile often
- ✓ Connect with other positive people
- ✓ Practice good time management skills
- ✓ Acknowledge your blessings and be thankful
- ✓ Express gratitude and appreciation every day
- ✓ Seek to understand first and then to be understood
- ✓ Know yourself very well as well as your energizers, triggers and stressors
- ✓ Be goal-oriented, have a plan and then go with the flow
- ✓ Accept yourself (the good, the bad and the ugly) and believe in yourself
- ✓ Take care of yourself - emotionally, physically and mentally
- ✓ Focus on your strengths and leverage them in everything you do
- ✓ Find and develop your spiritual self
- ✓ Have a good sense of humor
- ✓ Expect some ups and downs every single day
- ✓ Embrace mistakes as learning experiences and don't be afraid to make some
- ✓ Realize there is no such thing as perfection
- ✓ Allow yourself to take some risks
- ✓ Control your self-talk

- ✓ Let go of the past and live in the present
- ✓ Make wise choices for yourself
- ✓ Be present in everything you do

You may be familiar with these strategies and even practice them regularly. Some may be easier than others and all can be valuable as part of an overall strategy we create for ourselves and continue to work towards achieving with ease. My favorite saying is, we need to get comfortable being uncomfortable and pushing ourselves in new ways. Although these practices can be difficult, they yield incredible rewards and results including greater energy, hopefulness, empowerment, creativity, a sense of calm, inspiration, confidence, health and wellness as well as increased productivity. ***Stay positive and be happy!***

Here are a few resources that can be helpful in understanding the theory of positivity:

- *Power of Positive Thinking*, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale
- *Positive Intelligence*, Shirzad Chamine
- *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, Dale Carnegie
- *Happiness: A Guide to Developing Life's Most Important Skill*, Matthieu Ricard (Foreword by Daniel Goleman)

Ask Rita: Do you have a career question and/or a career story to share? Email your questions or stories to rita@ritaballenassociates.com

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