

Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

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Optimism, the Secret to a Longer, Happier Life?

The other day, I received a fantastic little newsletter, "Exceeding Expectations", from my good friends, Gary Nathan and Amanda Mavis, at Woodland Developments and Realty. What a treasure!! With their gracious permission, I am reprinting an outstanding article from the newsletter, "Could Optimism be the Secret of Living a Longer, Happier Life?"

Recent scientific research now confirms the secret ingredient to a longer life -- an optimistic attitude. And there's even better news. . . anyone can learn to be more optimistic.

A Dutch study found that optimistic people live longer; in fact, almost 30% longer than pessimists. Scientists found an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, heart attack, stroke and weakening of the immune system associated with pessimism.

Researchers at the Mayo Clinic, reporting on a 30-year-study, found that optimistic people live about 19% longer than pessimists do. These findings come from studying 839 people living in Minnesota. The researchers found people classified as "optimists" had significantly better survival rates. Optimists were less likely to develop depression, sought medical help when needed, and took better care of themselves.

So how can you become more optimistic? Here are six tips for becoming a more optimistic person:

- 1. Set Specific Goals.** A study of happy people found they set goals and consistently take action.
- 2. Project a Cheerful Voice.** Research has shown people feel the emotion they are acting. Use a positive voice.
- 3. Use Positive Language.** Use upbeat words: *opportunity, challenge, recharging, success, can do, solution.*
- 4. Practice Good Posture.** Optimists have good posture, stand tall, walk briskly, and take big steps.
- 5. Focus on Solutions.** When a difficult situation comes up, focus on the solution and put it into action.
- 6. Be a Role Model.** When you act as a role model for your co-workers, employees, family and friends, you'll become more optimistic.

Just by applying these six steps to your life, you can change your thinking, reduce your risk of physical illness, and live a longer, more fulfilling life.