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Do you find yourself getting drawn into the constant news of the recession and economy? Unemployment is high, foreclosures are up, consumer confidence is low, and on and on. Getting caught in the negativity loop is easy these days. The most powerful way to overcome what I’ve now termed as the “recession blues” is to banish negative thinking from your life.

Your attitude plays an integral part in how you perceive and react to what happens to you and around you. How do you define attitude? One of the simplest definitions is that attitudes are habits of thought. A habit is defined as a recurrent, often unconscious pattern of behavior that is acquired through frequent repetition. How you think – repetitively – creates your attitudes.

“... banish negative thinking from your life.”

Attitudes are both positive and negative, but when we habitually think negatively, we respond to the world around us negatively.

Even during good times we may play the blame game or think that life is not fair. In a recession, it is only magnified. What I propose is that you follow these seven steps over the next 21 days (that’s how long it takes to form a new habit) and see what a difference it makes in your life.

1 Awareness

Before you can commit to changing your way of thinking, you need to become aware of how you think. We all have “voices in our heads” that talk to us continuously. Do you pay attention to how you think and talk to yourself? When you make a mistake, do you tell yourself you were stupid? Negative self-talk is a habit we learn at an early age. It’s important to be aware of how you talk to yourself before you can change it.

7 Steps to Overcome the Recession Blues

2 Re-Phrase Self-Talk

Once you consciously pay attention to what you say to yourself, the next step is to start re-phrasing your negative statements into positive or neutral statements. For example, “I am stupid for making a mistake” becomes “I made a mistake.” Every time you catch yourself talking negatively, either in your head or out loud, stop immediately and re-phrase your statement.

3 Use Affirmations

To accelerate the process, you also need to add more positive thinking into your daily regimen. Affirmations are a powerful and consistent way to help you overcome negative thoughts. Create three affirmations that you will state three times a day – when you wake up, at lunchtime, and before you go to sleep. Put them on index cards by your bed side as reminders. Say these affirmations daily for 21 days.

4 Re-Think Your Influences

The outside world will pull you back to old ways of thinking, if you let it. We are bombarded with messages every day that influence how we think, act and react. You can change some of the negative influences you allow into your life by becoming aware of them and removing them. Turn off the TV; stop reading the newspaper; don’t engage in negative conversations; and remove or limit your association with negative people. Replace these activities with positive ones such as helping a friend or neighbor, volunteering for a community organization, or begin practicing yoga or meditation.

5 Re-Programming Takes Time

As children, most of us were programmed from a negative point of view. The first three words a child understands are mommy, daddy and no! Then the “no” becomes “don’t”. Don’t talk to strangers. Don’t touch. In fact research shows that between

the ages of 0-5 years old, 77% of the messages children receive are negative and only 23% are positive. Remember that your habits were created over time, and it will take time to establish new habits of thinking to a positive attitude.

6 Recognize the Rewards

The rewards of a positive attitude are endless – so start noting them as soon as you see changes in your life. Here are some rewards you might recognize: People like to be around positive people. Having a positive attitude improves relationships. A positive attitude manifests optimism and motivation. You will exude self confidence and self esteem. (Hint: These are also great affirmations!)

7 You Have a Choice

Yes, you can choose to be negative or positive. And that choice is available 24/7. Each time you choose the positive way of thinking you’ve created an opportunity for yourself and everyone around you. So choose wisely and make a difference. ■



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Elkay Corporate Advisors specializes in leading, coaching, consulting and training businesses and individuals to help them be more effective and profitable. We use customized processes and practical guidance to help clients make strategic and informed decisions to achieve success faster and easier than they could on their own.

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