

» Positivity



A key skill of the emotionally intelligent leader is one's ability to maintain their positive outlook. Feelings of joy, peace, empathy, awe, gratitude, and hope can be cultivated and your brain can be reset for more positive emotions. As a leader, your moods have an outsized impact on your team. People "catch" each other's emotions, and this is especially true for emotions transferred from a leader to the team that works for them. Are you a force for good when it comes to how your team deals with Covid? We know positivity has an impact on team productivity and we also know positivity impacts a person's own productivity and well-being. Are you an Eeyore or a Tigger?

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, 'My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.' The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, 'Which wolf wins?' The old Cherokee simply replied, 'The one you feed.'
 – Anonymous

I have come upon this fable many times, in many versions. And I've worked on my own positivity for many years. Having the ability to influence how you show up in life is work for many of us. And for many of us, work and life circumstances add or detract from our moods. And many of us are not born with a natural, sunny disposition.

Where should you start? First, with your **self-awareness**. How would you describe your predominate mood? Is this an aspect of your life that needs some improvement? I was working with a coachee who described her general mood as being overwhelmed. And this was impacting her ability to face challenges on the job, enjoy time with her family and an overall sense of sadness in her life. And while she was not clinically depressed (as assessed by a medical professional), she realized and wanted to do something about her positivity.

She started by becoming aware of specific moods she was experiencing. She started to keep a daily mood calendar so she could keep track of her moods (See Barbara Fredrickson's <https://www.positivityratio.com/single.php>). Once she realized that she was on the Eeyore vs. the Tigger end of the scale, she started to identify what increased her daily positivity. She started keeping a gratitude journal. By listing 3 specific things that she was grateful for each day, her mood began to improve. We find the simple, regular practice of journaling about what brings you gratitude in your life increases your positivity by 10%.

Finally, she started to reframe her thoughts around the work she did. As a new customer service director she was struggling with the feedback from customers. The feedback made her anxious and fearing for her job. In the past she was a project manager and her experience with negative feedback was infrequent vs. continuously being subjected to complaints. Once she faced that the very nature of her responsibilities was to be of aware of customer concerns and marshal the resources to fix the root causes of those issues, she realized she needed to change her thinking about her job duties. While she preferred her project management role and the inherent satisfaction it provided, by reminding herself that she had a skilled team that could address and fix customer issues and that her boss wasn't going to fire her, she found her feelings of being overwhelmed abating. So, when we started to work together and she said her goal was to be happier, I thought "how are we going to achieve that"? Through building her self-awareness and identifying targeted practices, we got there and she reported that she no longer felt overwhelmed.

