

# **TEN STRATEGIES FOR NURTURING A POSITIVE MENTAL STATE**

## **STRATEGY # 1 Exit gracefully**

Remove yourself from all negative conversations and/or situations as quickly as possible. When someone starts to whine about the wrongs of the world, do not engage. Change the subject, reframe, say something positive and walk away. Whiners and complainers will usually shut up if they are not getting you to buy into their complaints.

## **STRATEGY # 2 Enlist Support**

Enlist the support of your family and co-workers. Tell them that you are trying to see what the effects of a positive attitude might have on your life and that you need them to support you. (Hey, you never know, your positive attitude might be contagious!)

## **STRATEGY # 3 Choose your thoughts carefully**

Check in with yourself to see what negative messaging you are giving yourself. Awareness of what you are thinking is the first step, so learn to listen to your words, whether unspoken or spoken.

Once you notice the dialogue you are having with yourself, think about the choice you can make – either to stay with the debilitating thoughts, or to choose a different thought. It *is* your choice. Inspirational best-selling author Louise Hay said, “You are the only thinker in your own mind.” We cannot control what others think, but we can choose our own thoughts. Create the thoughts you want.

## **STRATEGY # 4 Focus on today**

Take a deep breath and release your thoughts from old memories and hurts that no longer serve you. Take another deep breath and release your thoughts about the uncertainties and the “What will happen tomorrow?” Stay with the present. Find joy in what you have in your life today. Live each and every moment you have today.

## **STRATEGY # 5 Develop a Gratitude Attitude**

Spend five minutes, just before you fall asleep, writing down what of value happened or what you noticed that day for which you are grateful. You will find that you will begin to be more aware of and thankful for the small things (the little girl next door who smiled at you), small victories (like getting the Christmas tree lights untangled) as well as the bigger things (I am grateful that I am warm in my bed with a roof over my head in this Vancouver monsoon). You will go to sleep with positive thoughts rather than worried and stressful thoughts.

## **STRATEGY # 6 Feed Yourself**

Surround yourself with reminders of your fabulous-ness. Fill your home, your office, your car, with positive messaging; photos of the people you love, things you love, images or quotes that inspire you. Stay centered and remind yourself that you are a unique being. There is only one you.

## **STRATEGY # 7 Turn off the News**

Turn off the TV news and definitely do not listen to the news before bedtime. Those grim messages you receive right before sleeping will stay with you and amplify through the night.

## **STRATEGY # 8 Empty your mind daily**

Put aside at least 15 minutes per day for mindful self-care. Do something to slow your thinking mind (the place where all of your fear or negative thoughts exist). What do you like to do that takes you out of your thinking mind? Consciously add in those activities at least once a day, e.g., playing an instrument, laughing, meditating, reciting your affirmation, gardening, going for a walk on the beach or in the park, doing some gratitude journaling, calling a friend who replenishes your energy, listening to music... you choose!

## **STRATEGY # 9 Distribute Happiness**

We know our culture is ridden with constant negative messaging from the media. Combating this culture of doom sometimes takes a heroic Pollyanna-type move. Consciously distributing happiness is a fabulous way of shifting the energy surrounding you to create more joy. Play the Pollyanna Glad Game. See how much happiness you can spread.

## **STRATEGY #10 Focus on what you can do**

Focus on what you can do to contribute to a better world and not what you expect others to do, nor what you think others expect you to do. Let go of expectations about how things “should be.” In fact, why don’t you just throw out the “shoulds” completely and embrace the “coulds” instead? As you focus on positive possibilities, you’ll find that positive energy follows.