



- Home
- Archive
- Newsletters
- Video
- Blogs
- Discuss
- About
- Search
- Donate
- Advertise

Newsletter

Health and Wellness

E-mail address

ZIP/Postal code

CarnalNation

A web site about sex that treats you like a grownup.



Sorcerers Battle Over Soccer Stud Cristiano Ronaldo

"I will end Don't Ask, Don't Tell. That's my commitment to you" - Obama (Full Transcript of Speech)

Sexual Intelligence: Family Foundation of Kentucky Calls Me Out

Gays: It's All God's Fault

Conservatives Support Same-Sex Marriage?

Rammstein Returns, Demonstrates How To Get Laid In Germany

Oklahoma Wants to Blog Your Abortion



Health & Wellness

Barbara Ehrenreich: The Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America

By [Emily Wilson](#), [AlterNet](#). Posted October 10, 2009.

The author talks about how a plague of positive thinking is permeating our society, from medicine to business, and is even contributing to our financial crisis.

Tools

- EMAIL
- PRINT
- 173 COMMENTS

When Barbara Ehrenreich went to be treated for breast cancer, she was exhorted to think positively; and when she expressed feelings of fear and anger, she was chided for being negative.

Ehrenreich, the author of 16 books, including *Nickel and Dimed* and *Bait and Switch*, which examine the blue- and white-collar job markets, took on what she sees as an epidemic of positive thinking in her new book: *Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America*.

Positive thinking is different, she says, from being cheerful or good-natured -- it's believing that the world is shaped by our wants and desires and that by focusing on the good, the bad ceases to exist.

Ehrenreich believes this has permeated our culture and that the refusal to acknowledge that bad things could happen is in some way responsible for the current financial crisis.

In her new book, Ehrenreich examines how the positive-thinking movement was started by Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, and an amateur metaphysician named Phineas Parkhurst Quimby in response to Calvinism; how being positive became mandatory in corporate culture; and how she thinks prosperity preachers, such as Joel Osteen of Lakewood Church in Houston encouraged a culture of debt by telling their congregations that God wants them to have a big house and a nice car.

Emily Wilson: At the beginning of the book, you talk about going to be treated for breast cancer and being told to think positively. Was that what started you thinking about this?

Barbara Ehrenreich: That was my first exposure to positive thinking as an ideology. I was just astounded and dismayed by it. Here I was in a real crisis in my life, and people were trying to market pink ribbon teddy bears to me, and where I thought I would find sort of sisterly support on the Internet, I found instead the constant exhortations to be cheerful and to embrace my disease [she laughs].

Share and save this post:

Digg



AlterNet Social Networks:



Also in [Health and Wellness](#)

Why Was a Lightweight Montana Senator on the Finance Committee Tasked to Take on Health Care Reform?
Jim Hightower

Columbia Medical School's 200 Dirty Little Secrets
Jeanne Lenzer, Shannon Brownlee

A Solution For Diabetes: A Vegan Diet
Kathy Freston

Why It's a Good Idea for the Well-Off to Share Their Health Care with the Rest of Us
Ann Neumann

The Fight for the Public Option Hits Home Stretch -- Is Obama Hiding?
Adele Stan



AlterNet Your turn

Support AlterNet

Do you value the information you're getting from AlterNet? Please show your support with a [tax-deductible donation](#).

Feedback

Tell us [how we're doing](#).

Search:

Search

Advertisement

EW: What is the difference between being told to try and stay upbeat and to have a good attitude and positive thinking?

BE: I think it's a slippery slope. Once you start on how you have to face your problem with a good attitude, they start looking for justifications for that, and it became you actually get better only if you are upbeat, only if you visualize your recovery and so on.

EW: Were the doctors telling you that?

BE: The doctors don't say much, but there are books they have written, or psychologists have, trying to get in on the breast cancer business, but to my chagrin I was often encountering it from fellow sufferers. Individual women have written books, too, like my favorite, *The Gift of Cancer*, and it seems to be pretty ubiquitous. I wasn't finding any dissent, and when I tried to dissent on a message board, I was told to run, not walk, to therapy.

EW: You write a lot about how positive thinking is in all aspects of life. Do you think this is the most insidious about it -- this idea of a disease being your fault?

BE: I look at it with a little bit of sociological detachment. It's a brilliant system of social control. When bad things happen to people you say, "Well, it's really your attitude that has to change."

The second big place where I encountered all this was in the kind of motivational services that are offered to laid-off white-collar workers, where every networking event or seminar you get the same message about how it's really your attitude that is going to determine if you're going to get a job and probably has something to do with why you lost that last one.

You take people who have been really victimized, and I use that word advisedly, with cancer and with lay-offs from unaccountable corporations. And then you tell them, "Well, you just have to change the way you think." And that's very clever.

EW: You write about how positive thinking started with Mary Baker Eddy and Phineas Quimby and how it was a response to Calvinism.

BE: I was actually kind of a fan of Quimby. Here was a blue-collar guy, basically a skilled craftsman living in Portland, Maine, and who had a sideline of being a metaphysician. What it's all about is he was rejecting a Calvinist worldview -- that people are damned, that we're wretched sinners and that we should spend all of our time examining our souls for sins and flaws.

And he said "Hey!" [She laughs.] He understood that that worldview was making people sick. It was kind of brilliant, I thought. He was part of a larger populist health movement arising against the regular medical profession.

EW: When does this idea of positive thinking change into being what you're saying it is now?

BE: It had ceased to be seen as a healing method, although that comes back. By the time I encounter it, breast cancer has come back into the health area. But in the early 20th century there was, for the first time, scientific medicine and the beginnings of some sorts of effective treatments. That kind of closed a door for

The Story of My 'Socialist Kidney'

Jennifer Nix

More stories by [Emily Wilson](#)

[Health and Wellness RSS](#)

[Feed](#)

[Main AlterNet RSS Feed](#)

Advertisement



Upcoming AlterNet stories on Digg

- 2076 [30 GOP Senators Vote to Defend Gang Rape](#)
- 50 [Righties Believe Rand's Every Word, But Forget It's Fiction](#)
- 50 [Why Conservatives Are Really Afraid of a Black President | |](#)
- 35 [Rick Scott Is Making a Killing off the Uninsured](#)
- 34 [Outrageous Oklahoma Law Will Post Details of Women's Abortio](#)

Powered by Digg's Users

the positive-thinking movement, which then increasingly in the 20th century addressed itself to prosperity and wealth and success.

1 2 Next page »
View as a single page



See more stories tagged with: [cancer](#), [barbara ehrenreich](#), [brighsided](#), [positive thinking](#)

Emily Wilson is a freelance writer and teaches basic skills at City College of San Francisco.

Liked this story? Get top stories in your inbox each week from Health and Wellness! [Sign up now »](#)

Advertisement

Selected for you by a sponsor:

- [5 Little Known Face Recognition Facts](#) (Mind 360 Play Smart)

You might also like:

- [Why the Medical Industry Is Lashing Out at Oprah Winfrey](#) (AlterNet: Health)
- [The Real 9/12, Not Glenn Beck's](#) (AlterNet)
- [Toxic Chemicals in Everyday Products: Find Out What's in the Stuff You Use](#) (AlterNet: Health)
- [Health Insurance Companies Are the Real Death Panels: My Best Friend Is Proof](#) (AlterNet)

[1 more recommended post »](#)

Story Tools: [EMAIL](#) [PRINT](#) [173 COMMENTS](#) [Health and Wellness »](#)

Advertisement

SHOCK JOCKS
HATE SPEECH & TALK RADIO

America's 10 worst hate talkers and the progressive alternative
By Rory O'Connor

“The latest release from AlterNet Books
Order your copy today!”

Advertisement

Comments

[Turn comments off sitewide](#)

[Give us feedback »](#)

Tools: [\[Post a new comment\]](#) [\[Login\]](#) [\[Signup\]](#)

View: [Threaded](#)

Prosperity Gospel

Posted by: ohb0b on Oct 10, 2009 12:12 AM
Current rating: 4 [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

I've always had an issue with Joel Osteen and other "Prosperity Gospel" preachers.... God wants you to be rich.

What if God wants you to become the next Mother Theresa?

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment »\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **God is a lie told to control the minds, money and sexual habits of stupid people.** Posted by: The Antichrist

» **RE: God is a lie told to control the minds, money and sexual habits of stupid people.** Posted by: richholland

» **God's Balls man** Posted by: Hiroak

» **Yeah, why DOESN'T God tell those churches he wants them to help the poor? Surely some of them** Posted by: Beck

» **Right like it says in the Bible the next best thing to being a capitalist is to think like one!** Posted by: RR#1

» **RE: Prosperity Gospel..."only inner fulfillment really matters"** Posted by: RR#1

» **positive thinking has had nothing to do with undermining america** Posted by: masthead

» **RE: How thick are we?** Posted by: improperly_sedated

I love this!

Posted by: zola77 on Oct 10, 2009 12:28 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

i have been thinking this for years. The Oprah/Dr Phil/Deepak Chopra cult of positivity absolves all parties of their responsibility and/or sociopolitical reality in any situation.

The church of positivity think that's the problem with the homeless - they just dont think positive enough. If they had 'the secret' they would all rise out of their drudgery and be successful.

People dont have to analyse society, class structure and relations (yes it does exist in the US people!) and do something about it if they can dismiss people in worse situations than them as 'not working hard enough' or 'not thinking positive' etc.

It was nice to see this interview.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **RE: Zola, Oprah, Dr. Phil, and Deepak Chopra Shouldn't Be Lumped Together** Posted by: Carol Burns

» **RE: Zola, Oprah, Dr. Phil, and Deepak Chopra Shouldn't Be Lumped Together** Posted by: clvngodess

» **RE: Zola, Oprah, Dr. Phil, and Deepak Chopra Shouldn't Be Lumped Together** Posted by: pancakebunny

» **RE: Zola, Oprah, Dr. Phil, and Deepak Chopra Shouldn't Be Lumped Together** Posted by: zola77

Positive Thinking Is Absolutely Necessary ...

Posted by: mmckinl on Oct 10, 2009 12:27 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

To run the Ponzi Scheme economy.

And when that doesn't work they'll fall back on the old standbys Planned Obsolescence and Style Obsolescence ...

Watch This : The Century of the Self

Happiness Machines

The Engineering of Consent

[Happiness Machines](#)

What Barbara Ehrenreich and all of us are faced with is a bombardment of psychological messages designed to stimulate and influence our behavior in our purchasing decisions and our very philosophy of life through Corporate Media.

It's no accident that Barbara encountered a wall of intolerance when she felt angry and depressed about her health.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **Century of the Self: Must see!** Posted by: DignityForAll

RE:

Posted by: Nebris on Oct 10, 2009 1:10 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

"There is no doubt that healthy-mindedness is inadequate as a philosophical doctrine, because the evil

facts which it refuses positively to account for are a genuine portion of reality; and they may after all be the best key to life's significance, and possibly the only openers of our eyes to the deeper levels of truth." ~William James

[< Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

» **RE: ality** Posted by: improperly_sedated

Why the hippies wouldn't let me in

Posted by: Perry Logan on Oct 10, 2009 2:58 AM
Current rating: 3 [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[Report this comment]

This must be why the hippies didn't let me in. I couldn't master the art of positive thinking.

In the 1960s, the philosophy of the counterculture had a strong strain of "positive thinking" to it. But I could never relate to it, because it asked things of my psyche that it couldn't deliver.

For example, you were supposed to feel no shame about your body. The human body is beautiful and natural, etc. This was supposed to happen simply by deciding it was so.

Yea right.

Likewise, the Counterculture were invited to give up all feelings of sexual possessiveness and jealousy. Partners could share love equally, without the old hang-ups.

And yet I was sure the green-eyed monster would remain, no matter how hard I tried to be beyond such things.

Even back then, I never believed for a moment that simply deciding you didn't have a hang-up got rid of the hang-up. This particular part of the New Age philosophy always struck me as dumb.

I'm not dissing the Counterculture or the hippies. On the contrary, I think they were awesome. But I couldn't apply for full membership because I could never get the "curing the world's ills through positive thinking" philosophy to work.

It's interesting that the Counterculture was and is not really "counter" in this. Their use of the positive-thinking model is as American as apple pie.

Le Pig

[< Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

» **RE: Why the hippies wouldn't let me in** Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line

» **RE: Why the hippies wouldn't let me in** Posted by: richholland

» **RE: Why the hippies wouldn't let me in** Posted by: Beck

» **RE: Why the hippies wouldn't let me in** Posted by: Benn_Miller

» **RE: Why the hippies wouldn't let me in** Posted by: johnyradio

» **RE: Why the hippies wouldn't let me in** Posted by: JiminSanFrancisco

» **RE: Why the hippies wouldn't let me in** Posted by: YellerKitty

» **RE: Why the hippies wouldn't let me in** Posted by: johnyradio

It is

Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line on Oct 10, 2009 3:15 AM
Current rating: 3 [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[Report this comment]

Your choice in life whether to see the world in a positive or a negative light. When things go wrong as they will it does absolutely no good to sit and cry about it.. When things go wrong get up and do it again. Positive thinking can and does accomplish a LOT. But its your choice. I have spent a lot of my life blaming others, believing things that were not true about myself and being kinda miserable (and not really knowing it).. Positive thinking is what keeps us healthy. I am learning right now just how much power we actually DO possess and reality is what you make it...Positive thinking does not just make all the bad stuff go away... No not in the least, but it does help to deal with it. Bad stuff happens all the time... its not really what happens in life, but how you react..

[< Reply to this comment] [Post a new comment >] [Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5]

» **RE: It is** Posted by: dogeatdog

» **RE: It is** Posted by: richholland

» **It does a huge amount of good to sit and cry, THEN get up and get going** Posted by: Beck

» **RE: It does a huge amount of good to sit and cry, THEN get up and get going** Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line

» **RE: It does a huge amount of good to sit and cry, THEN get up and get going** Posted by: Beck

» **Don't take Beck seriously. She preaches "realistic" but goes out of touch like crazy.**

Posted by: Benn_Miller

» **RE: Don't take Beck seriously. She preaches "realistic" but goes out of touch like crazy.** Posted by: DaBear

» **RE: Don't take Beck seriously. She preaches "realistic" but goes out of touch like crazy.** Posted by: Benn_Miller

» **The thrid choice** Posted by: Word Mix

» **From the article:** Posted by: nha16

Positive

Posted by: kepstein7777 on Oct 10, 2009 3:15 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

It sounds like Ehrenreich has hit the nail on the head so far as the positive thinking philosophy goes, and how it is used to control the masses, and sell motivational books, seminars, etc.

The trouble is that positive thinking is as much an ideology as a philosophy, and is a large part of what we think makes the US better than the rest of the world. Thus, I expect Americans to defend their positive thinking tooth and nail, no matter how little it has to do with reality.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **RE: Positive** Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line

» **Give me the Positive Thinking. I'll take it over the alternative any day,** Posted by: avidAmerican

» **RE: Positive** Posted by: kahuna_2bears

» **RE: Positive** Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line

» **RE: Positive** Posted by: Basenjjs

» **Thoughts are not things. They are thoughts** Posted by: pancakebunny

» **RE: Positive. Ah, the kool-aid drinkers rise!** Posted by: DaBear

I could not disagree more

Posted by: khaleesi on Oct 10, 2009 3:49 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **3** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

I truly believe in thinking positively no matter what the situation. The reason being twofold- First, regardless of what happens being negative never makes anything better. Does it help to get upset when you wreck your car? No, it just makes you feel terrible. You just have to deal with the problem, and if you can control yourself and stay positive the situation is alot more pleasant. You can apply this to any event in your life. Second, everything in life- the good and the bad- is an experience. Once you can get past the idea of JUDGING an experience and you can appreciate the experience as an experience you will be enlightened. This mentality that we must be angry to get things done or change the world is typical for the Judeo-Christian society that seeks to always think of life in its present form as less than perfect. That is why they aim to go to 'heaven'. This mindset unfortunately has tainted all of American society. For everyone who does not agree with me- forget Oprah and Dr. Phil- go read a book. It is called The Art of Happiness and it is written by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I have compassion for all of those who are trapped in a negative state of mind. I hope your lives will be happy after reading this book.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **The Power of Positive Thinking is exactly what this country needs right now,** Posted by: avidAmerican

» **RE: The Power of Positive Thinking is exactly what this country needs right now,** Posted by: nha16

» **Not the Rich** Posted by: Hiroak

» **Being negative DOES accomplish things.** Posted by: heid

» **We need realism, not positive thinking** Posted by: bonapartist

» **You are *so* missing the point** Posted by: hagwind

» **RE: You are *so* missing the point. Not according to my life experience, she isn't.** Posted by: Beck

» **RE: You are *so* missing the point. Not according to my life experience, she isn't.**

Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line

» **NO. YOU are missing the point.** Posted by: nha16

» **RE: NO. YOU are missing the point.** Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line

» **RE: Being negative DOES accomplish things. Thank you!** Posted by: Beck

» **It's Not All About HOW YOU FEEL!** Posted by: ProgressiveManiac

» **RE: It's Not All About HOW YOU FEEL!** Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line

» **RE: I could not disagree more. I think you greatly misunderstood. Repression leads to deep problems** Posted by: Beck

» **all of this is suffering** Posted by: inverse_agonist

» **RE: all of this is suffering** Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line

» **RE: all of this is suffering** Posted by: inverse_agonist

» **So starving third world peasants and proles should appreciate their experience?** Posted by: and_abottleofrum

» **Are you saying life in its present form is perfect?** Posted by: and_abottleofrum

» **You totally don't get the Dalai Lama** Posted by: jcalhoun

» **RE: I could not disagree more... because you insist on denying that you're an animal** Posted by: DaBear

Good work, Barbara

Posted by: marxalot on Oct 10, 2009 4:41 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

The reality-based approach to life is often not as pleasant as living in a happy face fantasy. But reality breaks through eventually. You know, this is essentially the Buddhist approach to living.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **Yes, every Buddhist book I've read goes into the importance of facing true feelings, not adding** Posted by: Beck

» **Buddhists don't play politics like you do.** Posted by: Benn_Miller

and when positive thinking

Posted by: Farmertim on Oct 10, 2009 5:07 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

falls short...the Christian right allows you to forfit all your responsibility to God.

Don't show up on time, no prudent or measured thought, just pray on it and if you miss an appointment or what most would consider a considerate gesture in our society...oh, God had other plans for me today....said with a blank smile on their face.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **RE: and when positive thinking** Posted by: babzter

Think Pink

Posted by: bonapartist on Oct 10, 2009 5:23 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

The positive thinking can be a great tool to help you ride through rough spots in life. However once positive thinking stops being a tool and becomes an end to itself the problems arise.

We are already fed truckloads of positive thinking, so much in fact that it became a mantra to replace action. Majority of issues in one's life will require action, with or without positive thinking.

To resolve a problem one first must admit that there is a problem. The positive thinking culture is busy denying that there is a problem and thus the issue remains unsolved.

You can see the sample in current economic downfall, no need to implement a real reform. Just patch up and hope for the best, think positive and continue business as usual.

Scepticism, realism, rationalism, cynicism, pessimism etc are all venues of thinking that can and are useful in certain conditions. The current TV culture discarded them in favor of simplistic think pink attitude.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **RE: Yes, and we don't have problems any more** Posted by: outsideagitator

Parrot

Posted by: ecofriendlynet on Oct 10, 2009 5:30 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

If one eats loads of crap and then thinks he or she can positive think out of being fat, that is wishful thinking. Cause and effect.

The superficial view of "Positive Thinking" is what is prevalent. Just like most Christianity is so unlike Christ. Surface stuff.

Positive Thinking is a state of heart/mind which remembrance of and reliance on our Highest Self (God, Beloved, Christ, Ezad, etc.,) through all the good and crappy times with the objective of eventual liberation from duality.

We have to do our best, cast our net, do our part. Actions and thought work together. This is obvious.

Getting a disease sucks and the mindless parroting of the "positive thinking" crowd, even worse.

A disease is shitty but also an opportunity for a lot of inner growth and compassion.

It's infinitely better to hope for the best than to fear the worst -- Meher Baba

Give up all forms of parrotry. Start practicing whatever you truly feel to be true and justly to be just. --
Meher Baba

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

» **RE: Parrotty** Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line

Positive Thinking vs Positive Action

Posted by: Mimi on Oct 10, 2009 5:35 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

The issue is not positive versus negative thinking.

The issue is thinking versus ACTION, the delusion that "I think, therefore IT IS." That thinking something is so makes it so. It's called psychosis.

Those who take the quest for human happiness seriously recognize that taking positive ACTION to right the world's wrongs and injustices leads to authentic happiness, rather than the delusional "think it and it will happen" positive thinking Ehrenreich objects to.

I wish that Ehrenreich had built on one of her best books, *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy*, and focused on the difference between collective action to secure happiness and well-being for all, versus delusional, inner individual thought processes that produce the terrifying and absurd human condition of everyone wearing smiley faces while the world heaves and burns.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

» **"Positive Thinking vs Positive Action" Perfect!** Posted by: nha16

» **Also, positive thinking is popular because it's the lazy ass alternative to positive action.**

Posted by: and_abottleofrum

Give me negativity any day

Posted by: SekhmetsatRa on Oct 10, 2009 5:47 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **4** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

this is just a way to deny us genuine emotions, like anger, sadness and even *gasp* hatred. Don't tell me to NOT be angry about my bad decisions. I DESERVE that anger about myself. Don't tell me not to be sad I had to put my cat to sleep, my aunt had a stroke that paralyzed her whole side, or my other aunt is going blind.... I NEED to grieve over this. And don't tell me i can't hate people who have done me wrong. They deserve the contempt and loathing I feel for them. Forgiveness may be reached, but NEVER forget the betrayal. Learn from your mistakes, and don't let them medicate you into subservient happiness. Because, really, that is all happiness is, a way to make us serving class more subservient.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

» **RE: Give me negativity any day** Posted by: Trixietheduck

» **Agreed** Posted by: BlueTigress

» **Exactly right. Traits as significant as emotions evolved to serve a function.** Posted by: and_abottleofrum

» **RE: Give me negativity any day** Posted by: Fat Man at the Buffet Line

» **Feelings as long as authentic and genuine need to be expressed** Posted by: RR#1

Positive thinking has an even dumber twin sister-

Posted by: souffrantfleur on Oct 10, 2009 5:49 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **4** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

And her name is Denial. In the US, they are conjoined twins.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

very good article!

Posted by: Trixietheduck on Oct 10, 2009 5:52 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

I have a dear friend who's mind is in the grip of this positive-thinking stuff. There are moments when she is absolutely terrified to express a negative thought, always has to punctuate the end of every story or conversation with, "but I'm grateful for..." or "but I know that everything is alright and the universe is going to bring me what I need..." blah blah blah. I suppose its good to be upbeat but I always sense this invisible gun pointed at her head "SAY THE WORDS AND SMILE OR ELSE." I know a few people like that. The 12-steps promote this kind of thinking, big time. Like, every bad thought you express or just think-- whether it's "dammit all" or "I'm concerned that this might not turn out as I'd like"--is a karma bomb that you've just planted in your own path and it WILL to explode in your face if you don't get positive now (does my negativism trump God's plan for me?). Does anyone remember that Twilight Zone episode where the little boy is holding all the adults captive in the house because he can destroy them with his mind by just thinking something, so all the adults have to act happy and agree with him or they'll die some weird death (getting turned into a jack-in-the-box and put out in the cornfield)? Sometimes the persistent Dr. Phil & Oprah militant-gratitude stuff reminds me of that. (NO, I am not accusing them of trying to murder people by turning them into jackintheboxes, I just haven't finished my coffee yet.)

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

» [Militant gratitude and "radical forgiveness"](#). Posted by: Beck

» [Thanks for the laugh!](#) Posted by: CV

» [It sounds like she has obsessive-compulsive disorder.](#) Posted by: and_abottleofrum

We Are A Young and Immature Nation

Posted by: drricklippin on Oct 10, 2009 6:14 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

The US is like a child believing that we can do anything and that the world revolves around us. We are a very young and immature "can do"-overly-optimistic nation. We suffer from way overblown hubris.

We will grow up someday

Maybe we have entered our painful but necessary adolescence?

Dr. Rick Lippin
Southampton,Pa

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

» [RE: We Are A Young and Immature Nation](#) Posted by: nha16

» [RE: We Are A Young and Immature Nation](#) Posted by: theblackgeorgecarlin

» [RE: Enough with the "Young Nation" nonsense](#) Posted by: improperly_sedated

» [Growing up requires pain and bad experiences.](#) Posted by: and_abottleofrum

» [The whole time we lived in Germany, I thought, "We Americans are adolescents compared to this"](#). Posted by: Beck

» [RE: The whole time we lived in Germany, I thought, "We Americans are adolescents compared to this"](#). Posted by: improperly_sedated

Mountaintop

Posted by: saquisili on Oct 10, 2009 6:19 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Hurrah for Barbara Ehrenreich! You've put into words what I have been wanting to express for a long time. Those around me that subscribe to the Positive Thinking ideology are critical of my critical thinking. They say I'm negative. I say objective. In Andean thought one does not occur without the other, all is paired, so negative/positive. To exclude one denies the existence of the other. Avoidance as a theory for living does not contribute to a more egalitarian society.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

There's nothing wrong with being positive

Posted by: anok on Oct 10, 2009 6:32 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Nor is there any direct correlation between being "positive" in both thoughts and actions and being ignorant, naive, or walking about with happy blinders on.

People who deal with situations by ignoring it will do that regardless of the positiveness or negativeness of their thought process.

Nor does being positive immediately equate to being nauseatingly happy or chipper. For example: One who has lost their job, and is facing a hard road ahead can think positively by simply saying "We WILL get through this." That's a positive thought, leading to a positive action. It is neither ignorant, nor blind of the facts.

Anyone can take any ideology and go too far with it. However our outlook on life, and our immediate emotions can be and are affected by how we react to them.

Ever make yourself cry by thinking about something sad? Ever get yourself out of a funk by thinking about something enjoyable, or fun?

There you have it, it's just that simple. It's not easy, just simple.

Take whatever time you need to mourn your losses, experience your anger, grief or whathaveyou and then move on. It does you no good to sit around moping about it. It also makes you the type of person that others don't want to be around much, either.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Of course there are excesses and extremes

Posted by: chariotdrv14 on Oct 10, 2009 6:35 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

I probably wouldn't have become a punk rocker in the 70's if I hadn't seen them as well.

But time has tempered my pessimism.

There's a denialism in that which isn't so much positive thinking as much as taking a leap of faith into the realm of self serving fantasy.
That doesn't mean that visualizing what you want and initiating activity to achieve is delusional.

I do remember in my early 20's I was working at a healthfood mexican food restaurant, a chain called *The Good Earth* and we were trying to organize an alternate food workers' union. The CEO came in and gave us this song and dance about how our serving 'healthy positive food was a service to humanity and a positive action...but that people who wanted unions were negative thinkers who weren't thinking of anyone but themselves'...something to that effect.
I walked out in the middle of that one.

Yeah, I know how new age capitalists use this to any advantage they can, for any justification they want.

And that how 'The Secret' fad... is about taking what a very old spiritual concept and selling it by focusing on selfish materialist motivations. This is my fundamental disagreement with new agers.

But I do think that there are places and instances where positive thinking is both useful and necessary. I would never embrace an illness like cancer and couldn't even imagine any reason to do so. But stressing and bemoaning the fact would never help either. You do have come to a point of acceptance with any situation before you can deal effectively with it.

Positivism...negativism... the point is in never becoming out of balance by embracing the extremes.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Optimism Is.....

Posted by: drricklippin on Oct 10, 2009 6:50 AM
Current rating: **3** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

... a moral imperative

Ask those who wrote about concentration camp experiences about not giving in to pessimism or hopelessness.

Of course reality tells us all the time to be pessimistic but we must rail against that and live our lives always "as if" things will be ok.

This is our obligation.

Dr. Rick Lippin
Southampton,Pa

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

» **So....** Posted by: BlueTigress

» **RE: So....** Posted by: drricklippin

» **So we the people slaughtered in the camps not optimistic enough?** Posted by: and_bottleofrum

» **RE: So we the people slaughtered in the camps not optimistic enough?** Posted by: drricklippin

» **RE: Optimism Is.....** Posted by: DaBear

Religion sets this precedence

Posted by: loneswaneast on Oct 10, 2009 6:52 AM
Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Walt Disney and Religion certainly set this stage. Every Disney film teaches kids to simply "cross their fingers and wish really really hard and it will come true!!!!" sets us up for such nonsense and religion tells us to "fold your hands and pray really really hard and it will come true". Of course, when the situation stays the same, or the child dies, it is because we did not pray hard enough.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Mind is the Builder

Posted by: Gravitas on Oct 10, 2009 6:56 AM
Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

As a fellow sociologist I do agree with her that the way it has been popularized and oversimplified in books like *The Secret*, is IS a form of social control. As she says, it is a way to blame the victim for their situations.

However, the concept that thoughts can shape outside reality is in many of the great spiritual traditions of the world. I like what the mystic Edgar Cayce said about "mind being the builder." He said thoughts create reality BUT it was far more complicated than just making out a wish list. Thoughts had to be couple with action, principles had to be lived, intentions had to be defended with acts of faith. It is hard

work, not just magic wishes.

It is very sad that this essential spiritual concept has been watered down and commercialized. But it is not all or nothing. Few on this board would reject nutrition just because there are charlatans with miracle diets overstating their case. We don't need to reject a powerful tool to reshape reality just because spiritual snakeoil salesmen exist!

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

>> **RE: Mind is the Builder** Posted by: babzter

Think Realistically

Posted by: melpol on Oct 10, 2009 6:57 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Thinking realistically not positively is the key to wisdom. The chicken that thought positively when the fox approached would wind up in the stomach of the fox.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

>> **RE: Think Realistically** Posted by: nha16

POSITIVE MONEY MISMANAGEMENT

Posted by: americansheep on Oct 10, 2009 7:03 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

I have a friend who makes a good salary in a job he hates. But he cannot manage money, due to his taste for lavish shopping and over sized, over priced houses (plural) because he keeps losing them and getting another. He's always living paycheck to paycheck, can't afford to take a vacation, his credit is shot but he always got another house, with exhorbitant interest rates. One of the big items he spends his money on is "how to get rich working at home" scams. He has spent thousands of dollars, and none of them have worked. I have told him nicely so many times that if he wants to get rich (like them) then forget their scam and create his own scam, as that is the way THEY are getting rich. Also, if he just had all that money he has spent to get rich he would be rich. It goes in one ear and out the other.

Conclusion: I read some of his brochures and watched some of his videos, and they address the fact that "some of your friends (like me), and even some of your family" will be negative and that you need to get away from them. Think positive. So, they have masterfully "built-in" this scenario that they know will happen to prepare him to expect "negative" advice and ignore it.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Somebody had to say it!

Posted by: nha16 on Oct 10, 2009 7:04 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Somebody had to say it, and it's only natural that that person would be Barbara Ehrenreich. Bless her, bless her, bless her...for the thousandth time, bless her.

I've always suspected a certain behind the scenes, conscious promotion of these "positive thinking" ideas as a means of control. Society needs people who see clearly and aren't afraid to confront the bad things in this world. They serve as an early warning system to the rest of the clan, and deserve respect, not ridicule. If it could be tested, I'll bet we could trace our current conundrum to the broad, conscious application of these ridiculous ideas.

I believe that this is the main reason people generally scorn those in need, and protect the wealthy in our society. They know if they frame that dollar bill and smile on it each day with positive thoughts of abundance, they too will someday draw that wealth to themselves and be protected by the same system that today victimizes them.

If we can call out this nonsense in any meaningful way, we may have a chance to recover. I hope Ehrenreich's book breaks the decades-old ice on this subject. It really could be our path back to reality.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Fear of job loss = Negativity

Posted by: troubleinmind254 on Oct 10, 2009 7:16 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

This reminds me of the time when I was a temp at some company that hire only temps at there call center. The flow of incoming calls were grinding to a next to nothing and I started preparing my resume for another gig. When I advise some co-workers to do the same, I received some push-back from my fellow cube drones about "being negative all the time", "Things will get better because our boss says so". One month later were were packing our belongings (also stealing office supplies) and dropping our ID badges.

Just like the financial crisis, the wars in Irpakistan, the rosy self-denial of our personal interactions and public policy can case more harm than good.

Whats the old cliché and correct if I'm wrong "Err of the side of caution" ?

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

There's positive thinking and then there blissfully ignorant thinking.

Posted by: JenniferBedingfield on Oct 10, 2009 7:19 AM
 Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

One such example of the latter is Obama getting the Nobel Peace Prize under the "faith based" notion that he will continue to bring "peace" all over the world when in fact he has no plans to end the wars and occupations in the Middle East and is starting new ones. That's on top of playing kissyface with AIPAC and allowing Israel to persecute the Palestinians.

Another example is the way Obama is poorly handling the economic crisis. As usual, the corporate media lies about the economy getting better when nothing could be farther from the truth. The economy getting better is an illusion. Bailing out Wall Street has done nothing to ease the pain and suffering of homeowners who actually needed assistance. And what about slowing down the shipping of jobs overseas? There are no policies being planned on that to the best of my knowledge and the unemployment rate keeps going up and even amongst those who are still employed there are those who face more cuts in wages and/or benefits. Better for companies to slit their wrist and screw the employees and appease those crooked stockholders isn't it?

And here's my favorite example. Everyone screams about race and yet very few people acknowledge that the "Patriot" Act is the big gorilla sitting in the room. Without that bloody act, most of the racial profiling we're seeing today wouldn't exist. I don't see anything positive for minorities trying to make it through this bloody dog eat dog society when racial profiling is persecuting them the most.

We can have positive thinking but too much blissful ignorance is dangerous and the results are showing.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **RE: There's positive thinking and then there blissfully ignorant thinking.** Posted by: Basenjjs

» **RE: There's positive thinking and then there blissfully ignorant thinking.** Posted by: JenniferBedingfield

How About The Secret?

Posted by: curiousdwc on Oct 10, 2009 7:19 AM
 Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

How about all the people who are getting hooked on The Secret? It's amazing. I can't help but feel that if our educational system did a better job of teaching critical analysis, we wouldn't have so many people believing in things they shouldn't be believing. People commit violence to themselves when they believe things that are harmful to themselves.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **RE: How About The Secret?** Posted by: nha16

» **RE: How About The Secret?** Posted by: wrinkleomma

» **RE: How About The Secret? Her book devotes sections to The Secret** Posted by: Beck

» **RE: How About The Secret? Her book devotes sections to The Secret** Posted by: improperly_sedated

Can we revive Stoicism?

Posted by: stormchilde1975 on Oct 10, 2009 7:22 AM
 Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

It's a good, old philosophy that says getting emotional about our lives undermines the freedom of our wills. The less of that, said the Stoics, the better. There's no need to stay upbeat. There's no reason to get upset, either. Just figure out what the problem is and handle it.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **RE: Can we revive Stoicism?** Posted by: improperly_sedated

» **Stoicism preaches self reliance...** Posted by: Ayla87

A justification for blaming those less fortunate.....

Posted by: babzter on Oct 10, 2009 7:23 AM
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Conservatives use this "positive thinking" philosophy to blame the less fortunate - "they're not working hard enough. They could make it if they really wanted to."

I remember being told "What you can conceive and believe, you will achieve." (Nightingale??) What a gross deception of real life.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

steering clear of depression

Posted by: littlepitcher on Oct 10, 2009 8:14 AM
 Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

The only real justifications of the "positive thinking" fad are the recognitions of opportunity in any situation, if possible, and the avoidance of psychological depression in situations that can do little except inspire emotional traumas.

Emotions create hormonal changes. Manipulating our emotional states to keep healthy is a must. Viewing bad times as opportunities to help our fellow human sufferers helps us, as a group, improve the conditions of our race one-on-one, and as a group.

Manipulations of "positivity" by sales and customer service supervisors, and by anti-organizational goons, are just profitability moves which benefit the company and customer but do little for the non-commissioned worker.

Despite this, I've admired and read Ehrenreich for 30 years, and hope sincerely that her health improves. She might consider looking into my personal suspicion that mastectomies are the new unnecessary hysterectomy, a profit maker for misogynist medical practitioners and, with bribes of underpaid cytotechnologists, an easy way for husbands to dispose of wives, or for the system to dispose of unwanted activists.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

>> **RE: steering clear of depression** Posted by: Basenjjs

>> **RE: steering clear of depression** Posted by: Basenjjs

This positive thinking nonsense has kept us from dealing with problems

Posted by: metamind on Oct 10, 2009 8:23 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

If you are unemployed, it must be because you aren't competing hard enough. Pump up your positive attitude. It's not because the economic system has failed us; it's all YOUR FAULT.

This kind of thinking keeps us from changing a DYSFUNCTIONAL system. It puts all the responsibility on the individual and ignores how the system itself has failed. Only YOU can fail with this philosophy. Nobody else can do anything wrong.

The truth is that WE THE PEOPLE need to come together and change our political and economic systems. Big changes are needed and as long as people believe "it's my fault" they won't come together and change the systems.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

>> **And yet, you've missed the point.** Posted by: anok

>> **RE: This positive thinking nonsense has kept us from dealing with problems** Posted by: wrinkleomma

>> **America Where even an idiot like Forrest Gump Can rise to the top** Posted by: RR#1

Research Suggests Link Between Emotions and Health

Posted by: johnyradio on Oct 10, 2009 8:38 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **4** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Health providers encourage patients to think positively because some scientific research has suggested that an optimistic attitude may contribute to better outcomes for cancer patients. Medical practitioners who "blame" the patient are doing it wrong-- obviously, that's just going to make the patient feel depressed.

"Psychological factors can predict the response to primary chemotherapy in patients with locally advanced breast cancer."

[Institute of Rehabilitation, University of Hull](#)

"Optimistic women have a lower risk of developing heart disease or dying from any cause compared to pessimistic women, according to research reported in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*."

[University of Pittsburgh](#)

"stress and emotion appear to have important implications for the initiation or progression of cancer, HIV, cardiovascular disease, and other illnesses."

[Annual Review of Psychology](#)

"Various psychosocial factors, particularly cancer-related concerns and depression, appear to be related to preoperative and postoperative VEGF level in patients with newly diagnosed colorectal cancer."

[Academic Surgical Unit, Cancer Division, University of Hull, UK](#)

"Relaxation training and guided imagery beneficially altered putative anti-cancer host defences during and after multimodality therapy."

[United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust, United Kingdom.](#)

"Professor Leslie Walker, a director of the Institute of Rehabilitation at Hull University, has just begun the largest ever trial into the impact of thought processes on the body's ability to fight cancer."

[Three-year trial, involving 180 bowel-cancer patients.](#)

Approaching life with optimism and confidence is not denial. As Ben Franklin said, "Expect the best. Prepare for the worst." Expecting the best does not mean closing one's eyes to reality.

It's a big stretch for Ms. E to equate her experience with cancer with the economic crisis.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

I continue to see responses that confuse the matter.

Posted by: anok on Oct 10, 2009 8:56 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **4** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Positive thinking, again, is not some blissful state of ignorance where one hides from realities. Negative thinking is not simply addressing reality. Example:

Positive thinking: "I have cancer, it sucks, I am scared. But I have a good doctor, and I will get through this."

Negative thinking: "I have cancer, I will never overcome it no matter what happens. I might as well give up and die now."

See the difference?

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

>> **RE: I continue to see responses that confuse the matter.** Posted by: BlueTigress

>> **RE: I continue to see responses that confuse the matter. Et tu, anok?** Posted by: DaBear

thank you!

Posted by: gradlady on Oct 10, 2009 9:02 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

Thank you, Barbara, for putting into print my thoughts on this as I too faced breast cancer recovery. It wasn't my questions and concerns about it that caused my cancer, and yet, every time I tried to express them I was informed that I needed to talk to someone or that I would only get better if I thought positively. I cried huge tears when I went for financial help and was presented a huge white teddy bear with a pink ribbon around its neck - not from sentiment, but out of frustration. I told the woman I didn't need any pink ribbons, I WAS one, and I had questions. To this day I cringe whenever I see folks going through this, and being told their recovery depends on smiling. Really? I don't think so. It depends on having coverage for treatment, and the opportunity to rage against the condition.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

>> **"Rage" May Be A Good Thing** Posted by: johnyradio

"Positive Thinking" sometimes works as "hypnotic suggestion."

Posted by: reykr on Oct 10, 2009 9:39 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

There was a Frenchman named "Coué," who told people to keep saying, "Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better." That was supposed to function as hypnotic suggestion.

Some time, around 1950, a minister named Norman Vincent Peale wrote a book titled, "The Power Of Positive Thinking."

In 1952, the Republicans had a "positive thinking" slogan about Eisenhower, their Presidential candidate that year. It was this: "I like Ike." He was nicknamed "Mr. Clean," by The Democrats, because he had no political record for them to criticize.

Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic candidate, thought the Biblical Epistles of the Apostle Paul were more relevant to Christianity than "Positive Thinking" was. Stevenson once quipped, "I find Paul appealing, and Peale appalling."

That was an example of the "contrapuntal" comments that speechwriter Ted Sorenson often put into President Kennedy's speeches. For example, in one of his speeches, Kennedy said, "We must not negotiate from fear, but we must not fear to negotiate."

My Blog's URL is:

<http://reykr.livejournal.com/>

Jerry Baker

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

LONG OVERDUE, THANKS BARBARA

Posted by: suetiggers on Oct 10, 2009 9:56 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

I have for a long time suspected that women who send those super positive e-mails belong to the club of perpetuating the lie, i.e if we all just be more cheerful, positive, the world will change. How the guys on Madison Avenue and at places like Citibank must love that stuff. "Religion is the opium of the masses" ??yes, but also "have a nice day".

Grumps and curmudgeons unite....we at least know what's really happening. Rome is burning and this is what has been passed to our new leader.

Hope he isn't too cheery. an old woman

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Bravo!

Posted by: badkitty on Oct 10, 2009 10:31 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **Not yet rated** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

The relentless promotion of positive thinking--ever heard your manager say, "we face critical challenges--sales are down, we have to close stores and lay off staff". Excuse me, that sounds like we have critical "problems". I am so tired of seeing language mangled to try to put a positive spin on everything. But new age corporate speak does this all the time. Never will you hear a realistic assessment of anything.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

uncertainty

Posted by: Rusty Shackelford on Oct 10, 2009 11:58 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Uncertainty is no crime.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with rational thinking and being right in the middle there.

Positive thinking says: I WILL get through this crisis.

Negative thinking says: I WON'T get through this crisis.

Both sides seem absolutely certain about their fate, when, in reality, neither one really KNOWS what's going to happen.

There's nothing wrong with saying:

I DON'T KNOW what's going to happen in this crisis.

People prefer to take one side or the other because there's something far more frightening than anything else to them, and that's the fact that THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.

They would rather live in delusion, (positive or negative), than simply admit that they don't know, and be content to let things run their course.

Positive thinking is especially abhorrent because it tends to claim that one's destiny is completely within one's own control.

Things are determined by chance and probability. On THAT, can you base your views. NOT on dead certainty, positive or negative.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Upbeat

Posted by: willymack on Oct 10, 2009 1:04 PM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

I was really down in the dumps when a voice called out of the gloom, saying "Cheer up; things could be worse", so I cheered up, and sure enough, they got worse.

The Rodney Dangerfields school of thought may be at work here:

Hey, I had my identity stolen last month. A week ago, the thief called begging me to take it back. No respect.

In my opinion, a change in the economic order may be happening.

The change is viewed by most of us as a threat to our lives as we know them, but who knows? It may be a BENEFICIAL change. Then again.....

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Barbara and "Another Day in Paradise"

Posted by: ranger1 on Oct 10, 2009 1:18 PM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

I've been known to take on the positive outcomes folks aka just trust us by my greeting to fellow humans...before Bruce Willis made it a saying in a movie.

People will ask me how am I doing.

My response:

"It's just another day in paradise ...except for the Bush/Obama wars, corporate malfeasance, neoliberal trade policies, lying scheming mortgage loan lenders, securitizing bankers who sold AAA rated crap to my pension plan, AAA crap converted to AAA gold by security ratings agencies, 42,000 corporate lobbyists in Washington etc, etc,,,,other than that, it's all good.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

The causes of cancer

Posted by: PaulK on Oct 10, 2009 1:54 PM
Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Or we can say, "What's the cause of this? How are we going to get together and do something about it?" And I come down on that side.

200 years ago 1 in 1800 people got cancer. Our children will probably reach 1 in 2 people.

The causes of cancer are related to corporations making a penny and stealing our health. The food is drained of natural nutrients and is stuffed with carcinogenic chemicals that you don't taste. The stuff under your sink is carcinogenic too. You put carcinogens on your skin.

How are we going to get together..

On the Internet of course. We're going to have to develop a system to successfully screen out most or all of the paid pro-carcinogen boiler room bloggers. That's the next step, and we're not completely stupid, you know. After that we'll organize faster and better.

..and do something about it?

I expect a general movement toward third-party non-governmental certification. Is a co-op or a company a good corporate citizen or no? The good ones band together in an economic (and somewhat political?) union and lock out the others from our community. The baddies can always go off and murder the dwindling pool of citizens that still trust them.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

SUPERSTITION/EGO=REALITY=EGO/CYNICISM or CYNICISM/EGO=REALITY=EGO/SUPERSTITION

Posted by: blurider on Oct 10, 2009 3:14 PM
Current rating: **4** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

CHOOSE!

Have you ever watched an injured animal licking a wound and observed that it appeared in time to aid the healing? Have you thought that the animal couldn't consciously 'know' that the licking action might help? Like it or not, there's 'magic' involved. Not a 'magic' trick as we've come to think of it nor a religious epiphany but simply a part of reality that we haven't always understood. That animal and his earliest ancestors have intuitively 'known' for centuries that he was both increasing the blood flow and circulation to the injury and directing his own mental energy toward the wound and it's healing. Such 'knowledge' seems to have been passed in his DNA more than by example or 'discovery'.

While dogs have licked their wounds since pre-historic times, modern medicine has only recently accepted that our minds are capable of healing or aiding the healing of, our bodies.

As always, 'magic' is simply something we don't, yet understand.

Many years ago in pre-pubescence, I had my first experience of solving my daily, mundane problems in my dreams. At first I accepted it as mystical but certainly useful and a 'gift'. Since - many decades later, I have realized that it's just my subconscious mind working overtime while my body and my conscious mind, rest. The 'practice' works as well for the adult, more 'rational' me as it did for the young, 'mystical' me but I've come to accept that I can't control it through any rational procedure, ritual or discipline beyond mere documentation - sketching and writing notes as I begin my morning in the conscious world. There are problems that can be solved rationally during my waking hours while some problems are more difficult and may not lend themselves to any solution. Then there are those which seemingly, may be solved only by my subconscious while I sleep.

After years of 'trying' I've come to accept that I have little control except to cultivate the habits of a visionalry artist and to accept and to 'keep' through my practice. all the gifts of my dreams - some just visual material for new art, some the solution to problems that apply to other, more mundane aspects of my life - all useful and all gifts from the very edges of the realms of 'magic'.

From my experience in my reality as both a rational man who deals with the practical aspects of business and the mystical aspects of creativity, I'd have to say tha Barbara Ehrenreich is both right and wrong! She is quite right that positive thinking (magical thinking) will neither balance your checkbook nor address our economic issues. She couldn't be more correct in pointing out how some have been manipulated and misled by a kind of mass hysteria and how counterintuitive it is to mix (fake) spirituality with materialism and greed

I will grant too, that most if not all, of what she might be mistaken about, science hasn't yet discovered but all the same I'm convinced from my own experience that there exists a space in which she is very likely, very badly, mistaken!

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

Ms E's Premise Is Not Legitimate -- It's Marketing

Posted by: johnyradio on Oct 10, 2009 5:17 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)Current rating: **3** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

it's surprising to hear this praise of negativity coming from a progressing blog-- it's usually right-wingers who spew negativity.

the comments in this thread are all over the map, because i think Ms. E's premise is not legitimate.

there's mounting scientific indication that emotions affect physical health (see my links above to research studies). which has NOTHING to do with Amway, Wall Street, or the Bible.

her position speaks neither to the Left nor to the Right, she's just attempting to rouse the emotions of both.

i'm sure she'll sell some books.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **Looked at her book yesterday and she cites 2 studies that show positive cancer patients do worse** Posted by: Beck

» **Positive cancer patient, eh?** Posted by: Benn_Miller

» **RE: NOT CALLED FOR** Posted by: improperly_sedated

» **You're right. I think I'll put the political gun down here.** Posted by: Benn_Miller

» **A Very Weak Metaphor** Posted by: johnyradio

Everything is not fine

Posted by: Angela Flynn on Oct 10, 2009 6:56 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Blue Window: A Christian Science Childhood by Barbara Wilson is a good expose on the harm done by irrational positive thinking. Wilson's grandmother was a remote healer. Her mother went crazy after she was diagnosed with breast cancer as it was not a possibility for her to be sick. The poor woman drank Drano in an effort to kill herself rather than live with the fact that she had failed to live up to the CS faith. Her grandmother never admitted to her religious/social group that her daughter had come down with breast cancer.

This is what Ehrenreich is lamenting. In irrational positive thinking there is a disconnect with reality and then there is the corresponding lack of taking action to enact needed change. This is a corporate practice. Rather than face the harm done by business practices the strategy is to demonize/ridicule those who draw attention to and try to change them.

Everything is not fine. We are facing the most dire environmental crisis in human history. The irrational positive thinkers insist we do nothing. The rational positive thinkers are creating the change we need, but they are hindered every step of the way by the irrational positive thinkers. We need to wake them up out of their dream. It is a dream that is turning the world into a nightmare.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

Positive thinking is....

Posted by: Romantic Violence on Oct 10, 2009 7:18 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

positive denial...if you don't think so, look at what's been happening for the past 30 years..

FTW

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

the optimism trap

Posted by: crmcvin on Oct 10, 2009 8:49 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

yes - agreed the point is everybody thinks they will win in the big casino called america- and it's actually wired for the banks and big boy companies. banks that set arbitrary due dates for payments then punish you with money that could be used for food and medicine to line their pockets. they should be stopped - the optimism trap keeps us from rebelling - for example -all of us should stop paying all credit card bills until they 2% interest (like our bank accounts earn) and reasonably scheduled for payments (at least 30 days a cycle) to keep paying these crooks is an act of self destruction in the name of optimism and we should ALL stop doing it today.

[\[< Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment >\]](#) [\[Rate this comment: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5\]](#)

» **RE: the optimism trap** Posted by: Romantic Violence

It is better to face an known devil that is negative than an unknown devil that is fake positive.

Posted by: Benn_Miller on Oct 11, 2009 6:50 AM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

With the former, you know what's coming and will prepare yourself. With the latter, too many shocking betrayals up close and personal.

[[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Pros and Cons of "Positive Thinking"

Posted by: Lily H. on Oct 11, 2009 8:41 AM
Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

[[Report this comment](#)]

I would like to offer perhaps an interesting view of BE's cancer experience. She outlined her ordeal in a Harper's Magazine article, entitled "Happyland", where when she was diagnosed with her cancer, she was inundated with pink ribbons, etc. and told to think happy thoughts. From what I can gather, seems BE didn't quite take to the cotton-candy environment currently surrounding the breast-cancer movement.

I speak from first-hand experience, as I too, "joined" the breast-cancer community in 2005. I was also surrounded by myriads of pink accessories, and while in the beginning, I thought it was juvenile and kind of immature. As time (and my ordeal) wore on, I started to take to some of the cute-sey items, and when I go to chemo now, I wrap a toy stuffed animal around my IV pole, so the nurses and other patients have something funny to look at during those dreary hours.

I get the sense from her accounts that BE probably needed more personal support and wasn't seeming to get any. My hospital set me up with a wonderful support group, maybe BE needed to do that as well? As BE spoke of her experiences with the job coach sessions, seems she just isn't a real "joiner", that is, prefers to operate solo instead. Well, if that's the case, then she shouldn't have expected the world to fall at her feet in her time of crisis.

Another perspective that she is mostly correct on in the "positive thinking" tenet is that of my ex-husband. When I met him thirty years ago, he was already drinking the Kool-Aid of positive thinking while in college working towards a business degree.

He was constantly braying that with just a little time and perseverance, he was going to graduate and secure a well-paying career in short order. While there was nothing wrong with that in the main, he had many inner personal flaws (I discovered much later) that this popular and sunshiny view tended to conceal.

It was apparent that just taking on the view of "positive thinking" became a substitute for dealing with one's own personal issues and how to maximize one's own potential based on reality, not simple bromides.

Since then, while he never achieved his imagined goals, I had to grapple with the reality of what our lives would have been if I'd stayed with him and his overactive imagination. Deciding this was definitely NOT the choice I wished for myself and our children, I chose to leave him and pick up the pieces.

What motivated me was not pure positive thinking, but that along with a healthy dose of anger at the situation I needed to change and my willingness to go the extra mile it took in doing so. At no time did I believe positive thinking alone would be sufficient, and anyone who thinks that is emotionally deficit.

After my experiences, I believe BE's views are valid, but with a disclaimer. Short-sightedness cloaked in the banner of "positive thinking" just sets one up for gross failure and a dismal outcome. Reality needs to be a part of the picture, and that includes those following "The Secret" and those Oprah-watchers clinging to her every word.

[[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Culture of Debt Created By Culture of Greed

Posted by: johnyradio on Oct 11, 2009 9:11 AM
Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

[[Report this comment](#)]

The segment of society who succumbed to unrealistic optimism are the naive home-buyers who got over their heads in debt.

The same consumers who bought into the culture of debt perpetrated by companies like General Motors ([starting 100 years ago](#)), and feel-good advertising spewed by TV.

That kind of "positive thinking" has played a significant role in our problems today, but it was birthed by a culture of greed, which Ms. E minimizes-- "You can't rule out greed and the exceeding rapid nature of transactions and globalization and all that".

[[« Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment »](#)] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

She said much the same in "This Land is Their Land"

Posted by: Parcival01 on Oct 11, 2009 9:38 AM
Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

[[Report this comment](#)]

I've always been an attempted believer in positive thinking, but as a concept, NOT as a theology.

The roots of the "theology" can be traced at least to the 1930s with Napoleon Hill's "Think and Grow Rich." And it's been encouraged by Dale Carnegie, Norman Vincent Peale, and, these days, the "Secret" nonsense. Ehrenreich eloquently commented on all of them--and a host of other motivational speakers,

and the CEOs who endorse them, in "This Land Is Their Land."

I think I'll pick up this latest book too.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

» **RE: She said much the same in "This Land is Their Land"** Posted by: dealmeinfo2

What's wrong with "Realistic Thinking"?

Posted by: wtfo on Oct 11, 2009 10:05 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

This was an interesting article because it brought to light things that I have frequently thought about. When dealing with life's problems, I have often been chastised as being "too negative" by others when I am really simply trying to be as realistic as I can be. Why is it that we typically seem to confuse realism with pessimism?

I hope that when I finally have to come face-to-face with my mortality or (even worse) the mortality of my loved ones, I will be able to draw strength from being sentient and intelligent and, most importantly, realistic in my response.

My concern with overly-positive thinking or "just leaving the problem to God" is that it really doesn't help you too much when that's all you do and things don't get any better as a result. If your only response to serious problems is to just put on a happy face and think positive or drop on your knees and pray, then the difficult work of truly dealing with the problem at hand and planning for best AND worst-case scenarios is short-changed.

How many times have you heard of people who were faced with an imminent and highly potential end-of-life difficulty and, in spite of their positive attitude and religious convictions, ultimately lost the battle and left their family much worse off than if they had instead suddenly had their life snuffed out? When facing your possible end of life wouldn't it be better to instead focus on the REALISTIC choices and making sure that you have covered the worst case scenario just in case the best case scenario does not play out?

Many years ago I was a skydiver and, being well aware of the negative potential of a less-than-successful jump, I researched heavily into what to do when things went wrong. Interestingly, there was not too much in the research about keeping a positive attitude and very little about praying. What there WAS of interest basically centered on:

- 1) Realistically and honestly appraising the situation as quickly as possible
- 2) Determining the possible things to do to eliminate the problem at hand as quickly as possible
- 3) Choosing the best alternative
- 4) Implementing the plan immediately

Failing to do any of the above steps in the right order and within the very limited time at hand pretty much insured the worst case scenario. Even more importantly, for this problem there was only one person you could count on - yourself. And your success or failure in dealing with your problem was entirely dependent on realistically doing everything right as quickly as possible.

I no longer skydive but the lessons learned from the above mental exercise have been ingrained into my thinking. So, the only positive thinking that I now strive for is the kind that results in realistically doing what I need to do myself to fix the problem - knowing that, in spite of everything that can be done, eventually there are some problems that I simply will not be able to correct in time.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Too much positive thinking leads to complacency

Posted by: Just Me on Oct 11, 2009 10:11 AM

[[Report this comment](#)]

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

While this may be my own opinion I do think that too much positive thinking leads to complacency. People simply don't try to improve their situation/condition because they are too caught up in believing that things are "just fine" as they are so there's no need to change a thing. Further I find that people ignore the wrongs that exist and so nothing ever changes because no one accepts that there is a problem.

I have to agree that it's only those at the top that tell others to think positively since it serves as a distraction while the "haves" continue to get more.

Sure it is said that we must be upbeat and look forward to a positive outcome but in order to realize the outcome we want we have to first acknowledge that there is something wrong and then actually do something to change it.

In the workplace those who speak up about issues that need resolution are told to keep their negative comments to themselves so as not to impact morale even if morale is already low to begin with because of the problems that exist.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

I Believe in God

Posted by: marjani on Oct 11, 2009 10:19 AM
Current rating: **4** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

[[Report this comment](#)]

But nobody told Norman Vincent Peale or Joel Osteen or Kenneth Copeland or any of these other folks to go around preaching straight BS. This stuff takes people out of reality about the way the real world works. You can't "speak jack into existence" - what's going to be is going to be, and you don't have to think about it. It just is. Positive thinking doesn't take the place of the body's healing powers and medicine. It causes people to think they can heal themselves with their thoughts alone and that is a lie. However, if you MUST think and you must, the best thing to do is remain upbeat. Being downcast won't help, either. Just understand that positive thoughts alone don't heal.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

What about

Posted by: joseywales on Oct 11, 2009 10:29 AM
Current rating: **3** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

[[Report this comment](#)]

the correlation between what we think and how our body responds to those thoughts? Do our bodies respond to thought with bio-chem reactions? Can you think yourself into or out of clinical depression? Is clinical depression the result of a chemical imbalance or just negative thought-ing or are both interconnected? Does prayer have a similar process? Maybe it is all of the things discussed here but are simply not yet connected/linked in a way we understand. Lots of things to consider which imho makes this topic so exciting.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

The most dangerous "positive" illusion

Posted by: daw13 on Oct 11, 2009 10:45 AM
Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

[[Report this comment](#)]

is that however awfully the United States beats up on its "enemies" -- little people, inconveintly demanding a place at the table, mostly -- our powers that be will prevail. The worst consequence for us who give a shit, and live on our-gang's turf, is to have to witness the trashing of others. Kind of like Billy Holiday's song, Strange Fruit. How awful what our leaders do to others. But not to us.

This is crap. The world has changed. What we do to them they will do back to us, quite effectively. It's not politically correct on the Left to view Third Worlders as other than victims. But they have become much more than merely victims. Our "positive thinking" that we can escape the fate we visit upon others, no matter how we claim to deplore it, is the most dangerous illusion we maintain.

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Religious nonsense

Posted by: nonknown101 on Oct 11, 2009 12:15 PM
Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

[[Report this comment](#)]

this is the basis of theism, your so-called positive thinking is the act of "lets pretend", you remember the kids game that if you pretend real hard it should come true, same exact thing!
the christian right uses this technique to shut up the opposition.
positive thinking is used to fire employees that don't believe they should be robbed by their employer, this is the begining of the come back of slavery folks, don't argue with the master or you'll be whipped, thats what this all about!!!

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Many years ago I lost a lover due to the "positive thinking

Posted by: outsideagitator on Oct 11, 2009 2:19 PM
Current rating: **5** [[1](#) = poor; [5](#) = excellent]

[[Report this comment](#)]

BS". After several years of being together my partner began to tire of constant organizing against the power structure that was busily trying to loot the middle and working class. We agreed that I should go to a shrink to see if I could change by behaviour somewhat so that I was not always so angry. I had a hell of a time finding a shrink who could understand my anger and constant organizing with labor and peace and environmental groups. The attempt was a failure and I had a rough time getting along without for a while. She finally told me that I was "like a lightning rod for trouble, whenever I showed up there was always conflict happening," Well she was right, and I had to choose between the shrink trying to get me to chill out with the organizing and my lover's desire that I cut out all the direct action against those for whom I had such anger.

though I lost that relationship, which made me sad I know I made the right decision. I feel good about my decision to keep on keeping on, to join with others to fight back, to build a vision of a better alternative and to hell with the smiley faced naysayers. Barbara is so right. The actions taken together collectively to fight social injustice, stop these senseless and cruel wars, and maybe even heal our environment are the reward, win or loose.

Joseph

[< [Reply to this comment](#)] [[Post a new comment](#) >] [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

» [Sometimes, people are afraid of their closest doing the right thing.](#) Posted by: Benn_Miller

Thank you, Dr. Ehrenreich.

Posted by: zigy on Oct 11, 2009 2:58 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **5** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

Thank you for all you have done for the "little people" like me. You are a great gift to the American people in what is left of this god-forsaken, god-damned, miserable society.

[\[« Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment »\]](#) [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

Ah, barb, stalwart champion against the threat of straw-men invading the intellectual space...

Posted by: franklyspanking on Oct 11, 2009 4:47 PM

[\[Report this comment\]](#)

Current rating: **1** [1 = poor; 5 = excellent]

it's believing that the world is shaped by our wants and desires and that by focusing on the good, the bad ceases to exist.

...by no other means than making sure they're all in her preferred tent o' demons.

Good luck shilling your latest propaganda!

[\[« Reply to this comment\]](#) [\[Post a new comment »\]](#) [Rate this comment: [1](#) - [2](#) - [3](#) - [4](#) - [5](#)]

[Home](#) [Mobile](#) [Newsletters](#) [Video](#) [Blogs](#) [Discuss](#) [RSS/XML](#) [About](#) [Search](#) [Donate](#) [Contact Us](#) [Advertise](#)

Reproduction of material from any AlterNet pages without written permission is strictly prohibited.
© 2009 Independent Media Institute. All rights reserved.