Emotional Invincibility: How To Build a Reservoir of Strength, Health and Wealth

June 17, 2011 By Alexander Avila

Have you ever felt invincible, on top of the world, incapable of being defeated? Maybe, you've felt like that at times when things were going well: your money was right, your relationships were great, and you felt healthy and happy. But, unfortunately, that feeling of invincibility usually doesn't last very long. When your relationships go sour, your money gets tight, your career is not advancing, and the world seems like a dangerous and troubled place--that is when your shield of invincibility starts to break apart--and you end up feeling down in the dumps: dissatisfied, frustrated, and worried.

Now, there's a simple, research-proven way to build a long-lasting and long-term sense of emotional and physical well-being. It boils down to a simple formula: Create more positive feelings in your life on a daily basis, and these feelings will help you build long-lasting psychological and physical resources. When you need them, you can tap into these resources to become more successful, healthier, and happier. It's as simple as that.

During the last 13 years, psychologist Dr. Barbara Fredrickson at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has done ground-breaking research to support the Broaden and Build (B & B) Theory of Positive Emotions. According to the B & B theory, daily experiences of positive emotions like curiosity, affection, compassion, and enthusiasm compound over time to build our personal psychological and physical resources. Think of a reservoir, the collected water that is held back by a dam, and that, when released, can generate a great deal of electrical energy. In the same way, your positive emotions--your reservoir of strength--are built up in your mental dam, and can generate a great deal of positive energy and action over the long-term. If you store enough positive emotions in your mind on a daily basis, you will be better able to meet life's challenges, take advantage of opportunities, and live a healthy and happy life.

For example, researchers have found that people with a high level of curiosity and interest will tend to build expertise in their chosen fields, and consequently receive more income, prestige, and career satisfaction. Similarly, a high affection person will build love with a mate on a daily basis--resulting in a life-long, loving, and happy marriage. Overall, research has shown that a high level of daily positive emotions (amusement, awe, contentment, joy, gratitude, hope, and interest, for example) have been linked to a great number of personal resources and benefits:

*novel/creative thoughts and action
*flexible goals and mindsets
*resilience: the ability to adapt to changing environments and bounce back from adversity
*better relationships and greater marital satisfaction
*higher income
*better physical health
*less depression
*faster recovery (lowered heart rate) when under anxiety and stress.

How do you build these positive emotions on a daily basis? Researchers are validating simple interventions or techniques that you can use on a daily basis to help you build your reservoir of positive emotions. These include:

1. Loving kindness Meditation (LMK) (Fredrickson et al, 2008): Sit comfortably at home, and focus on your heart region, as you think about a person or animal you care about and have warm feelings toward. Now, mentally extend these warm feelings first to yourself, then to a widening circle of other people. Feel your love emanating in waves from your heart area outward to countless people. Research shows that people who practice LMK to build positive emotions on a daily basis savor the future more, are masters of their environment, enjoy more social support, have greater self-acceptance, enjoy a stronger sense of purpose in life, and suffer from fewer illness symptoms.

2. 3 Good Things In Life (Seligman and Steen, 2005): At the end of the day, write down three good things that went well for you today. Explain why those three things happened. Do this every night for a week. In a research study, people who did this exercise had increased happiness and decreased depression during a six month period.

3. Use Signature Strengths In A New Way (Seligman and Steen, 2005): Write down your signature (main) strengths, like curiosity, appreciation of beauty, affection, etc., and use one of these strengths in a new and different way every day for one week. For example, if appreciation of beauty is one of your top strengths, then you may decide to take a painting class, visit nature, play with animals, and so forth.

There are many ways to create daily positive emotions. For more ideas, you can email me at lovetype4u@aol.com for simple techniques tailored to your particular personality and strengths. Remember: a little positive emotion each day goes a long way toward helping you build a lifetime of success, prosperity, health, and happiness.

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