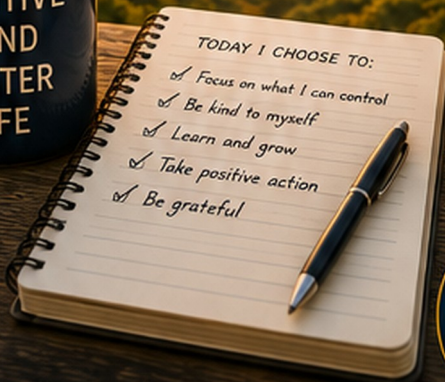


THE BETTER LIFE SERIES

PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGY FOR REAL LIFE

THINK POSITIVE LIVE BETTER

How to Rewire Your Mind, Overcome
Negative Thinking and Create
a Happier, Stronger You



ALDEN M. CORVALE

THE BETTER LIFE SERIES

BOOK THIRTEEN

THINK POSITIVE, LIVE BETTER

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Publishing note

This general-interest self-help book is educational and is not a substitute for individualized medical or psychological care. Positive thinking is presented here as a set of cognitive and behavioral skills, not as a guarantee of health, wealth or success.

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PREFACE

Positive thinking has a branding problem. It is often presented as a choice between optimism and realism, as if seeing the good requires ignoring the bad. This book takes a different position. Useful positivity is reality-based. It notices difficulty, then asks what interpretation and action will help you respond well.

Thoughts matter because they shape attention, emotion and behavior. They do not control other people, cure illness, erase structural problems or guarantee success. The promise here is smaller and more defensible: you can learn to recognize mental habits, challenge unhelpful conclusions, widen perspective and act in ways that support your values.

The strongest version of positive thinking is not “everything will work out.” It is “whatever happens, I will try to meet it with clarity, flexibility and courage.” That is the mindset we will build.

INTRODUCTION

This book combines ideas from cognitive psychology, emotion regulation, positive psychology and behavior change. It is written for everyday use rather than clinical treatment. You will find thought records, reappraisal prompts, gratitude practices, environmental changes, habit design and realistic optimism.

The evidence does not support every popular claim. Positive psychology interventions show average benefits, but effect sizes vary. Growth-mindset interventions have mixed evidence for hard outcomes. Extreme affirmations can backfire. Toxic positivity can invalidate emotion. Those limits are not reasons to abandon positive thinking; they are reasons to practice a better version of it.

The working definition used throughout the book is simple: positive thinking is the deliberate practice of interpreting experience in ways that are accurate, flexible, compassionate and useful enough to support constructive action.