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Is positive thinking bunk?

For years I've focused on learning the *external* self-help skills. How can I communicate better? How does my body language support my message? What does his body language tell me about his thoughts on my proposal? How can goal setting make me successful?

I know, I know, all of the "gurus" tell you that you need to start inside. I know they say improve your attitude. Work on your confidence. Examine and develop your values.

But that all is vague, fuzzy, and takes time. It's easy to learn to read body language. I see instant results by changing the words I use. Goal setting has easily defined results as I get to check off my completed activities and goals.

But that only takes you so far. And to really move to the highest levels you need to become a better person.

Hindsight is 20/20

Don't get me wrong, the *external* skills took me pretty far. This is especially true with my career and with my personal finances. And along the way my *internal* side improved as well, but it started to lag behind.

The problem is that I'd reached my limits unless I became a better person. To make matters worse, I wasn't happy. Since I hadn't clearly defined what I stood for and believed in, I found that I was often acting in ways that didn't make me feel good. Since I hadn't explored my purpose in life, my goals often took me away from what I really wanted.

That is where the *internal* comes in

I now understand why you need to explore and develop your beliefs and who you are. It's why becoming more confident and exercising the demons from your past is critical.

Positive thinking (or positive mental attitude) is a perfect example. Until I looked closely at my life, I thought I was pretty positive. I smile a lot. I'm generally a nice guy. I tend to be optimistic.

But when I looked closely I noticed things that weren't so positive. I tend to look for problems because I defined myself as a problem solver. I tend to have a "shortage" mentality and looked at the glass as half empty. I didn't have a fully developed belief system so I shot down conflicting views before they could disrupt my life view.

You get the picture.

With age comes wisdom

No, I'm not old and decrepit. But I have gone to great lengths to learn from my experiences, and I'd like to think I'm becoming wiser. One of the major things I've figured out is that it all starts inside me. Knowing who I am and what I believe in makes it easier to make the right decision and have open discussions with opposing viewpoints. By knowing my purpose in life, my life is more focused and I can spend time on activities that fulfill me. My improved confidence has me willing to take on life changing stretch goals and challenges.

And the strange part is that I've suddenly become much better at all of the external skills. Since I'm no longer "faking it until I make it" it's easier to communicate. Since I know my purpose in life and have aligned my goals with my purpose, I find it easier to be motivated and to get it done. Since I know my values and beliefs, it's easier to "think win-win."

You can also find this article published on [Is positive thinking bunk?](#), and on the tag pages [attitude](#), [belief](#), [Better Person](#), [Body Language](#), [confidence](#), [Critical Thinking](#), [Demons](#), [goal](#), [Goal Setting](#), [goals](#), [Gurus](#), [Hindsight Is 20](#)

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