

LMI Journal



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Plan Every Year with Positive Expectancy

By Paul J. Meyer

The upcoming new year can be one of great accomplishment. You can access your untapped potential, receive merited recognition, and achieve worthy goals in all areas of life. It is up to you to make the new year exciting and rewarding. The new year will bring accomplishment, realization, and achievement when you approach each day with positive expectancy.

Positive expectancy is an attitude you must adopt and maintain daily. The greatness of your accomplishments depends upon your understanding and application of the principles of positive expectancy.

To illustrate the power of positive and negative expectancy, Norman Vincent Peale told a story about a group of people who, at the end of the year, committed to writing their expectations for the new year. Each person in the group wrote down his/her expectations and closed them in a sealed envelope to be opened the following year.

When the time came to read aloud the contents of the envelope, all were surprised to find that the expectations of each person had been fulfilled. One person had written: "All I can expect is more of the old, miserable same," which unfortunately, was realized. Another person listed ten worthy goals he expected to achieve

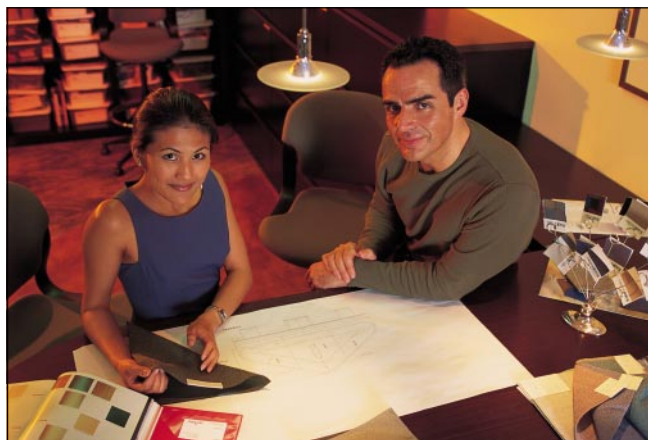
and found that nine had been accomplished.

You receive exactly what you expect, whether your expectations are positive or negative. You can see from these examples, and probably personal experiences, that an attitude of positive expectancy is crucial to accomplishment and success.

How Can You Plan Each Day with Positive Expectancy?

First, you must vividly imagine. You must develop the faculty of seeing, with your mind's eye, a concise and clear image of your expectations. The law of attraction is demonstrated by the tendency to draw to ourselves that which we set out for ourselves. It is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve beyond our self-imposed expectations. You must understand and exploit the natural tendency of becoming precisely what you imagine yourself to be. Your mental picture of expectancy is most likely to become a reality.

Second, you must ardently desire. The more vivid your expectancy, the stronger your desire becomes toward the achievement of your goals. An ardent desire burning within creates a success consciousness that develops habits of success. Those habits



"This can be a year of great accomplishment... It is up to you to make this year exciting and rewarding."

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drive dividends commensurate with your investment; they consistently challenge you to climb to greater heights. You enthusiastically accept the challenge of accomplishing your dreams.

Third, you must sincerely believe. The accomplishment of your goals, however vividly imagined and ardently desired, also depends upon a sincere belief in your ability and worthiness to attain them. Speaking of the power of such belief, Benjamin Disraeli said, “Man is not the creature of circumstances. Circumstances are the creature of man.” William James affirmed the same truth when he said, “Our belief at the beginning of a doubtful undertaking is the only thing that insures the successful outcome of our venture.”

Fourth, you must enthusiastically act. Enthusiasm and action are effective partners in bringing imagination, desire, and belief into reality. You must plan the short-term actions required to accomplish your goals. You must consider all the obstacles you expect to face and accept them as opportunities for creativity. Actions empowered by enthusiasm breed a positive state of acceptance of yourself and others. In such an atmosphere of acceptance and selflessness you find that

“Obstacles challenge and strengthen your ability, resolve, and understanding.”

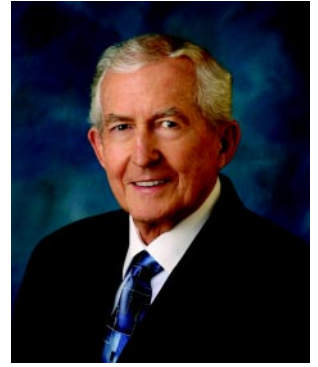
the more you give, the more you are capable of giving, and the more you give the more you receive in return. The un-failing cycle of giving and receiving reinforces your commitment to positive expectancy.

When you live with positive expectancy, it does not mean that life will be free from disappointment, frustration, and difficulties. You acknowledge the negatives inherent in life as mere obstacles to your goals. Obstacles challenge and strengthen your ability, resolve, and understanding.

Positive expectancy allows you to transform prob-

“Positive expectancy allows you to transform problems into procedures and adversity into opportunity.”

– Paul J. Meyer



lems into procedures and adversity into opportunity. With the pervading thoughts and concise mental picture of positive expectancy, you seek personal growth and welcome change.

If you want to live each day with positive expectancy, you must **vividly imagine** great accomplishments. You must **ardently desire** that this year will be the best year of your life. You must **sincerely believe** in your abilities and in the goodness of others. You must **enthusiastically act** upon your own plans and seize every opportunity to achieve.

Challenge yourself today to plan and live the new year with thoughts and dreams filled with positive expectancy.

“If you want to live each day with positive expectancy, you must vividly imagine great accomplishments. You must ardently desire that this year will be the best year of your life. You must sincerely believe in your abilities and in the goodness of others. You must enthusiastically act upon your own plans and seize every opportunity to achieve.”



Choosing Courage

Courage is the state or quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face threatening situations with self-assurance and self-reliance. Courage is bravery and valor; it is the quality that athletes sometimes call "heart." Courage is inner strength, moral stamina, and the inherent capacity for rising to a challenge with steadfastness of purpose. Courage is faith in oneself. Courage is self-confidence!

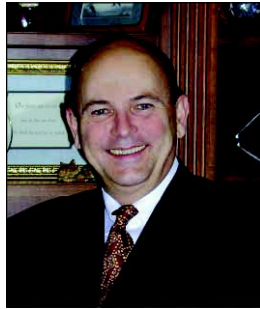
Great thinkers from all areas of life and all eras have recognized the power of attitudes. Karl Menninger, the celebrated psychiatrist, said, "Attitudes are more important than facts." William James, the noted psychologist, said, "The greatest discovery in our generation is that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change all the outer aspects of their lives." Lord Byron, the great English poet, said, "We can choose our attitude in any set of circumstances."

Once you make a commitment to adopt the winning attitudes of self-confidence and courage, you see appreciable improvements almost immediately.

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The Power of Choice – Step Three: Accountability



David Byrd
President, LMI

Over the last two months I have described the important role our actions and attitudes play in the choices we make.

This article concludes the power of choice series with the definition of the third step: accountability. What I would like for you to remember about accountability is that accountability is a choice, not a crutch. Accountability pushes you beyond your self-imposed limitations.

In my early years after college, I was a high school football coach and later went on to coach at the college level. I learned

one of my most significant leadership lessons while coaching high-potential athletes: Natural talent, such as size, speed, strength, and intelligence, is nothing more than untapped potential, and there is one ingredient required of the gifted athlete in order to develop that potential – accountability. The high-potential athlete must come to accept 100 percent responsibility for developing and using his or her talents as an effective member of the team. When a gifted athlete matures to a level of personal accountability, he or she becomes a champion.

“You possess an infinite supply of potential. However, to reach that reserve, you must overcome your self-imposed limitations.”

You possess an infinite supply of potential. However, to reach that reserve, you must overcome your self-imposed limitations. The very essence of life is the passionate commitment to strive for a better tomorrow. If you want to be some-

thing tomorrow that you are not today, you need to develop your untapped potential. Doing more of the same will never raise you to another level.

Your untapped potential lies just beyond your comfort zone. Accountability is not comfortable. That is probably the reason many top leaders resist tracking their daily activity; it holds them accountable to effective actions. If you want your life to be filled with abundance and significance, never allow yourself the comfort of an excuse. Accountability eliminates all excuses; accountability is truly a choice, not a crutch.

Regardless of your current accomplishments, you have so much more to give. Potential represents an endless reserve, and that potential always lies just beyond your comfort zone. Many leaders constantly struggle with their comfort zone. They straddle two questions, do I settle for what is, or do I push toward what could be? I hope you are asking yourself these questions as well because effective change begins with awareness, and awareness always leads to choice. You cannot sidestep the issue of choice. Your choices regarding attitude, action, and accountability will determine the quality of your life and leadership. You must choose, so choose wisely.

With Positive Expectancy,

David Byrd
President, Leadership Management Institute™

The Philosophy of a Good Leader

Leadership ability and effectiveness are enhanced tremendously by a leadership philosophy that calls for belief in the worth of people, belief in their abilities, and belief in their potential for growth. This leadership philosophy forms a bedrock foundation for building sound relationships with team members – relationships that lead to personal growth and success for them, for their manager, and for the entire organization. Effective leaders possess this philosophy. They light the spark of imagination and creativity in themselves and in their followers. Effective leaders seek to unleash their own untapped potential as well as that of their people.

This optimistic philosophy of leadership is based on the assumption that you, as a motivated individual, can learn the skills essential to effective leadership. You undoubtedly already possess many of the skills needed for both personal and organizational effectiveness in a management position. The skills you now possess will serve as a foundation for further development and for adding techniques to your inventory of available resources as you work to achieve results through other people.

Status of a Leader

Any leadership position carries with it certain status, privileges, opportunities, and power. These benefits are a part of your compensation. You have the right to enjoy them; you have earned them. But privileges carry with them their own responsibilities. Recognize that the unique position that brings you honor and prestige also requires making decisions, solving problems, and performing services that no one else in the organization can perform. Your willingness to accept personal responsibility for your own leadership effectiveness will be admired and emulated by your team members. Acceptance of personal responsibility also means you admit to your team when you make a poor decision. After all, you are not perfect. People will respect you more, not less, for your openness and candor.

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An effective leadership philosophy also encompasses a sense of ethical responsibility. The ethics of an organization is concerned with the way people behave and with the values or standards that govern their actions and choices. Leaders are responsible for choosing the goals of the organization, establishing its direction, and determining its ethical standards. Ethical standards grow out of the basic beliefs and personal values of the top leaders. Certain standards in the areas of fairness, honesty, and personal responsibility, however, are widely accepted by the whole of society. **Effective leaders maintain these basic ethical responsibilities:**

▲ They obey the law. Operating within both the letter and the spirit of the law is a responsibility of leadership. Most laws are designed to protect particular portions of the

population: employees, workers, consumers, or the general public. Organizational rules and procedures should make it clear to all employees that the law must be obeyed. Policies and procedures should also make it possible for employees to do their work well while satisfying legal requirements.

▲ They deal honestly with clients or customers. Ethical behavior toward clients is more than a matter of right and wrong; it is good business as well, for satisfied customers come back again and again. Honest dealing includes providing a high quality product or service for consumers. They have the right to expect that the product or service you market

will accomplish what you claim and that it can be used with safety and confidence. Your clients should also be able to trust you to keep your commitments in regard to quality, delivery time, price, and credit terms.

▲ They treat team members fairly. Effective leaders seek to achieve the greatest possible results through directing

the efforts of people. But if they exploit people in the process of achieving results, they stand to lose good workers and, in the long run, lose the ability to produce results. Since the results achieved by the organization come from the efforts of all those who have a part in the work, it is the

responsibility of the leader to see that everyone benefits from what is earned in the process.

Opportunity in Every Difficulty

Innovation and creativity flourish when people challenge one another within good working relationships. When you face challenges with people, keep in mind that *in every adversity is the seed of an equal or greater benefit*. Whether you call them problems, challenges, difficulties, or differences, it is in working through these interpersonal issues that you, your organization, and your team members may be forced to better understand one another. You recognize previously overlooked strengths, abilities, and insights each person has to offer. You will also find that in resolving these difficulties, you can find the greatest opportunities to grow.

Some problems with people are preventable, but due to differences among people—perceptions, cultural backgrounds, life experiences, and more—some difficulties simply cannot be avoided. You and your team members may not agree on everything, but when you can agree on the overall goals, sometimes how you get there is not so important. By measuring results, not necessarily activity, you can continue to monitor progress and take corrective action when needed, yet at the same time, set an example of tolerating differences in the way people approach their work. A productive, effective organization can usually accommodate individual differences among team members when you, as manager, have clearly defined the overall goals and requirements of your organization. Rather than being a source of conflict, differences can be transformed into a wellspring of team creativity.

Productive Handling of Problems

Whether you are handling an informal complaint or a formal grievance, on a one-to-one basis or with a group, **use these basic techniques:**

- ◆ Be a good listener. Never interrupt while team members are talking, even if you disagree with the opinions expressed. Complaints often dissolve when people simply have a chance to talk about them.
- ◆ Ask questions. Your questions indicate interest and a desire for more information. You may uncover underlying causes or related problems. Open-ended questions like, “Why do you think we have this problem?” or “What do you think the solution might be?” accomplish more than closed questions that elicit only a “yes” or “no.” Through asking good questions, you

communicate that you do not unfairly prejudge people or situations.

- ◆ Do not argue. Present any information you have in a persuasive manner rather than an argumentative one. Arguing builds resistance and makes employees become determined to have their way regardless of facts. Asking questions can be an effective tool for disarming a potential argument. Your point of view is more persuasive when you demonstrate that you can see the bigger picture and that you refuse to be drawn into an argument.
- ◆ *Make sure you understand.* Some people have difficulty expressing themselves, so you must use all your questioning and listening skills to make sure you understand

their position. If they go away convinced you do not see their point, you have not helped them resolve the issue. Restate, summarize, and ask additional questions to make sure you understand their point of view.

- ◆ *Treat employees with respect.* Ridicule or comments that minimize a person’s concern are powerful and devastating and have no place in management. If you attempt to make someone else feel foolish, you destroy the lines of communication and trust. Let others save face and retreat gracefully.

- ◆ *Let the person know when to expect a response from you.* Your commitment to give an answer shows that you are taking the problem seriously and will

investigate. Many times, the problem can be settled on the spot, and the sooner the better.

- ◆ *Gather the facts.* If you cannot make a decision during the meeting, check the team member’s story, refer to employment agreements or other important documents, and – if appropriate – consult with higher management before making a final decision.
- ◆ *Make a decision.* Once you make a decision, stick to it firmly – even if it is unpopular – unless new evidence that deserves consideration is presented.
- ◆ *Explain your decision.* If your decision is distasteful to the team member, explain it and answer questions. Team members may not agree and may appeal your decision, but they will respect you for your stand.
- ◆ *Thank the team member.* Express your appreciation for the person’s willingness to communicate openly about problems. This encourages even more open communication in the future.



The Priority of Goals

Goal setting is the strongest human force for self-motivation. But not all goals have equal power of self-motivation. Some are more important than others. Some are clear and vivid; others are nebulous and difficult to define. Until you bring some kind of order, sequence and priority into the mass of dreams that constitutes your collection of goals, even those close at hand are difficult to achieve.

The Tangibility of Goals

One facet of goal setting frequently misunderstood is the necessity for both tangible and intangible goals. Many people feel guilty about wanting anything with tangible overtones for fear of appearing selfish. An equally large number of people have only tangible goals as though a person's worth were measured exclusively by material wealth. Both views are highly distorted. You cannot give undivided attention to self-fulfillment if you cannot afford a reasonable standard of living; and although you had the world's riches at your fingertips, without a purpose or ideals you would be miserable and frustrated.

Tangible goals are goals for attaining measurable achievement or for acquiring desirable possessions and are based on both needs and desires. A tangible need is expressed as an immediate or short-range goal. It includes material items that enhance your ability to reach other goals, develop new habits and attitudes, or attain a higher plateau.

Suppose, for example, your goal is to reduce turnover in your department by 20 percent next year. You find you need to read constantly to keep up, not only with new ideas about management of people that will help you reduce turnover, but also with the new technology directly related to your department's work. Routine duties take all your time. You decide that speed-reading skill would enhance your ability to reach your goal. When you include the development of this skill in your goals program, you find a solution for the time obstacle and enroll in the next available speed-reading course. Success of a goals program lies in the conscious choices you make almost daily that build the habits and attitudes of success.

In addition to tangible needs, you also experience many tangible desires: a vacation trip, a new home, a swimming pool, a recreational vehicle. Do not worry about whether you can afford these possessions nor how you can get them. Your list of tangible wants is merely a horizon expander.

As you follow this pattern – without limiting your belief in yourself – what now seems far away eventually becomes near, not because the goal shrinks, but because you grow and expand to match it.

Intangible goals are usually the internal changes required to reach other, more tangible goals. They are personality characteristics that must be developed on the road to becoming successful in your field or profession. Suppose you have a long-range goal to be the general sales manager for your company. You know that before you can achieve this tangible goal, you must develop greater decision-making ability, be able to overcome procrastination, and know how to motivate others. These behavior patterns – the internal changes necessary to reach your long-range goal – are your “intangible goals.” They are goals of “becoming” – of developing personality characteristics you do not already have or strengthening areas that are weak.

Sometimes tangible and intangible goals are inseparable. Most self-fulfillment needs fall into the category of intangible goals although the measuring stick may sometimes be tangible. Think, for example, of the work of Dr. Jonas Salk in developing the polio vaccine. Although he obviously had a goal to discover an effective polio vaccine, he was probably also motivated by a higher self-fulfillment drive to be of service, to



contribute something of value to society. The majority of great discoveries probably find their most significant motivation deep within the value system and self-fulfillment needs of their discoverers.

It may be difficult to reduce your intangible goals to writing, especially if they are also long-range and if you have had little previous goal-setting experience. But remember that your “Plan of Action” need never be seen by anyone else – not by your friends, or your boss, and parts, at least, not even by your family. So list your intangible goals with complete honesty. Crystallize your thinking to the best of your ability and describe the intangible accomplishments that inspire you, including the personality traits or habits of character you wish to develop. Although you may be unable, at this point, to define them clearly or to see immediately all the intermediate steps necessary to reach them, as you progress and grow in the habit of goal setting, you will make periodic refinements to your plan. A vivid image will gradually emerge of the goal itself and of the solution to any problem that stands in the way of its achievement.

Attitudes for Delegation Effectiveness

Understanding the nature of authentic, effective authority and power is inherent in empowering a team and practicing effective delegation. True power involves leading through character, example, and intellectual challenge. Personal power is strengthened and multiplies through surrendering it and investing it in others.

The most successful, powerful leaders in any organization are those who learn to delegate effectively, who surround themselves with competent people and then allow those people freedom to do the job. These leaders respect their people and their potential and liberate them to do what they do best, in their own way. This approach is difficult for those who have been conditioned to believe that effective action is accomplished by a group of people acting in a clone-like manner – behaving just as the leader would – rather than as individuals. Leaders who excessively control people destroy opportunities, along with one of the most important assets of team members: self-confidence.

Effective delegation increases the self-confidence and potential of every team member. Use the following ideas to develop appropriate attitudes for delegation effectiveness:

- ▲ Flexibility – Delegation must be accompanied by flexibility. Allow people to test new ideas, and you will enjoy the rewards of unexpected, innovative results. People will respond to situations and clients in ways more effective than you could have dreamed. Avoid the trap of overly standardized methods. When you adopt a flexible, adaptive attitude, delegation motivates and encourages others to take responsibility for thinking creatively about how and why they follow certain procedures. A flexible work environment enables workers to eliminate unnecessary steps and spend time only on activities that add value for the customer.
- ▲ Self-confidence – Self-confidence is the foundation for delegation without fear. Self-confidence gives you the freedom to share necessary information and resources to empower others through delegation. Self-confidence frees you to expect your team members to perform as well or better than you. One common reason leaders withhold authority and responsibility from other team

members is the fear of being replaced or unneeded. This attitude sacrifices progress of the whole group. A manager who has a deep need for personal power and the dependence of others often expects or demands unquestioning obedience – an expectation fatal to effective teamwork and maximum productivity. To free your time for the highest productivity, look for appropriate opportunities to delegate. You reinforce the ability and worth of your team members and build a reputation as an energetic person who focuses effort and time on maximum payoff activities. Find contributions you can make that no one else has the ability to perform. Delegate the rest. In this way, you maximize your strengths and also meet the needs of those to whom you report. A person consumed with the passion for finding new, creative, measurable ways to contribute to the organization will always be a vital, valuable team member.



▲ Focus on results – Develop consistent thought habits of believing that others are competent, intelligent, and capable of achievement. Believe that “different” is not necessarily undesirable. People to whom you delegate tasks are unlikely to use the methods you would, but their work is not necessarily inferior. Judge results rather than methods when you delegate. Set appropriate standards of excellence for yourself and your team members. The 80/20 principle operates in connection with delegation. When you remember that 80 percent of the results you obtain come from 20 percent of your activities, it is easier to accept less than perfection in some relatively unimportant areas.

- ▲ Team commitment – True heroes are team members who earn respect, involvement, and results through behind-the-scenes, consistent dedication to group goals. Taking credit for the work of others, not listening to their ideas, and working solo – these are all symptoms of a mistaken belief that effective leaders must always be unquestionably in control to command and inspire results from others. Release control of the activities you delegate to others. Constantly eliminate activities that minimize, undermine, or second-guess the work of other team members. To teach others how to make good decisions, involve team members in the process of making decisions. Permit others to make as many decisions for themselves as possible. Commit yourself to team empowerment and allow others to succeed and excel.

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