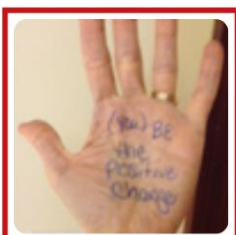
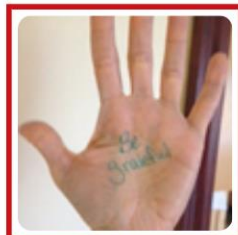
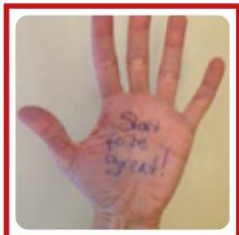


30 days of positivity



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30 Days of Positive

It is my goal to write a post each day about positive things that happen by starting with a quote or comment!

Life can be full of so many NON-positive things and sometimes it's hard to "count your blessings," as it were. Instead of thinking, "I only ran two miles this morning (read: should have run 3!)." Think positively and say: "I ran 2 MILES this morning! Wow, last year this time, I couldn't run for 2 minutes, let alone 2 miles. I've improved!"

It's all in your perspective.

I intend to change mine, hopefully yours, too. At least maybe make you laugh along the way. Stay tuned.

High Five – Be Positive

As I stated [in this post](#), I will be writing daily about thinking positively and will be including my “high five” pictures with quotes!

I will start by stating the obvious – there are so many negative things in the world like violence, hunger, taxes and the general unfairness of life. Another obvious statement, I am, by nature, a “glass half empty” sort of person. Not sure if it’s a generational, psychological, or hereditary phenomenon but I am a pessimist who tries to masquerade as an optimist.

With that being said, I’m taking the month of September to not only write about subjects on which I am educating myself – such as type indicator assessments, organizational psychology and learning and development training initiatives – but to find a way to be positive about the fact that for the second time in three years, I am being laid off due to the government contract on which I am working not being renewed.

So enough introductions, onto the Be Positive (B+) part of today’s High Five.

What do you have to be positive about?

On a basic level, we can be positive that most of us have minimum resources: food, shelter and clothing.

After that, we have electricity, running water, transportation, communication and we also have access to healthcare if needed. American psychologist [Abraham Maslow detailed our needs in a pyramid](#) starting with the physiological (food, shelter, clothing) and moving to safety, belonging, esteem and self-actualization.

I think most of us, having access to minimum resources, get hung up between safety (where’s my security in this ever-changing world?), belonging (what do my friends/partner think of me?), esteem (do others respect me?) and self-actualization (how can I accept the facts of my situation?). Of course, these do seem like “first world problems” but nonetheless keep us from being positive.

Some people say “count your blessings” and others say “what good have I done today” and I would challenge you to consider what you have to be not just happy – but positive about. For example, I have a nice home that sits on a few acres, a wonderful husband who supports me, two great dogs, and extraordinary friends that challenge me. I have the opportunity to volunteer, love to interact with people and learn something new each time I do. I dearly love running and power yoga – I find that these two activities bring me the closest to self-actualization as I may ever get! So just in the time it’s taken me to write this post, it seems that I have climbed the pyramid quite successfully. I am still working on finding security in a job but perhaps through positive thinking and by accepting the positive things I have, I can attain that security as well.

Please post in the comments if you have positive changes you would like to make, have made or need some encouragement to make!

High Five – Help Someone!

“We can’t help everyone, but everyone can help someone.” This quote is attributed to Ronald Reagan and it resonated with me in two positive ways. One is that you could help someone by volunteering outside of the work environment. Another is that you could help someone by training within the work environment.

I attended a conference over the weekend and one of the panels was about running (something near and dear to my heart.) One of the suggestions that stuck with me was to volunteer for a marathon race. This had never occurred to me since I run 5Ks. But the presenter stated that seeing a sign of encouragement or hearing cheers at mile 21 of a 26 mile race and having some chocolate or gummy bears available at that mile marker would make all the difference in the world. I know I wouldn’t be able to help everyone – some may not stop or be concentrating too hard on the finish line to even hear the cheer – but I could help someone finish who may be considering giving up at that crucial point.

On the training front, I have written processes to help users find their bearings within a new application. I’ve produced hard copy, online help, video screen capture processes and release notes to help that someone either with a refresher or those just logging into the application for the first time. Documentation is more often met with a grimace than a smile but I know that my step-by-step instructions helped someone; not everyone, but someone.

Another instance of helping someone involves starting [a local job networking group](#). Our mission for our Job Networking Group is to allow job seekers a place to meet with each other, area human resource representatives and career counselors to get employment advice and resume reviews. There are people that may not attend or may only attend one meeting; however, there may also be a member who attends, meets a recruiter, gets a job lead and starts to work in a few weeks. All of this because volunteers got together and started a group.

As your positive thought for the day, keep in mind that you may not be able to save the world all at once but by helping where you can; everyone can help at least one person.

High Five – Positive vs. Negative

“You cannot have a positive life and negative mind.” So, according to an article in More magazine that I read recently which lead me to the book written by neuropsychologist [Rick Hanson](#), PhD, called [Hardwiring Happiness: The New Brain Science of Contentment, Calm, and Confidence](#), all we need to do to be happy – and change our way of thinking to be positive – is rewire our brains. Or change the

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structure of the brain and how it responds to life experiences, thoughts and feelings. For example, have a good experience and dwell on it – thereby replacing a bad experience with a good one. Like saving a new file over an old one!

I am currently reading this book and will have a review soon; however, here's a link to the More magazine article.

<http://www.more.com/health/wellness/hardwire-yourself-be-happy>

I hope it influences you to read the book as well and allows you to reprogram you negative mindset to create a positive life.

High Five – One Step Starts a Long Journey

In researching positive thinking, I found a quote from Lao Tzu: “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” I immediately thought of all the journeys I wanted to undertake. It was exhilarating to know that traveling a long distance requires the simplest of motions to get started – taking the first step. That, however, is often the hardest part because there is fear – fear of risk, fear that there won't be enough resources or fear of giving up the life you already know. But, upon consideration, that first step allows you see a different perspective – closer to your goal – and can indicate a new, positive beginning, the start of something you've always wanted. Fear will be there, regardless, but it will fade with each successful step.

Everyone's journey is individual – some may include learning a new skill, breaking a bad habit (like negative thinking!), exercising more, losing weight, getting a business off the ground or writing a novel.

The journey I am planning involves going back to college for my Masters. For many years, I looked for a profession that would combine my love of process and organization (technical writing) and convey instructions either through eLearning online or as presentations (training) and conduct individual assessments to determine group interactions and organizational functions. And, after much investigation, I found [Organizational Psychology](#).

According to Onetonline.org, Organizational Psychologists “apply principles of psychology to human resources, administration, management, sales, and marketing problems. Activities may include policy planning; employee testing and selection, training and development; and organizational development and analysis. May work with management to organize the work setting to improve worker productivity.”

It appears to be everything in one bundle. However, taking the first step is a little unnerving. Logically, I know and I'm sharing this: with the right mindset, one step will follow another until the mile marker shows that a thousand miles has passed. So, get moving! I'll be walking right there, too.

High Five – Choose a Great Attitude

“The choice to have a great attitude is something nobody or no circumstance can take from you”

Choice implies control and you have the choice whether to be positive or negative. It is so incredibly easy to say: “I hate this job!” or “If I had this then I could do that.” Or “There are neither opportunities nor support here!” I’ve said it, done it, been it and swam in it and I have the t-shirt to prove it.

Last year all that negativity took its toll on me and I made a huge change in my life. After 5 years of living in four separate cities, in three different houses and changing jobs, I had given up exercising and eating well (always the first to go, am I right?). So the pounds added up, days were struggled through and over-caffeinated fatigue was the norm. I made a decision; I would lose weight, start eating well, and run a 5k race – all before my next birthday which at the time would have been 6 weeks away. With that goal, I learned to cook and I slapped the Couch-to-5K app on my iPhone. Sugar and caffeine were the first casualties, processed foods were next and the challenge of drinking battleship-sinking amounts of water was accepted. My mantra was: There are some things I can control and some things I can’t – I can control my attitude and how well I treat myself.

Did the mantra about control lead to a more positive attitude? Yes. The pounds came off and I ran my first race in 6 years. My attitude toward meeting my goal was always positive and with each small victory I would chanted, “I can do this. I can control this.” And I did.

In researching my posts, I found an article from a few years ago about [using positive thoughts and health affirmations to create better health](#). Three different studies were funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health and researchers found that being optimistic can positively affect health and well-being.

In short, decide to maintain a great attitude. I know it sounds simple and in some way like a platitude but it’s true, a great attitude cannot be taken from you by another person or circumstance – it is your choice to keep it.

High Five – A Good Laugh

As she said so many things, Audrey Hepburn said this well: “I love people who make me laugh. I honestly think it’s the thing I like most, to laugh. It cures a multitude of ills. It’s probably the most important thing in a person.”

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In the realm of laughter being the one of the most positive things one can do, I try to surround myself with people who make me laugh and my closest friends have the best senses of humor. My personal humor is self-deprecating, but I don't find that negative, just a sign that I can laugh at myself and don't take my successes (or failures) too seriously.

And, I've always preferred comedies over dramas, the crazier the better (Airplane, Young Frankenstein), and I love science fiction comedies (Spaceballs, Galaxy Quest) and I even enjoy zombie comedies (Shaun of the Dead, Zombieland)! And countless others that I will catch on late night cable or load into the DVD player when I'm feeling that life has become too serious or negative and I need some comic relief.

Laughter is healthy. Plain and simple, it engages 15 different muscles in your face and it causes muscle contractions in your limbs, diaphragm and back. A good chuckle also increases blood flow (energizing!), boosts immunity, lowers blood sugar levels, and helps you relax which could lead to better sleep. And consider that 10-15 minutes of laughter burns 50 calories that means one really good comedy could burn up to 300 calories!!

So, in sum: laughter is the essence of being happy – it makes you feel positive, is an excellent cardio workout and it's good for your soul.

High Five – Start to be Great

Thinking of the week ahead, this quote from Zig Ziglar made sense: "You don't have to be great to start, but you do have to start to be great."

"You don't have to be great to start, but you do have to start to be great."

If you're like me Sundays are for preparing meals, scheduling the work week, appointments, exercise and volunteer time. So much of my life is in the planning! But for me, this is my "start," my game plan, if you will. I make lists and have spreadsheets. I know it sounds tedious; but it really does relieve stress and make my week go so much smoother.

[About Health had a really good post featuring details on list making and stress management.](#)

Use whatever method works for you to plan the week ahead. Less stress means a more positive attitude. And positive leads to good changes. Look forward to Monday, it's already planned and that will leave you plenty of time to start to be great.

High Five – 5 Positive Things about the Job Market

Today's positive quote relates to the title of the post: "It's kind of fun to do the impossible!" I thought I would try to find five positive things about the current job market. Let's face it, the job market is pretty dismal – what jobs are available require an Einstein-level understanding of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); student loans are out of control, pay is not keeping pace with inflation, etc. Yes, there are plenty of checks in the negative column on the balance sheet.

With all the negatives having been mentioned, I venture forward to find some positives and live up to Walt Disney's quote about finding fun in doing the impossible.

1. **The unemployment rate has gone down.** As of last week's job numbers over 140,000 new jobs were created and the unemployment rate went from 6.2% to 6.1%. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover report from June 2014, [there are 4.7 million unfilled job openings in the U.S. right now.](#)
2. **Retraining opportunities are available.** The main reason for the unfilled jobs in America is the skills gap. By retraining or becoming certified in a technology or manufacturing field, you could get a new position and fill in the skills gap. Resources are available through the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (check at your local career center for details). In the process of retraining, review some [recession-proof careers.](#)
3. **Reinventing yourself is possible.** So there are no openings in your field but you see an opening in a job you've always wanted to try. Review your resume, [see what skills transfer](#), write an exceptional [career transition cover letter](#) and apply. Other options are to start a new business, open a franchise or take your years of experience and begin a freelance career.
4. **Reconnecting with your network is acceptable.** You may not have spoken to a contact in a few years, so now is the time to run through your LinkedIn connections and reconnect – call, send an email or make invitations for coffee. People, especially those in your network, want to help you find a position, even if they cannot offer you one directly.
5. **Information-age technology can work for you.** Don't just think of how the applicant tracking system rejects your resume, think of what possibilities technology offers. You can apply for a job in [Australia](#) and do the interview via Skype. You can work out of your house for a company in London. It is possible to check a company's mission statement, at what price it is [publicly traded](#), what the [employees think of working there](#), and in what [charities](#) it participates, all from the comfort of your table at Starbucks!

So, yes, the current job market is not a happy place, but you can make it a better place for you – transfer your skills, apply for an international work-from-home job or train in a recession-proof career to fill one of the 4.7 million open positions. It is always possible to be negative but you feel a much greater sense of accomplishment when you have a positive outlook and do the impossible.

High Five – Change Your Perceptions

"To change ourselves effectively, we must first change our perceptions." Aptly put by Steven Covey.

Changing one's perception can often lead to a positive outcome. It gives you the ability to look at another person's point of view, interpret a situation in a different way, or reevaluate an impression. It

also gives you the opportunity to remove yourself from day-to-day monotony and alter your understanding. For example, if you meet a colleague at a coffee shop to discuss the ranking report or had a walking meeting with the Quality Assurance team to share statuses something more might be achieved.

I walked into Panera early one morning and looked around – everyone at the tables had open laptops, were scanning i-devices, scribbling furiously or speaking animatedly with their hands. Business was being conducted, and from the looks of things, a lot was being accomplished. Simply because they were away from the distractions of the office or were in a more open environment than a cold board room with institutional gray walls. A change not only in perspective (point of view) but in perception (understanding and thought) seemed to make this alternative work.

Another way to change the perception is through [walking meetings](#). (I always recommend walking rather than sitting at a desk all day). Walking meetings stimulate creativity; inspire new ideas and improve well-being. It also increases brain function (brainstorming!).

Through movement – not just of our feet but of our thoughts – it seems that we are changing ourselves effectively and the working world is shifting in a positive direction as well.

High Five – Volunteer

Today's quote from Arthur Ash embodies the spirit of volunteering: "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." And it's a positive quote because it states that you are perfect just as you are to do whatever comes next. However, you don't have to be perfect to help someone else; you just have to be willing to help.

I've volunteered most of my adult life. My first venture was for [My Sister's Closet](#) which benefited the women who had come from domestic violence situations then I worked for a Crisis Center. I've been on professional boards, studied to teach adults to read, ran a website for my neighborhood, did a few resume writing workshops and wrote grants.

There are many articles out about the psychology of [why people volunteer](#) but for me (especially when I was laid off) volunteering was my lifeline because it helped me as much as I helped others. In the U.S. News ebook, [How to Live to 100](#), it states "...volunteering improves the health, happiness, and in some cases, the longevity of volunteers. Children who volunteer are more likely to grow up to be adults who volunteer." Then added, "And in a virtuous circle, communities with lots of volunteers are more stable and better places to live, which in turn further boosts volunteerism."

Starting where you are (an individual with the desire to do something good) and using what you have (an ability to make a difference) to do what you can (achieve lasting results) can make the world a more positive place.

Remember

Everyone who was alive then remembers where they were when they heard about the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the flight that went down in Pennsylvania. The timelines for the events of that day can be found at History.com. Please take a few moments today to remember those who died and those who live on because of the brave acts of the New York City Police and Fire Departments.

Today is also known as [Patriot Day](#). So show your gratitude to the soldiers who have gone to war so that we may continue to live in freedom.

“The attacks of September 11th were intended to break our spirit. Instead we have emerged stronger and more unified. We feel renewed devotion to the principles of political, economic, and religious freedom, the rule of law and respect for human life. We are more determined than ever to live our lives in freedom.” — Rudolph Giuliani, former mayor of New York City

High Five – Just Be

“Wherever you go, there you are.”

I know you’re wondering how this could be a positive quote. But think about it. You take you and your talents with wherever you go. If you change jobs, houses, cities, states or countries, you are there. With that in mind, the you that you travel with had better be positive.

My point in using this quote for today is to bring attention to the fact that I know a lot of people are dealing with transitions in the job market lately. They have to determine whether they should move or stay where they are and stick it out. It’s true that only the individual can decide if that move is worthwhile. Leaving friends and family and, well, roots, is difficult but being laid off or having the job move away from you may call for tough decisions to be made.

In his book, [Cracking the Hidden Job Market, Donald Asher](#) writes, “Look around you. Do you see the future or the past? And don’t whine to me about your house. If you’re upside down in it, give it back to the bank. You’ll be a lot better off working in a career-enhancing role in a new locale. If you can’t sell it, fill it up with relatives or rent it out. Don’t hang on to a declining area until you’re flat, busted broke.” And he continues with, “Do something good and move away from bad times if that’s what it takes.”

The advice may seem a bit harsh but the sentiment is that you can make a positive change by doing something that may be very difficult. I’ve had friends who have moved – one completely uprooting within two weeks of getting her job – to new cities for new positions and new lives and both are thriving now. And I’ve met several people who sometimes live three hours from work but commute a few days a week, work remotely or have an apartment in the area. Keep in mind, taking your talents

on the road or moving to another city entirely may be painful and a bit scary at the outset but in the end may be the most positive decision you will ever make.

High Five – Make a New Path!

“I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

I admit it, I have a background in English and I have a weakness for verse. But when I re-read this passage from Robert Frost, I thought it fell right into the positive category. Why? Because making and owning a decision gives us control and that control allows us confidence to go forth and make more decisions, even to divert from our current career path. As I’ve stated before, having control can lead to a more positive life.

“I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.”

According to [Alison Doyle, Job Search Expert on aboutcareers.com](http://aboutcareers.com), “Today, the average person changes jobs ten to fifteen times (with an average of 11 job changes) during his or her career, which means a good amount of time is spent changing employment. Job searching and networking, along with staying on top of the job market, has become an integral part of everyday work life, rather than something you do once or twice during your career.”

This could mean you change jobs for better pay, hours, more work-life balance, a chance to expand your skillset or you change careers to develop your skills in a different area. Maybe you remain at the same company and grow in your current job – team lead, supervisor, manager or encourage those in power to help you create a new position. If job changes are a constant, why tread down the same old path? No sighing involved, make a decision to take the less traveled road and make all the difference for yourself.

High Five – Never Give Up!

“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”

Mr. Edison’s quote reminds me of a time in my early life when I wanted to be a Pharmacist. I loved the idea of helping people feel better and the fact that I could live and work anywhere – but my way to success was blocked by an impenetrable brick wall made up of chemistry, statistics and physics. I collided with Math. At that point, I took my bruised ego and changed my major to Business which

would lead me to Human Resource Management and play to my desire to work with people. In the Business classes I encountered were – wait for it – economics, calculus and accounting. There was no shortage wanting to give up here, at one point during a calculus exam, I looked at the test and realized I was never going to pass this class.

In that moment, though, I made a decision – not to be upset, not to be defeated, not be hurt – but to play to my strengths: writing, research, process, and project management. I wrote my name on the test and handed it to the professor and said, “Thank you. I’m done.” I left that class for the last time and marched to the English department to change my major. My final attempt to find a place to succeed paid off; I obtained my Bachelor’s degree in English.

Along the way, I found a new passion – technical writing. I know it sounds weird to have a passion for writing technical manuals and online help but it allowed me to develop processes, manage projects and work with people to help them understand the most difficult concepts. And though I will probably never understand math, the position has allowed me to work with those brilliant people who do understand it – engineers, software developers and analysts.

With this quote, Thomas Edison encourages us to turn a negative – giving up – into a positive – be resilient and try just one more time to succeed.

High Five – Happy Monday!

“Today is just a good day in disguise!”

So it’s Monday. Maybe it’s raining. Maybe it’s sunny. No matter. You can wake up happy if you’re practicing being positive.

Give yourself something to wake up happy for...go for a walk, do yoga, meditate, write in a journal, read a favorite blog. Do something positive to be more positive.

Think of Monday as if it were disguised as Friday and Be Happy!

High Five – Be Positive for 12 Months!

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference” –Winston Churchill

And I thought being positive for 30 days was tough!

Check out [“The Happiness Project” by Gretchen Rubin](#) who chose 365 days to be positive and happy!

High Five – It's Great to be Grateful

"Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough." – Oprah Winfrey

Being grateful has been proven to [improve attention, energy, leads to better sleep and lowers depression and leaves the grateful party in an optimistic state](#). This state is also linked to greater coping skills during times of stress. And according to researchers and [Positive Psychologists](#) (yes!), "feelings of gratitude directly activate brain regions associated with the neurotransmitter dopamine. Dopamine feels good to get, which is why it's generally considered the "reward" neurotransmitter."

"Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough."

Psychology aside, being grateful is being thankful and appreciative of what you have. It can be as substantial as a supportive spouse or as exciting as having friends who reassure you that your crazy schemes will work, you can do The Crow in yoga class and a girl's weekend is the perfect antidote to a layoff notice. It can be as common as having clean drinking water, a roof over your head, a car that runs and general good health. It can be as challenging as knowing you can run 5K race and that your legs, heart, and lungs are strong enough to get you over the finish line.

In sum, being grateful is concentrating on what you do have and not what you don't. I'll be improving my positive state at the end of the day by acknowledging all the things for which I'm thankful. Maybe you could do the same.

High Five – Savor the Moment

"Slow down and enjoy life. It's not only the scenery you miss by going too fast – you also miss the sense of where you are going and why."

What if you took 10 minutes a day to be mindful? To think of...well...nothing?

[Psychology Today defines mindfulness](#) as "a state of active, open attention on the present. When you're mindful, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to experience."

Meditation and mindfulness expert and founder of [Headspace](#), Andy Puddicombe, presented an exceptional talk about mindfulness at TED. Spend 10 minutes reviewing in presentation then spend 10 minutes doing nothing!

High Five – Be the Positive Change

It only takes one person.

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”

I was having a particularly bad day and had to – once again – go to Walmart for something-that-didn't-make-it-onto-the-huge-list-I-had-earlier-in-the-week-that-was-supposed-to-keep-me-from-needing-to-stop-at-Walmart-before-the-weekend! I was not happy about this trip and not happy about my bad day.

The cashier, as soon as I walked up with my items, completely ignoring my scowl, says in a most cheery tone, “Are you enjoying this fantastic weather we’re having today? What a beautiful day!” To be honest, I hadn’t noticed the weather. It seemed a little cooler, but, all I had been focusing on was how nothing had gone right the entire day and now I was going through the motions, just to get *through* the day! But, now that someone mentioned it, it was a really, really nice day outside. Our 90+ degree heat and high humidity had turned to a 75-degree, no humidity, light breeze, sunny day. Yes, the sun was shining and it truly WAS beautiful! So I replied, showing my first smile of the day, “Yes, yes, I am enjoying it!” Her exceptional attitude turned my day around. I just kept thinking; it only takes one person to be kind to bring about a transformation.

So with that, today’s positive quote is from Mahatma Gandhi who said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.”

You never know when your smile, your gratitude or your act of kindness will be the one thing that someone else needs that will change an attitude. I really needed her to remind me that it was a beautiful day. Her smile and excitement at this simple fact made all the difference.

Go be positive, smile and act kindly – be the positive change.

High Five – Positively Excited

Today’s quote comes from the [CEO of Threadless](#): “I try not to make any decisions that I’m not excited about.” I found this to be so timely and true.

Of late, I’ve had a big decision to consider: what job am I going to take next? As a writer, I can go many different directions and some are very exciting while others most definitely are not.

So it is at that point that I need to become excited about the options to change careers completely, remain in the one I chose 15 years ago or venture out into something related but different. Each consideration – even staying on my current career path – produces no small amount of apprehension

but does make the adventure seem more exciting, nonetheless. According to the [Advanced Life Skills website](#), I need turn negative self-talk into positive self-talk. Here are some examples:

Negative self-talk	Positive spin
<i>I've never done it before.</i>	<i>It's an opportunity to learn something.</i>
<i>It's too complicated.</i>	<i>I'll tackle it from a different angle.</i>
<i>I don't have the resources.</i>	<i>Necessity is the mother of invention.</i>
<i>There's not enough time.</i>	<i>Let's re-evaluate some priorities.</i>
<i>There's no way it will work.</i>	<i>I can learn to make it work.</i>
<i>It's too radical a change.</i>	<i>Let's take a chance.</i>
<i>No one communicates with me.</i>	<i>I will start the conversation.</i>
<i>I'm not getting any better at this.</i>	<i>I want to give it another chance.</i>

We make a million decisions a day and the one that should be the most important is to be positive. Make the decision and get excited about being positive! By being excited about that one decision, you can color your entire day, and eventually your life.

High Five – Positive Attitude-The Habit

From Samuel Johnson comes today's quote: "The chains of habit are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken."

When I first starting writing posts about making a positive attitude a habit, I couldn't wait for the 21st day! Why? [Because it takes 21 days to form a habit](#). Is this really true?

The [HowStuffWorks website](#) states that basically, "habits are easier to make than they are to break. If you repeat a behavior often enough, those synaptic pathways are going to get worn in. The human brain is a very adaptive piece of machinery" and continues with "Everyone's brain is different, and habit formation also relies on aspects of experience and personality."

The chains of habit are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken."

For me, I gave up caffeine in 7 days. Never went back to it. Gave up sugar in 28 days – cold turkey – but I must admit I still want it, crave it and occasionally indulge in it. I trained for a 5K after 6 years of doing nothing in 27 days (9 weeks, 3x a week!). But making a positive attitude a habit is proving to be a little more difficult, maybe because it is a state of mind instead of a state of being. Giving up caffeine and sugar and exercising all have visible results and though resisting cravings and slogging through a bad workout may not be the best of times, you know it will get better (interesting how I can be positive about those physical things but being positive about situations is so much harder)!

In this post, [How to Make Positivity a Habit: 4 Simple Steps to a Happier Everyday Life](#) from [bufferapp.com](#), it seems that a positive habit can be made over time, incrementally. As mentioned in the post, habits can be formed by taking small steps like flossing one tooth at a time or meditating for 2 minutes to work up to 10 minutes.

So whether it takes 21 days, 21 months or 21 years, forming habits both physical and mental take various amounts of time depending on your desire to change those habits. And my desire to be more positive is just as strong as my desire to give up caffeine and run a 5K. Be positive, don't look back and keep moving.

High Five – Hands Down!

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” – Mahatma Gandhi

**All this month my posts have been palms up and high fives but today the palm is down in a giving, handing gesture.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

A friend of mine was complaining about not getting what she expected from a networking event, and another friend reminded her that she needed to approach it with a selfless attitude. As in not thinking: “What’s in it for me” (WIIFM!) instead thinking “What can I bring to this event?” In other words, “How can I help you?” He said to take the world with a “palms down” approach – What can I hand to you? What can I give? Instead of the “palms up” approach indicated, “What can I get?”

Making others feel positive, uplifting people has a direct effect on your mood as well.

A post called [The Joy of Giving](#) at www.psychologytoday.com website discussed studies done involving helping others. One of the prime examples showed that those who were members of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and helped other members were “significantly less likely to relapse in the year following treatment” which was when most relapses occur. Another case presented involved a home for mental health recovery where the members helped each other. The director stated “that people tend to be more stable and happy if they feel like they are benefiting people more than themselves, or outside themselves.”

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My friend went to her next networking event with the idea that she would go early, volunteer to help with food, setup or wherever they needed her. And as I recall, she made a lot more memorable connections that day.

In closing, keep in mind – your palms are always down when you’re pulling someone else up.

High Five – Coping with the Unexpected

From JRR Tolkien we get these words: “Many are the strange chances of the world.”

A few days last week were more depressing than expected. But on the bright side, because I’ve been writing positive posts all month (!) my day did not end with gooey chocolate cake and wine. It ended with me utilizing coping skills, channeling the negative into a positive.

Coping skills might include binge watching The Big Bang Theory, writing in a journal or meditating. It may also include going shopping, meeting friends for dinner or seeing a movie. These two sentences do sound like the division between Introvert and Extrovert preferences.

I have a preference for extroversion and my coping skills can be summed up with: “get around as many people as possible and talk it out.” Other Extroverts seem to have the same reactions. Introverts, on the other hand, during times of stress, want a quiet and calm retreat. Extroverts see connections as soothing while the introverts think of reflection as comforting.

Whatever your [preference](#), handle life and the unexpected situations that arise within it in a way that recharges you and allows you to cope and get back to making your life more positive.

High Five – Be Encouraging!

“Correction does much, but encouragement does more.” -Goethe

I am a dog lover and married to a part-time dog trainer. Mei Mei, our Belgian Malinois, contributed her paw to the Paws-itivity cause!

I’ve always been a carrot vs. the stick kind of person. Positive reinforcement allows people to feel confident and accepted. And those attributes provide them the opportunity to do even better in learning, working or in their personal lives. E-Learning and adult training have even started using a badging system to teach. [The badge system helps with goal setting, recall, and is used as an ongoing incentive.](#)

Positive reinforcement not only works on humans, your favorite furry friend can benefit from some positive encouragement as well. Renowned dog trainer, Victoria Stillwell, has a training site called [Positively](#) and she explains the positive reinforcement principal!

High Five – Positive Vision

“In order to carry a positive action, we must develop here a positive vision.”

I saw this quote and realized, I have not posted anything about my positive vision!

I’ve always been fascinated by psychology, I think it started with my elective classes in college. In one class, I agreed to be a graduate student’s guinea pig (the control groups included those who did homework in silence, with heavy metal or classical music. I was in the group that had to listen to classical music and do some writing while it played. Kind of tranquil actually). I didn’t know at that point that I wanted to be more involved in psychology because I was on my way to becoming a technical writer (majoring in English).

Flash forward 15 years. I am inspired by a presentation at a local [ATD meeting](#) and learned that I enjoy [personality assessments](#) and the psychology as well as working with all levels of individuals that make up an organization. Add to this, a timely report comes out stating that Organizational Psychology one of the [20 fastest growing occupations](#). So, I obtain my MBTI Facilitator Certification and enroll in a Psychology Master’s program.

The [Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology](#) defines the field of Organizational Psychology as “versatile scientists specializing in human behavior in the workplace. Employers hire them—either in-house or as consultants—because their expertise results in better hires, increased productivity, reduced turnover, and lower labor costs.”

There will be more posts as I begin my education and continue my research into this interesting and growing field. Until then, I will maintain my positive vision.

High Five – Resilience

Thomas Jefferson stated “Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude.”

How true!

Several years ago, just as the economy was spiraling, I went through a huge downsizing. I was completely broken up by this, even though I was not one of the ones being let go, but to see how people handled it was amazing. Some were upset and crying. Some were very angry. But some

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continued to laugh, joke and hug everyone as they packed their desks and headed out. They didn't miss a step. Some of us had lunch from time to time over the next few years and those people who smiled in the face of the unexpected did very well. Those who didn't seemed to take longer to find positions, still remained unhappy and angry at the company for letting them go.

The ones who accepted the situation and moved on to their next big adventure were the resilient ones. [Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.](#) Being resilient helps you bounce back after surgery, illness, loss or anything else life can throw at you.

[A post on Healthgram details some ways to become more resilient](#), but I'm betting you're already doing them.

If you're still not sure how resilient you are, give this quiz from [Psychology.about.com](http://psychology.about.com) a try and see how what your results are.

<http://psychology.about.com/library/quiz/bl-resilience-quiz.htm>

Resilient people are positive people. Or maybe vice versa. Either way, you come out of a bad situation positive, and that's the right mental attitude.

High Five – Positive Friends and Healthy Adventures

"I knew when I met you an adventure was going to happen." – Winnie the Pooh.

Sometimes there are friends we've had for decades. Sometimes there are the friends we've had for a few months or years. Sometimes we just met them but we know they would be friends for a long time! It has been often said about me that I "collect people." And I suppose I do. I'm an extrovert and I am most proud of my have 500+ connections on LinkedIn (Twitter and Facebook fall a bit behind this!). Which is quite fitting, I collected most of my friends from previous jobs! No matter how we were separated after working together we would exchange emails, phone numbers and social media accounts. So, I promise, if I work with you, I will be connected with you!

Thanks to my positive, adventurous, healthy, exciting, inspiring friends.

When I lived in a larger city (I'm living rural now!), we would throw huge parties (our New Year's Eve dinners were legendary) and I would connect everyone from different backgrounds with one another. Most common question at the party – and an icebreaker, if you will – would be: "So, how do you know Stephanie?"

Connecting with others, I learned, promotes positive thinking. Not just positive thinking but it adds encouragement and confidence-building, risk taking, and resilience to the list. Lower rates of

depression, reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and greater resistance to the common cold have been cited as health benefits as well.

Consider the positive benefits to both of you of having a friend and go take them on an adventure with you.

High Five – 5 Positive Quotes

Here are some quotes I collected when I started planning these posts and I thought I would share the ones that didn't get full posts...

Five Positives and NO negatives!

"Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results." –Willie Nelson

"Positive anything is better than negative nothing." — Elbert Hubbard

"I haven't failed. I've identified 10,000 ways this doesn't work." –Thomas Edison

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." — Winston Churchill

"We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses." – Walt Disney

High Five – The 2nd Half

"I am too positive to be doubtful, too optimistic to be fearful, and too determined to be defeated."

Being positive about the age you are, the situation you are in, or the state of your career can be a little difficult at times – especially if you are in the "Mid-Life" stage in the year 2014. The job market isn't that friendly to, well, anyone but less so to those who are in the 40-65 age groups. However, at this stage, you are the more likely to find the career fulfillment you've been searching for since you left college. According to Carl Jung who created a model called [Stages of Type Development](#) in which there are four major stages – Childhood, Adolescence and Early Adulthood, Adulthood and Mid-Life, Maturity and Wisdom – this age group stands in stage where they have assets, experience and confidence enough to make positive changes.

In short, the first half of life (Childhood through Early Adulthood) is when family and cultural influences are most important and we are seeking experiences from which to learn. The "Mid-Life" stage

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(Adulthood and midlife) is when a major transition in energy and interests occurs. Additionally midlife is when people become aware of limitations both in time and possibilities and prepare to meet those challenges in life's "Second Half" stage (Maturity and Wisdom).

Early adulthood is when most people pick a career; some are content with that choice and can excel in their chosen field until retirement or beyond. Others of us pick a career, love the career, but want something additional – not just to "be happy" as has become the joke, but to find some level of fulfillment and have some form of stability. [Midlife has been defined as roughly between 40 and 60 years of age](#); however, Jung considered 56 as the beginning of the "Second Half" stage.

Those in midlife and beyond can be assured that they still carry the qualities of being positive, optimistic and determined because they have the assets and experience to meet career challenges. J.T. O'Donnell of CAREEREALISM.com wrote a great post on ["3 Must-Dos in Your 40's to Make Sure You're Employed in Your 50's"](#) so give this a read and prepare to meet your second half with a smile.

High Five – Celebrating Positive Focus

"We are not going to focus on what we can't do; rather, we are going to celebrate what we can do!"

This quote is the mantra of our yoga class and it sums up the focus of what this month has been – a celebration of what is possible.

It's been [30 days](#) and I've written every day about some aspect of the positive attitude – an attitude that can be attained [by giving](#), being [happy](#), [laughing](#), and [helping others](#).

I've touched on aspects of positive psychology with [coping skills](#), [resilience](#), and [positive thought](#).

A few posts dealt with [mindfulness](#), [personal journeys](#), [relationships](#) and [perception](#).

In this month, I had some celebrations (my wedding anniversary), personal losses (a layoff) and [remembered again the national losses of 9/11](#).

I do feel as though I have come a long way in 30 days and I do believe it takes about this long [to form a habit](#).

The [best picture of the month was attached to my post on Encouragement](#). My favorite post had to be [the one about doing the impossible](#) (Thanks, Walt Disney for the quote!). I put my focus on what I could do and I can now definitely be positive.