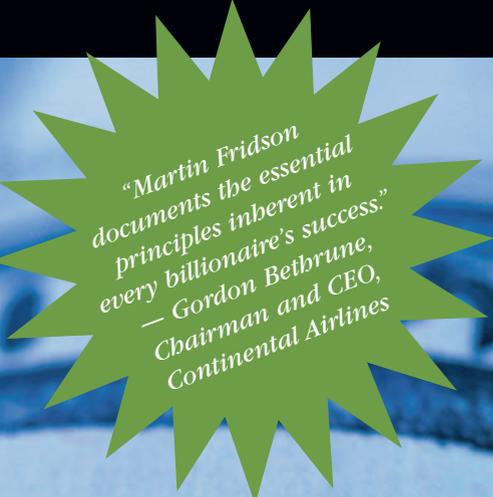


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Before Donald Trump built his first building ...
He had already built it in his mind.

Before Bill Gates created his first computer program ...
He was already running it in his thoughts.



*“Martin Fridson
documents the essential
principles inherent in
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— Gordon Bethune,
Chairman and CEO,
Continental Airlines*

As you’re reading these words, there are about 200 people in the United States whose net worth exceeds one billion dollars ...

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THINK LIKE A WINNER

BY BRIAN TRACY



People who never achieve success do so because they fall in love with their excuses. It isn't the truth about yourself and your abilities that hurts you; it is the negatives you consider to be true that hold you back. Abandon your excuses and learn to overcome the obstacles to success ... one oil drum at a time.

When I was 21 years old, a friend of mine and I decided to go off to see the world. Many of our friends were going to Europe and hitchhiking around with rucksacks. We decided to be different and go to Africa instead. It never occurred to us to ask why no one else was going to Africa. We found out later, much to our great regret.

To get to our destination in Africa, we had to cross the Sahara. We started out from London, riding bicycles across France and Spain. The labor was excruciating, the progress slow, and the pleasure was nonexistent.

In Gibraltar, we sold our bicycles and invested our last few dollars in an old Land Rover. We crossed from Gibraltar to Tangier into Algeria. We were on our way in Africa. Still, there was one obstacle between us and the greenery we were anxious to see. It was that darn old desert.

We had no idea how serious and how difficult this adventure was to be. As we moved south across the desert, we encountered endless problems, any one of which could have ended our trip and, probably, our lives. Yet, it was during this desert crossing that I learned one of the most important lessons in my life about attitude.

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The French, who had controlled Algeria for many years, had marked a path across the desert with black 55-gallon oil drums. The drums were spaced exactly five kilometers apart. As we drove and came to an oil drum, the next drum, which was five kilometers ahead, would pop up on the horizon, and the last oil drum, which was five kilometers behind, would fall off the horizon. Wherever we were, we could always see two oil drums at a time — the one we had just left and the one we were headed toward. To cross one of the greatest deserts in the world, all we had to do was take it “one oil barrel at a time.” We did not have to cross the entire desert at once.

For me, crossing the Sahara was a metaphor for life. In order to maintain a positive attitude under all circumstances, all you have to do is take it one step, one oil barrel, at a time. As Thomas Carlyle said, “Our great business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.”

In any endeavor we can choose to be positive and constructive, sit down and think through the situation, and then begin to deal with it one oil barrel — one small achievement — at a time. Of course, this isn’t always as easy as it sounds. We all must overcome the four obstacles that tend to get in the way of our maintaining a positive attitude.

OVERCOMING THE FOUR OBSTACLES TO A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

These obstacles are fear, worry, anger, and doubt. When things are not working out the way we had expected, our immediate response is to become fearful and uneasy. We are afraid that we will lose our money, waste our effort, or forfeit our emotional or physical investment in what we have done. If we are not careful, we start thinking of our potential losses rather than focus-



THE 3 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OPTIMISTS & PESSIMISTS

In his book *Learned Optimism*, Dr. Seligman claims there are three fundamental differences between optimists and pessimists.

1. The optimist sees a setback as temporary, while the pessimist sees it as permanent. The optimist sees an unfortunate event — something limited in time and that has no real impact on the future. The pessimist sees a negative event as permanent, as part of life, as destiny, as an indication of more to come.
2. The optimist sees difficulties as specific, while the pessimist sees them as pervasive. When things go wrong for the optimist, he or she looks at the event as an isolated incident largely disconnected from other things that are going on in his or her life. An optimist perceives an unfortunate business incident as just that — a business incident. The pessimist would question the validity of the entire business or business direction. The pessimist would tend to feel helpless, unable to make a difference to correct the issue.
3. The optimist sees events as external, while the pessimist tends to interpret events as personal. When things go wrong, the optimist will tend to see the setback as resulting from external forces over which one has little control but which one can overcome. The pessimist takes negative events personally and as an indication of a larger pervasive personal shortcoming.

ing on our potential gains.

Fear triggers worry, and we begin to use our power of imagination to create all sorts of negative images that cause us unhappiness and insomnia, and make us unable to perform efficiently.

Fear and worry create anger, or what has been called the “victim complex.” Instead of moving constantly forward in the direction of our dreams, we begin to react and respond, and to blame other people and other situations for our problems and challenges at hand.

Surrounding these negative emotions is the mental quality of doubt. Doubt is a fertile breeding ground for the other three negative emotions. Therefore, to eliminate these obstacles to positive thinking, you need to systematically eradicate the weakening emotion of doubt.

How do you do this? It’s simple. **The only real antidote to fear, worry, anger, and doubt is positive action toward the achievement of some worthwhile ideal.**

Psychologists tell us that the key to dealing effectively with life is what

they call “cognitive control.” This is the assumption that you can think about, and concentrate on, only one thing at a time, either positive or negative. Successful people consciously choose to think about what they *want*, rather than what they *don’t want*. As a result, they are continuously taking action toward their goals, rather than spending their time thinking and worrying about the current difficulties or the inevitable challenges that are sure to face them.

WHAT IS HOLDING YOU BACK?

People who never achieve success do so because they fall in love with their excuses. It isn’t the actual truth about yourself and your abilities that hurts you; it is the things you *consider to be true* but have no basis in truth that hold you back.

We naturally fall in love with our reasons for not moving ahead. Even if someone challenges those reasons, or

Picture your Future Success — and Get It!

Take every opportunity to surround yourself with images of what success means to you: Get brochures on new cars you desire; get magazines containing pictures of beautiful homes, beautiful clothes, well-toned bodies, and other things you will obtain as a result of achieving the success that you are aiming for. Each time you see or visualize those images, you trigger the thoughts, feelings, and actions that make them materialize in your life. But, don’t wish for them ... that is day dreaming. Think about them as absolute certainties in your future and focus on who you must be today to achieve these icons of your future success.

tells us that we have the capacity to accomplish so much more, we will often argue with them.

We attempt to prove to ourselves and others that our limitations are real, and the less justification these ideals or beliefs have, the more adamant we become in attempting to prove them to others. Richard Bach wrote this beautiful line: "Argue for your limitations, and sure enough, they're yours."

So how do you change your beliefs? The starting point is to get up the courage to question these self-limiting beliefs seriously. Question your basic premises. Check your assumptions. Ask yourself, *What assumptions am I making about myself or my situation that might not be true?* Think about them. Remember, most of our self-limiting beliefs have no basis whatsoever in fact. They are based on information and ideas that we have accepted as true, sometimes in early childhood, and to the degree we accept them as true, they become true for us.

You can always tell what your true values and beliefs are by looking at your actions. **It isn't what you say or wish or hope or intend that demonstrates what you really believe. It is only what you do.** It is only the behaviors that you engage in. It is only the actions you choose to undertake. And out of your actions come all the elements of your life. You are where you are and what you are because of what you have done in the past. But the wonderful news is, the past doesn't have to hold you back. That's because we are in a perpetual state of becoming.

A STATE OF BECOMING

The clearer you are about your ideal result or future vision, the easier it is for you to alter your actions and behaviors in the short term to assure that you get where you want to be in the long term. You have no limitations on your potential except for those you believe you have. As Walter D. Wintle wrote:

The Man Who Thinks He Can

If you think you're beaten, you are;
If you think you dare not, you don't.

If you would like to win, but think
you can't,

It's almost a cinch you won't.

...

Life's battles don't always go

To the stronger or faster man;

But sooner or later the man who wins
Is the man who thinks he can.

6 STEPS TO ASSURE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

There are six things you can do to assure that your attitude is the very best it can be under all circumstances.

1. Whatever challenges you face, focus on the future rather than the past. Instead of worrying about who did what or who is to blame, focus on where you want to be and what you want to do. Get a clear mental image of your ideal successful future, and then take whatever action you can to begin moving in that direction. As the New Testament says, "Let the dead bury the dead." Let the past take care of itself, and get your mind, your thoughts, your mental images on the future.
2. Whenever you're faced with a difficulty, focus on the solution rather than on the problem. Think and talk about the ideal solution to the obstacle or setback, rather than wasting time rehashing and reflecting on the problem. Solutions are inherently positive, whereas problems are inherently negative. The instant that you begin thinking in terms of solutions, you become more positive and constructive.
3. Assume that something good is hidden within each difficulty or challenge. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale used to say, "Whenever God wants to give us a gift, he wraps it up in a problem." Lloyd Conant said it this way: "You don't earn the right to solve big problems until you have solved the small ones." In other words, the bigger the gift, the greater the success you have coming, the bigger the problem you will receive and must surmount.
4. Assume that whatever situation you are facing at the moment is exactly the right situation you need to ultimately be successful. The situation has been sent to you to help you learn something, to help you become better, to help you expand and grow. What good is it to think anything else?
5. In every challenge, look for a valuable lesson. Assume that every setback contains a lesson that is essential for you to learn. Only when you learn this lesson will you be smart enough and wise enough to go on and achieve the big goals that you have set for yourself. Again, since you can think about only one thing at a time, if you are busy looking for the lesson, you cannot simultaneously think about the difficulty or the obstacle. You will always find the lesson if you look for it.
6. Whenever you have a goal that is unachieved, a difficulty that is unresolved, or a problem that is blocking you from getting where you want to go, sit down with a pen and paper and make a list of every single thing that you could possibly do to resolve the situation. Write down every idea, ridiculous or not. The more you think on paper, the more you will take control over your conscious mind and focus it where you want — on the solution. (Don't miss *The Greatest Problem Solving Tool* by Earl Nightingale in the next issue of *AdvantEdge*.)

THINK LIKE A WINNER

Thinking like a winner is the first step to *living* like a winner. You will become that which you think about most of the time. You are the architect of your personality and character. Your goal, your desire, is to be as successful, happy, and prosperous as you possibly can be in every aspect of your life. Therefore, the systematic development of a positive attitude is something that you need to work on every hour of every day. Continue to work on yourself and your thinking until you reach the point where you absolutely, positively believe yourself capable of winning in anything you sincerely want to accomplish.

People succeed not because they have remarkable characteristics or qualities. The most successful people

are quite ordinary, just like you and me. Most of us start off poor and confused. We spend many years getting some sort of direction in our lives. But the turning point comes when we begin to believe that we have within us that divine spark that can lead us onward and upward to the accomplishment of anything that we really want in life. So, become the man or woman who thinks, *I can*. And when you reach the point where you feel unshakable confidence in yourself and your abilities, nothing will be able to stop you, not even the Sahara. Just stay your course and take each challenge ... one oil barrel at a time. ■

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