



# Build your positivity

## **IU Health EAP**

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### **Optimism vs. negativism**

Optimism elevates your mood. It allows the brain to scan and realize new possibilities and solutions. Optimists give themselves credit when due, appreciate the efforts and accomplishments of others and feel confident that good things will continue and will permeate into different areas of their lives.

Pessimism lowers your mood and prevents the brain from seeing options and opportunities that abound. The negative brain becomes concerned with proving a negative conclusion to be true, and it seeks evidence to support it. Pessimists tend to assume or assign blame, assess bad situations as stable (“This won’t go away”) and feel that the negativity will permeate into different areas of their lives.

### **Benefits of positivity**

- Improved heart health
- Increased immunity
- Lower rates of depression and fatigue
- Increased levels of physical and mental well-being, life and marital satisfaction
- Increased ability to manage stress, build new skills and resources
- Increased ability to recognize possibilities and opportunities
- Better skills at cultivating friendships
- Better coping skills
- Greater longevity
- Greater productivity

### **Assess your positivity**

Find your positivity ratio here, and learn more ways to build on it:  
[www.positivityratio.com/single.php](http://www.positivityratio.com/single.php).



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### **Tips: Try these ways to cultivate and increase positivity**

- Use positive self-talk.
- Surround yourself with positive thinkers.
- Practice self-acceptance vs. self-criticism.
- Smile, laugh and play often.
- Use humor.
- Take action when problems arise if possible; practice acceptance when needed.
- Exercise to release endorphins.
- Maintain good relationships with family and friends.
- Accept and expect change as part of life.
- Engage in activities that spark positive feelings.
- Practice meditation and mindfulness.
- Keep a gratitude journal.
- Show appreciation for others regularly.

### **Next Steps:**

- To explore ways to improve your well-being, call EAP at 317.962.8001. We can help.

### **Resources**

To learn more about building positivity, visit these online resources:

- The Greater Good Science Center:  
[greatergood.berkeley.edu/](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/)
- Authentic Happiness – University of Pennsylvania:  
[authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/](http://authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/)

*Sources: "Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources" by Barbara L. Fredrickson (J Pers Soc Psychol, Nov. 2008); U.S. National Library of Medicine; National Institutes of Health; MayoClinic.org; [health.harvard.edu/hearthealth](http://health.harvard.edu/hearthealth).*



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