

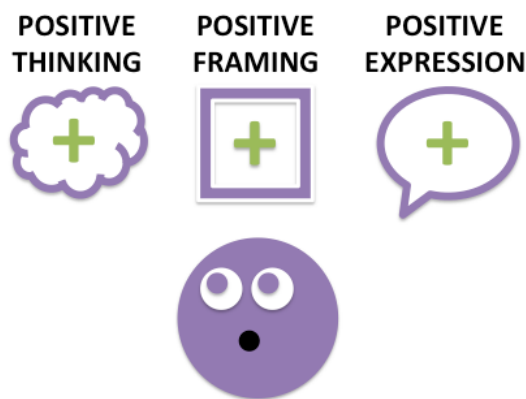
Parent (Teacher) Toolkit: Positive Thinking

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This document is part of the YCISL Parent (Teacher) Toolkit Series which is aimed at empowering parents as teachers to develop youth creativity and leadership skills that support healthy learning.

The 2013 TEDxUCDavis talk by Alison Ledgerwood “A Simple Trick to Improve Positive Thinking” contains a graphic illustrating how a positive event has a sharp peak effect, and a negative event has a blunt dragging effect. Positive thinking and framing is an essential innovator and leadership skill. Innovators with the skill maintain their sense of purpose and intrinsic motivation. Leaders with the skill are more agile and appreciated.

BASICS: The “glass half full” worldview is commonly found in the youth mindset. However, we learn from Tim Brown in his Serious Play 2008 talk “Tales of Creativity and Play” that optimism turns into pessimism and fear in the transition to adulthood. Focusing on the negative becomes a safe bet and freezes most adults. Those who learn to maintain their own positive mindset and can persuade others likewise grow to be productive decision makers and successful visionaries. So go ahead and pour yourselves a half glass of water, and see what a glass half full looks like.

BEGINNER: Let's discover simple methods for quickly fostering positive mindsets and emotions. The book title phrase "Spark Joy" from Marie Kondo encapsulates our goal. With your child, practice the following methods on each other then test this skill on others: (1) Smiling, (2) Generating Laughter, (3) Sharing a Vision, (4) Sharing Optimism, (5) Showing a Positive Result, (6) Expressing Appreciation, (7) Selecting Positive Words, and (8) Communicate a Compliment. Notice the sharp peak effect. Also learn to sustain positivity by timely combinations of the above methods.

INTERMEDIATE: Let's be creative and put together a Positive Mindset Test. The aim is to make sure we have a "glass half full" attitude before starting an important innovator or leader task. Test parameters: (1) Measure only positivity, (2) Test should take less than a minute, and (3) Promote positivity. Prototype several ways to implement your test. Which test most effectively orients and boosts positivity? Can your test work for teams as well as individuals?

ADVANCED: A daily ritual of gratitude and the lasting feeling of gratefulness can contribute to mental health and positivity conditioning. For this exercise, design a game or app that boosts gratefulness through daily reflection. Assist yourself and others in finding and tracking things to be grateful for. Simplicity, ease of use, and beneficial value should be the main design factors. What are you going to name your game/app? What motivator did you build in to maintain daily use?