

Positive thinking helps us live longer

29th August, 2019



Positive thinkers are more likely to live longer than negative thinkers. This is according to a combination of studies conducted by the Boston University School of Medicine into the health of people in the USA. Researchers looked

at data on the health of 70,000 female nurses and 1,500 male military veterans. They discovered that people who were optimists (people who thought positively) were more likely to live to the age of 85. They said people who were more pessimistic (those who thought negatively) were 11-15 per cent less likely to live to that age. The researchers believe that optimists (positive thinkers) found it easier to manage stress than pessimists (negative thinkers).

Participants in the two studies answered questions in a survey. The questions assessed their levels of optimism. The surveys matched these levels with the participants' overall level of health. They were also asked about their levels of exercise, their diets, as well as how much they smoked and drank. Professor Lewina Lee said: "Our findings speak to the possibility that raising levels of optimism may promote longevity and healthy ageing." She had some advice for pessimists who might want to live longer. The advice was to, "imagine a future in which everything has turned out well". She urged people to increase levels of optimism. She said it was healthier for people to look on the bright side of life.

Sources: bbc.com / sky.com / livescience.com

Writing

It's better to look on the bright side of life. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

positive / thinker / negative / data / health / optimists / nurses / veterans / stress / studies / questions / health / exercise / longevity / pessimists / imagine / future

True / False

- a) The article says pessimists are less likely to live longer than optimists. T / F
- b) Researchers looked at data on 71,500 men and women. T / F
- c) The research says all optimists live to be the age of 85. T / F
- d) Positive thinkers are up to 15% more likely to live to be 85. T / F
- e) People answered questions about exercise, optimism and drinking. T / F
- f) Researchers say optimism can reduce longevity. T / F
- g) A researcher said imagining a dark future helps people feel optimistic. T / F
- h) A researcher said bright people should look on the healthy side of life. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. likely | a. increasing |
| 2. combination | b. negative |
| 3. data | c. questionnaire |
| 4. pessimistic | d. mix |
| 5. manage | e. sunny |
| 6. survey | f. guidance |
| 7. assessed | g. probable |
| 8. raising | h. control |
| 9. advice | i. evaluated |
| 10. bright | j. details |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What is your overall level of health like?
- c) What advice do you have for pessimists?
- d) What can you do to increase your longevity?
- e) How easy is it to imagine the future turns out well?
- f) Are you a glass-half-full person or a glass-half-empty person?
- g) Is it easy to always look on the bright side of life?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Positive thinkers are more likely | a. people |
| 2. This is according to a combination | b. manage stress |
| 3. military | c. longevity |
| 4. 11-15 per cent less likely to live | d. of studies |
| 5. positive thinkers found it easier to | e. of health |
| 6. The questions assessed their | f. veterans |
| 7. the participants' overall level | g. side of life |
| 8. optimism may promote | h. to live longer |
| 9. She urged | i. levels of optimism |
| 10. look on the bright | j. to that age |

Discussion – Student B

- Are you a positive thinker?
- What do you worry about?
- Do you think positive thinking can make you live longer?
- Are you optimistic about your future?
- Are you optimistic about the world's future?
- What makes some people optimistic and others pessimistic?
- What stresses do you have in your life?
- What do you do to manage your stress?

Spelling

- more likely to live longer
- according to a combination of studies
- conducted by Boston University
- military veterans
- those who thought negatively
- found it easier to manage stress than pessimists
- participants in the two studies
- The questions assessed their levels
- overall level of health
- promote longevity and healthy ageing
- The advice was to imagine
- She urged people to increase levels

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. b	5. h
6. c	7. i	8. a	9. f	10. e

Role Play

Role A – Good Health

You think good health is the best thing about being optimistic. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): longevity, having many friends or a good image.

Role B – Longevity

You think longevity is the best thing about being optimistic. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): good health, having many friends or a good image.

Role C – Many Friends

You think having many friends is the best thing about being optimistic. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): longevity, good health or a good image.

Role D – Good Image

You think a good image is the best thing about being optimistic. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): longevity, having many friends or good health.

Speaking – Optimism

Rank these with your partner. Put the things optimism is best for at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| • many friends | • good health |
| • good image | • happiness |
| • success in life | • wealth |
| • youthfulness | • longevity |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.