

POSITIVE Thinking [alone] will never change your life

But this book will!

By David Essel

Review By Marie-Claire Wilson

I recently had the pleasure of interviewing David Essel, M.S. Here is that interview.

MCW: In one sense, the title of your book says it all, but there are so many disciplines, practices and books that champion positive thinking.

For the readers of our publication, how would you describe the central message of what your book is about?

DE: In all reality, we've been lied to. Maybe not on purpose, but that's to be debated.

When I decided to write the book, it was due to the fact that so many people have been contacting me as a counselor and coach, asking me what they were doing wrong regarding affirmations, vision boards and more. After all they said, according to books like the law of attraction and others, "all we need to do is ask and we shall receive: Ask the universe for what you desire and it must conspire to bring you exactly what you need." But it wasn't working for them. If these books were selling millions of copies and everyone was getting rich, losing pounds, and finding the love of their life by conspiring with the universe to have it happen, why wasn't it happening for them?

So my book was written as a book of hope to dispel the illusion, the fantastical thinking, that your thoughts are powerful enough to bring miracle like events into your life. And I am a huge fan of miracles. But seriously, after 27 years as a national radio host, interviewing people like Suze Orman, Deepak Chopra, Wayne Dyer, athletes, rock stars, Not one of them ever told me that they created an incredibly successful life by their thoughts.

I'm a huge fan of positive thinking! I devote the first hour of every day to affirmations, journaling, gratitude, prayer and meditation, but the ridiculous promises of these books is what sent me over the edge.

Just as I sat down to write the book, I reached out to six friends of mine who are New York Times best-selling authors and ask them if they had any words of wisdom, or would they support me with my venture. After describing in an email what my book was all about, all six individuals responded within 24 hours, "David thank God someone is writing the truth about success and the myth of positive thinking." From there, I was off to the races.

MCW: Can you provide our readers with an example or two of how/why positive thinking alone doesn't work?

DE: A great example is two of the stories in my book. Ray Higdon, was a single dad of two young boys who is facing extreme financial challenges. The market

had crashed. He had lost all of his money and now was going into foreclosure in his home. He contacted me and asked if I had any ideas on how we could turn his financial situation around. After our meeting, I looked at him directly in his eyes and said "Ray, I see such intense energy and passion in you. Find something you love to sell, put 100% effort into it..."

He went home and picked up the book THE SECRET. He went to great effort to create vision boards, written affirmations, and for the next several weeks devoted every waking moment to trying to turn his life around just like all of the stars that were written about in this book. After weeks of applying all of this intense energy with his thoughts, he found himself in a worse situation than he was before our meeting.

So he realized that this wishful thinking philosophy wasn't going to work for him. He stopped the insanity. He read that super successful sales people achieve great success by going after 20 "no's" a day, 20 rejections a day. Ray continued to think positively in the morning, but instead of waiting for his luck to turn around, he went out and created his own luck. By going after 20 rejections a day while selling a network-marketing product. Within a year and a half Ray was earning \$50,000 a month and his income goes up every year. He followed the exact protocol we wrote about in my book: When you do the tasks on a daily basis that you'd rather not do to make more money, lose weight, find deep love, or forgive someone who's hurt you, success is guaranteed.

Another story that proves the power of doing the deep work necessary to become successful in life has to do with my friend Scarlett Lewis. Many people, when they talk about forgiving someone who has hurt them, talk about it like it's the easiest thing in the world to do. "Just turn the other cheek, they're not worth your effort, think positively and move forward in life." That philosophy never works long term.

You can't cover up anger, grief, sadness, resentment or even rage by thinking positively. These emotions that we don't deal with grow.

Scarlett Lewis's son, Jesse, six years of age, was murdered at the Sandyhook Elementary School massacre. Scarlet had one option if she wanted to forgive the killer. She had to, on a daily basis, go into her rage, sadness, loss, and resentments in writing in order to release the incredible emotions that would drive the average person insane.

Scarlet shares in my book that many well-meaning

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people would make positive related comments like “your son is in a better place” or “God needed another angel”. These well-meaning statements actually divert our attention from dealing with reality. They are more hurtful, than helpful.

Scarlett Lewis has forgiven the killer of her young boy by 95 percent. This was an incredible journey, that has led her, in my opinion, to be one of the leading experts in the world of forgiveness that we know today.

MCW. In chapter 6, you provide some tools to help one take action with affirmations, visualization and prayer. How are these tools different from positive thinking and how can these tools work in our daily lives?

DE: They really are tools of the world of positive thinking, and I don’t think we can separate them with saying they are different than positive thinking in and of itself. We know that through prayer, positive affirmations and positive visualization there is a cascade of chemicals released from the brain that can lift our spirits, but only momentarily. Serotonin, GABA, dopamine and more are released when we use positive emotion in our thoughts, and words. We highly encourage everyone to start their day with these tools, but just don’t rely on them to change your life; they won’t. They do help us, at least in the moment, to feel more optimistic about achieving that which we desire.

MCW. It seems that what you have written will be easier for a person with a rational mind. What about others who are guided more by the emotional center and/or intuition?

I think being rational, is the only way we can really describe the definition of success. One of my great concerns with these other books that promise fantastical thinking, fantastical results, like “imagine checks coming in the mail and they must come in the mail”, taps into the emotional side of many people who love to live in this realm of life. But it’s not very realistic.

I received an email the other day from a “law of attraction coach”, who said that if you’re having trouble losing weight, it’s because you have not aligned your thoughts correctly. That losing weight should be very easy once your thoughts are in proper alignment through the law of attraction.

These type of things disgust me. In the past 37 years I have helped hundreds of people to lose anywhere from 80 pounds to 120 pounds in a 12 month period of time ,and keep it off long term. The secret to their success? Doing the hard work on a daily basis, cutting out all emotional eating type foods, radically changing their behaviors that many of them had from birth, until it just became a natural part of who they are.

So we can use the emotional side that might be our strength, first thing in the morning and immerse ourselves in the visualization and positive thinking techniques, but the bottom line is if we want to see great success in life we are going to have to follow the protocol in my book, that is backed by hundreds upon hundreds of people

MCW: There is much in our world over which we have no control – stuff happens. What closing message can you provide to our readers about how we can respond to circumstances that continually seem to not go our way, or not bring us the results we hoped for?

DE: Life is hard. That’s a fact that really can’t be disputed. Life is challenging.

That’s a fact. Many of the people that I write about in my book have walked through the fire of life. They have had incredible struggles mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, and in love and came out the other side.

So I think step one is to accept the fact that life can be very very hard.

Step two would be to surround yourself with really powerful people. Look at the number of people you interact with on a daily, and weekly basis. Are they moving forward in life? Are the victims? Are they gossipers? Are they really well grounded and doing positive things in this world?

If the answer is yes, spend more time with them. Ask them for help.

If the answer is no, then start to diminish the amount of time you’re spending with victims, and gossipers, and people like this. Open your circle of friends and acquaintances so that you attract more people into your life who are positive and proactive in nature.

Ask for help. Invest time, money, and effort into your personal growth. No one ever accomplished great success in any area of their life by themselves.

Over the past 37 years I’ve had spiritual coaches, business coaches, health coaches, relationship coaches and counselors. I’ve worked with ministers, priests and rabbi’s to make sure that my life that I’m living now, I am living at the highest level available. It does take work. But it’s worth it.

David Essel, M.S is the author of 9 books, a Master Life Coach and Teacher, Business, Relationship and Addiction Recovery Coach, International Speaker and Radio/TV host. From athlete to poet, he has been labeled a “21st century renaissance man”. www.DavidEssel.com

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