Book Summary: The Power of Positive Thinking, by Norman Vincent Peale

Learn the key points in minutes.

Book Rating by Shortform Readers: 4.6 (84 reviews)

This is a preview of the Shortform book summary of The Power of Positive Thinking by Norman Vincent Peale.

Read the full comprehensive summary at Shortform.

Contents

- 1-Page Summary
- Introduction: The Goal of This Book
- Chapter 1: Have Faith in Yourself
  - Exercise: Deconstruct Your Inferiority Complex
- Chapter 2: Cultivate a Peaceful Mind
  - Exercise: Cultivate a Peaceful Mind
- Chapter 3: Increase Your Energy
  - Exercise: Regaining Your Energy
- Chapter 4: Utilize the Power of Prayer
  - Exercise: The Science of Prayer
- Chapter 5: Decide to Be Happy
  - Exercise: Developing the Happiness Habit
- Chapter 6: Stop Fretting and Gain Peace
  - Exercise: Let Go of Fretting and Find Peace
- Chapter 7: Expect the Best and Get the Best
  - Exercise: Throw Your Heart Over the Bar
- Chapter 8: Defeat Is Not an Option
  - Exercise: Defeating Defeat
- Chapter 9: How to Stop Worrying
  - Exercise: Releasing Yourself From Worry
- Chapter 10: Solve Your Personal Problems
- Chapter 11: Heal Health With Faith
  - Exercise: Health in Mind and Body
- Chapter 12: Get Rid of Anger and Other Negative Emotions
1-Page Book Summary of The Power of Positive Thinking

In *The Power of Positive Thinking*, Norman Vincent Peale says there is no problem or obstacle you can't overcome with faith, positive thinking, and prayer. The book outlines the practical techniques of applied Christianity to help you take control of the events in your life rather than be directed by them. As a result of these methods, you can enjoy better relationships, a greater sense of well-being, robust health and energy, and a stronger sense of purpose in the world.

**Have Faith in Yourself**

Having faith in yourself is important to a happy and successful life. Self-confidence leads to achievement and self-realization, helping you release your inner power. But not everyone has the power to believe in themselves. Too many people are hampered by feelings of inadequacy, often called an "inferiority complex."

To build up self-confidence, understand the root causes of your sense of inferiority and develop faith in yourself through prayer. Discipline your thoughts by filling your mind with "confidence concepts," and keep an optimistic attitude in the face of difficulties. Remember that God is with you and helping you.

**Cultivate a Peaceful Mind**

Living with strain and anxiety is difficult, but living in a state of harmony makes for an easy, calm existence. There are several methods by which you can gain a mind full of peace, serenity, and calm attitudes:

- Empty your mind of fear, insecurities, regrets, and other negative emotions; you'll experience relief and release. After you empty your mind, refill it with positive, healthy thoughts and peaceful images.
- Use peaceful words and engage in peaceful conversations during your daily life.
- Find time to sit in silence.
- Stop punishing yourself for some real or imagined sin. You can find peace of mind by releasing your guilt and putting it in God's hands.

**Stop Fretting**

We often make life more difficult for ourselves by getting agitated and worked up about situations. Work stress, for example, is common. People have difficulty relaxing and this stops them from living a full life. Peale calls this “fuming and fretting.” To gain power and live our lives to the fullest, we have to stop this behavior.

To reduce tension in your life, try:

- Slowing down. Consciously do everything more easily, slowly, and without pressure. Sitting quietly and relaxing, getting yourself in tune with God, renews your power and gives you the energy you need.
- Control your physical reactions. You do this by keeping physically still. Don't move, pace, wring your hands, or let yourself get worked up. A physical attitude can guide your mental attitude, diffusing all the emotional heat you may be feeling.

**Stop Worrying**

Worry is a destructive and unhealthy mental habit. Worry can cause health problems and even shorten your lifespan. Worry is dangerous also because when you fear something for a long time, you can actually draw it to you, helping the fear come to pass.
The good news is that worry is a habit, and because you can change any habit, you have the ability to break the worry habit. There are 3 steps to this process:

1. Believe you can: With God's help, you can do whatever you believe you can do.
2. Empty your mind: Think of it as emptying a bathtub after removing the stopper, or you can imagine reaching into your mind and plucking out the worries one by one.
3. Refill your mind with positive thoughts. Since your mind won't stay empty for long, you have to refill it with positive thoughts, such as courage, faith and hope.

Increase Your Energy

Our thoughts affect how we feel physically. When your thoughts tell you you're tired, the body accepts this and feels tired. But when your mind and thoughts are engaged and interested in what you're doing, you have the energy to keep going indefinitely. You can increase your energy by doing the following:

- Get in sync with God's rhythm. The unnatural tempo of modern life can deplete your energy. But when we're in tune with God's rhythm, our inner tempo is flowing as it should and energy flows freely to us.
- Find something that interests you. When people are too wrapped up in their personal concerns, nothing outside of themselves moves them. To fight this, get interested in something worthwhile outside of yourself.
- Get rid of guilt and fear. Guilt and fear drain your energy, making you tire quickly and lose the resources to do your work, but faith can help disintegrate these blockages and reopen your channel to receive power and energy.

Utilize the Power of Prayer

Prayer can be a source of great power, helping to change your life positively, tapping forces and strength that aren't normally available to you. Prayer can even restore physical health and well-being, and is used by therapists and other practitioners to help others.

Prayer is a manifestation of energy, and there are ways to release spiritual energy through the mechanism of prayer. Prayer power can slow down the aging process, helping you keep youthful energy as you age. Prayer can help keep your spirits up, send you out each morning refreshed and renewed, guide you in solving problems, help you react properly to situations around you, and release power and keep power flowing freely.

Decide to Be Happy

We create our own happiness in this life. Happiness is achievable for us if we apply the right formula. One way of choosing happiness is to cultivate the habit of being happy. When you develop the happiness habit, life becomes more enjoyable every day. Because habits are something you can cultivate, you have the power to create your own happiness.

You develop the happiness habit by thinking happy thoughts. Make a mental list of happy thoughts and run them through your mind throughout the day. If an unhappy thought pops in, eject it by substituting a happy thought.

Expect the Best and Get the Best

When you expect the best in life, you get the best. When you expect the worst, that's what you get. When you change your mental habits to a state of constant belief instead of doubt, everything becomes possible. This requires faith.

To boost your faith, try the following:

- Absorb faith from the Bible. Read the New Testament and notice how many times faith is mentioned. Choose a dozen statements about faith; memorize each, saying them over and over again, allowing them to sink in. When you've absorbed these faith tenets, you'll have new power to get what you truly want from life.
- Tell yourself every day that God gives you the power to achieve what you want. Never mention or even think about a poor outcome.

Your thoughts are powerful; they dictate the type of life you lead, the kind of person you are, and the experiences you have. Positive thoughts create positive outcomes; negative thoughts lead to negative outcomes.
If you're unhappy with your current circumstances, you can remake your life by getting rid of your old, negative thoughts and filling your mind with new thoughts that reflect faith, creativity, love and goodness. When you start thinking differently, the conditions around you will change.

**Defeat Is Not an Option**

When you think about defeat, you tend to get defeated. Instead, adopt a mindset where you don't believe in defeat. The first step is not to be afraid of whatever obstacle you are facing; instead, stand up to it. Practice believing God is with you, and together you can handle any problem. When you stand up to your obstacles, they don't seem as strong.

If your subconscious has been fed negative attitudes in the past, it will give them right back to you when you're trying to overcome obstacles because it doesn't like change. Speak to your subconscious with positivity. Tell it you do believe you can do all things, and eventually, feeding it these positive thoughts — the truth — will turn things around.

If there's something in your life that has been a long-standing obstacle, it's likely because you've told yourself for a long time that there's nothing you can do about it. But when you adopt the "I can do all things through Christ" mentality, you gain the conviction that you can do something about your difficulties, and amazing results can occur.

**Solve Your Personal Problems**

Problems will always come up in life, but with faith-based techniques, you can solve your problems in a correct manner that brings you the best outcome. You can do this by:

- Putting your problems in God's hands. When two or more people pray about a problem and put it in God's hands, often greater clarity is the result.
- Imagine God as your partner. Talk over your problems with God, knowing he hears you and is thinking about your problem. Know that you will be guided to the right actions.
- Develop an attitude of faith. The Bible tells us that if we have faith, we can overcome any problems and rise above any defeat.

**Heal Health with Faith**

Faith can be a powerful factor in overcoming health obstacles. From readers and listeners, Peale received numerous examples of healing in which the element of faith is present. In each of these instances, the best resources of medical and psychological science are utilized in combination with spiritual science resources.

In the cases of faith-enhanced healing Peale has investigated, he found certain factors to be present. First, the patient is willing to surrender their health into God's hands. Second, they let go of sin and want their soul cleansed. Third, they believe in the combination of medical...

Want to learn the rest of The Power of Positive Thinking in 21 minutes?

Unlock the full book summary of The Power of Positive Thinking by signing up for Shortform.

Shortform summaries help you learn 10x faster by:

- Being 100% comprehensive: you learn the most important points in the book
- Cutting out the fluff: you don't spend your time wondering what the author's point is.
- Interactive exercises: apply the book's ideas to your own life with our educators' guidance.

**The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Introduction: The Goal of This Book**

Norman Vincent Peale wrote "The Power of Positive Thinking" as a practical guide to help regular, everyday people live a happy,
worthwhile life. In this book, he outlines a system that, if adhered to, will dramatically improve your life. You will take control of the events in your life rather than be directed by them. Your relationships will improve, you'll become more popular, have a greater sense of well-being, better health, an increased zest for life, and you will become more useful to the world and influential to other people.

The system he outlines is applied Christianity, which he terms a “simple and scientific system of practical techniques of successful living.” The knowledge and methods come from the Bible. This system has been proven successful many times over; Peale taught these principles for decades and has seen the results work for untold numbers of people.

Many people experience hardships and “bad breaks” in...

The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 1: Have Faith in Yourself

Having faith in yourself is important to a happy and successful life. Self-confidence leads to successful achievement and self-realization, helping you release your inner power.

But not everyone has the power to believe in themselves. Too many people are hampered by feelings of inadequacy, often called an “inferiority complex” or a lack of self-confidence. Inferiority complexes create barriers in our personalities, stopping us from achieving our full potential. They are often the result of emotional damage done to us in childhood, or may be the result of childhood circumstances.

There was a young man with great business potential whose loose lips were stopping him from getting promoted. He couldn't resist sharing confidential tidbits and insider information he was privy to. It turns out that a deep-seated insecurity was behind this behavior. He grew up poor, didn't go to college, and felt inferior to his associates. Throwing out company gossip had other people hanging on his every word, raising his self-esteem and helping him feel important. He was able to overcome this roadblock to his career by practicing the techniques to overcome an inferiority complex described below.

Overcoming an Inequality Complex

It is possible to overcome an inferiority complex and start believing in yourself. Here's how:

- **Deeply analyze the root cause of your inferiority complex.** Say you believe you'll never amount to anything. Look at your life to find the root cause of this inferiority complex. Perhaps your older brother got straight A's in school, but you only got C's and felt like a disappointment to your family. You end up believing that you're destined to get C's for your whole life, and your brother is the one who will be a great success.

- **Develop a Deep Faith in God.** Developing a deep faith in God will give you faith in yourself. The key to acquiring faith is prayer. More detailed prayer techniques and formulas will be discussed in a later chapter, but for now it's important to note that the type of prayer is important—the bigger your problem,...

Shortform Exercise: Deconstruct Your Inequality Complex

Is something deep inside you holding you back?

Is there a particular area of life where you tend to lack self-confidence? What is it, and what's a specific time it affected your life negatively?
The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 2: Cultivate a Peaceful Mind

Living with strain and anxiety is difficult, but living in a state of harmony, with inner peace, makes for an easy, calm existence. A mind full of anxiety leads to turmoil and unhappiness, but a mind full of peace promotes health and well being.

How to Create a Peaceful Mind

There are several methods by which you can gain a mind full of peace and calm attitudes:

- **Empty the mind.** (There will be more instruction on this in a later chapter.) The author recommends emptying the mind at least twice a day. When you consciously empty your mind of fear, insecurities, regrets, and other negative emotions, you'll experience relief and release.

  The author once shared this idea while conducting a service on a ship headed to Honolulu. He suggested his audience take their worries, fears, and other anxious thoughts and imagine dropping them all overboard. One man who practiced this expressed how relieved the exercise made him feel.

- **Refill the mind.** After you empty the mind, you have to refill it with positive, healthy thoughts and peaceful images, or the old miserable thoughts will just come sneaking back in again. Practice thinking peaceful thoughts. Visualize a peaceful scene you once encountered, such as a lovely beach. These peaceful images are healing.

- **Say peaceful words.** The author calls this “suggestive articulation.” Words have power; repeating anxious, panicky words helps produce a state of anxiety and panic. But speaking peaceful words helps keep your mind calm. The author suggests words like “tranquility,” and “serenity.” You can find peaceful words that appeal to you from a soothing poem or Bible passages.

  A group of businessmen were attending a conference. One man in particular was nervous and on edge. He expressed that the pressure he was under felt like it could break him. He had been prescribed medicine for his nerves. Another man suggested a different kind of medicine—reading from the Bible. In particular, he found the 23rd Psalm healing: “He leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul.” The nervous...

Shortform Exercise: Cultivate a Peaceful Mind

Living without strain creates a peaceful existence.

Peale says it's important to fill your mind with positive thoughts and peaceful images. What is your “memory visit” that you can call up when you need to find peace? Describe it in detail and explain how it makes you feel.
The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 3: Increase Your Energy

Our thoughts affect how we feel physically. When your thoughts tell you you're tired, the body accepts this and feels tired. But when your mind and thoughts are engaged and interested in what you're doing, you have the energy to keep going indefinitely.

Thoughts involving faith can help you gain more energy because they bring you feelings of endless support and power, fueling you. For example, a friend of the author's goes to church regularly to “recharge his batteries.” The idea is that God is the source of all energy; maintaining contact with God taps us into all this energy, giving us access to the very same energy used to create the world.

When we're aligned with God in our thoughts, we have access to this free-flowing energy. When our thoughts are not aligned with God, we feel tired and depleted. It's like an electric clock plugged into a wall. As long as it's plugged into the constant stream of electricity, it functions perfectly. But when it's unplugged, it stops.

The principles of Christianity, when tapped scientifically, can help you create an endless supply of energy in mind and body. A sound spiritual life brings energy; there's no need ever to suffer from depleted energy.

Peale had a discussion with a medical doctor about a man they both knew. This man had many responsibilities and obligations, but never seemed tired; rather, he kept taking on new responsibilities and worked with ease and efficiency. When Peale expressed worry that this man's pace might lead to a breakdown, the doctor said there was no danger of that. He said hard work doesn't drain energy; emotional upheaval does. This man's seemingly boundless energy came from his emotional balance and his religious beliefs. His religion taught him how to prevent leaks of his energy and power, so it always remained intact.

Finding God's Rhythm

Our physical condition is determined by our emotional condition, and our thoughts determine our emotional state. People who are capable of immense amounts of work, fueled by seemingly endless energy, are in touch with “the Infinite,”...

Shortform Exercise: Regaining Your Energy

When you lose your zest for life, how do you get it back?

Have you ever experienced a loss of energy—or are you experiencing one right now? Do you think it stemmed/stems from boredom, guilt, a loss of rhythm or something else?

The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 4: Utilize the Power of Prayer

Prayer can be a source of great power, helping to change your life positively, tapping forces and strength that aren't normally available to you. Prayer can even restore physical health and well-being and is used by therapists and other practitioners to help others.

Prayer is a manifestation of energy; you can release spiritual energy through the mechanism of prayer. Prayer power can help you feel youthful energy as you age, keep your spirits up, send you out each morning refreshed and renewed, guide you in solving problems, help you react properly to situations around you, and release your inner power.

How to Pray
Perhaps you haven't had this kind of experience with prayer. You may associate it only with religion and not creating change in your life. If so, understand that there is a scientific side to prayer, with different patterns and formulas that you can apply to get better results.

Peale advises us to experiment with prayer power methods; new techniques are always being discovered to help harness the power of prayer. The idea is to find the method that works for you—that helps you open your mind to God, and let God's power flow into your life.

Two industrialists had a conference to discuss a problem. They dealt with technical issues, but also prayed about it. When they didn’t receive a satisfactory answer, they called in a third person, a preacher, because they noted that the Bible said, regarding prayer, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 18:20). Bringing in the third person to pray about the matter was following this formula from the Bible.

They saw prayer as a scientific phenomenon, and they followed prayer formulas as they would a scientific experiment. (It worked; they found the answer to their issue.)

A 3-Part Prayer Formula

Another prayer formula consists of three parts: "prayerize," "picturize," and "actualize."

- **Prayerize** refers to making prayer into a daily system. When a problem arises, for example, speak to God about it simply and directly. Pray...

READ FULL SUMMARY OF THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

Why are Shortform Summaries the Best?

We're the most efficient way to learn the most useful ideas from a book.

**Cuts Out the Fluff**

Ever feel a book rambles on, giving anecdotes that aren't useful? Often get frustrated by an author who doesn't get to the point?

We cut out the fluff, keeping only the most useful examples and ideas. We also re-organize books for clarity, putting the most important principles first, so you can learn faster.

**Always Comprehensive**

Other summaries give you just a highlight of some of the ideas in a book. We find these too vague to be satisfying.

At Shortform, we want to cover **every point worth knowing in the book**. Learn nuances, key examples, and critical details on how to apply the ideas.

**3 Different Levels of Detail**

You want different levels of detail at different times. That's why every book is summarized in three lengths:

1) Paragraph to get the gist
2) 1-page summary, to get the main takeaways
3) Full comprehensive summary and analysis, containing every useful point and example

SIGN UP FOR FREE BOOK

Shortform Exercise: The Science of Prayer

Use the power of prayer in your life.
Peale talks about the “prayerize, picturize, actualize” formula for prayer. What is a problem in your life you’re currently dealing with. Prayerize it right now by speaking to God about it directly. What is your prayer? Write it here.

The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 5: Decide to Be Happy

We create our own happiness in this life, and we get to decide if we’re happy or unhappy. Abraham Lincoln said, “Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

If you want to be unhappy, filled with fear, worry, resentment and hate, you can choose unhappiness by going around complaining that things aren’t going your way. Even though bad things in life can and do happen, we can manufacture unhappiness by thinking unhappy thoughts and having unhappy attitudes. We think we’re not getting our due and the good fortune of others is undeserved. This manufactured personal unhappiness compounds all the normal difficulties in life we have no control over.

The good news is that happiness is achievable for us all, if we want it and if we apply the right formula. For example, instead of telling yourself that things never go your way, you can focus on telling yourself that life is good.

Children are naturally more attuned to happiness. With their pure, spiritual simplicity, they are able to see the beauty in the commonplace. For example, Peale’s 9-year-old daughter explained to him that she was happy because she loved her friends, school, church, and family. When adults can adopt this childlike mindset about happiness, they can find this same happiness with their associates, work, and home.

The Happiness Habit

One way of choosing happiness is to cultivate the habit of being happy. When you develop the happiness habit, life becomes more enjoyable every day. Because habits are something you can develop, you have the power to create your own happiness. Here’s how:

- **Think happy thoughts.** Make a mental list of happy thoughts and run them through your mind throughout the day. If an unhappy thought pops in, for example, you fear that things won’t go well for you that day, eject it by substituting a happy thought—things will go well for you.

- **Start your day happy.** The morning sets the stage for happiness throughout the day. Before you get up, picture happy experiences the day will bring for you. Peale recommends saying this Psalm...

Shortform Exercise: Developing the Happiness Habit

Choosing to be happy is in your power.

One way to develop the happiness habit is by thinking happy thoughts. Make a list of happy thoughts you can run through your mind throughout the day. Write them here.
fretting.” To gain power and live life to the fullest, we have to stop all this fuming and fretting.

**Slow Down**

The first step is to reduce your frantic pace of life. Many people drive themselves too hard and too fast, and this tempo leads to overstimulation, which can cause physical and emotional sickness. Slowing down brings you back in line with God’s pace. God’s pace is unhurried; things get done when they are meant to get done. *When you slow down and practice being peaceful, you will feel a sense of quiet power rise within you.*

A champion rowing crew coach once said, “To win a race, row slowly.” The idea is that rowing too quickly ruins the pace and it’s hard for the crew to regain its rhythm. It’s better to maintain a steady pace.

The author discusses a man whose doctor prescribed an “enforced rest” because of the tension and pressure this man was under. The man felt compelled to work nonstop, feeling that the world depended on his efforts.

The doctor issued an unusual prescription: take off two hours every day to go for a walk. Then, take a half-day off to spend in a cemetery. The idea was for him to meditate on the fact that the world had gone on after all those people died, despite how vital they must have felt in life. This illustrates that the world will go on without you.

The patient got the message. He slowed his pace, learned to delegate, and got peaceful.

Spending time in nature is one way to slow down your frantic pace of life and reduce tension. Getting used to quiet time in general is important; you have to discipline yourself to spend time in silence to reap the benefits of a peaceful mind. When you practice being peaceful, you get rid of nervous excitement that holds you back from calm.

Sometimes you just have to stop yourself in the middle of frantic busy-ness and regroup.

Once when Peale was giving a lecture, he found himself being anxiously bustled from event to event—from an...

**Shortform Exercise: Let Go of Fretting and Find Peace**

Relieve your mind of tension.

The frantic pace of life can increase our tension and anxiety, leading to a lack of peace. Peale found himself being hurried from obligation to obligation. What is a common situation in your life that leads to you feeling overwhelmed and lacking peace?

The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 7: Expect the Best and Get the Best

When you expect the best in life, you get the best. When you expect the worst, that’s what you get. When you change your mental habits to a state of constant belief instead of doubt, everything becomes possible. *When you learn to believe, things that seemed impossible before move into the area of the possible.*

Peale uses the example of a man from a good family, with every opportunity, who seemed to fail at everything in life. But he was able to turn the pattern around and begin to achieve success and become powerful and dynamic. When Peale asked him how he made this change, the man told him that he had trained himself to think positively about everything.

He discovered that if you expect the worst, you get the worst, and when you expect the best, you get the best. What triggered this new attitude was a bible verse, Mark 9:23, which states that “all things are possible to those that believe.”
Learning to Believe

The basic factor of succeeding in anything is learning to believe it’s possible. William James summed it up with this famous quote: “Our belief at the beginning of a doubtful undertaking is the one thing that insures a successful outcome.”

When you expect the best and believe it’s possible, the law of attraction is triggered and you are able to draw the best to you. But when you expect the worst, you’re actually releasing the power of repulsion—pushing away the best outcome.

Peale tells the story of the manager of a baseball club filled with great players. The team was expected to take the championship, but instead fell into a slump, losing to even the worst teams in the league. The coach knew the players’ attitudes were all wrong—they had reached a point where they expected defeat and doubted themselves.

The coach asked each player for two of his best bats and left. When he returned, he told them that a famous and well-respected faith healer had blessed the bats; the bats now contained a power that couldn’t be taken. The delighted players went out and played well, eventually taking the championship.

Regardless of...

Shortform Exercise: Throw Your Heart Over the Bar

What would happen if you had faith?

This chapter talked about the idea of “throwing your heart over the bar,” which is your mind picturing and believing in the best outcome when you’re facing a challenge. Think about a challenge you are currently facing. How can you “throw your heart over the bar”?

The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 8: Defeat Is Not an Option

When you think about defeat, you tend to get defeated. Instead, adopt a mindset where you don’t believe in defeat. This mindset requires faith.

The first step is not to be afraid of whatever obstacle you are facing; instead, stand up to it. Practice believing God is with you, and together you can handle whatever the problem is. When you stand up to your obstacles, the obstacles don’t seem quite as strong.

Obstacle Man was negative about any suggestion made in his firm, always worried about the potential obstacles involved in any project. He did this again when members of the firm were discussing a project with some potential hazards but a lot of rewards. He stopped the discussion and wanted to consider the obstacles involved. Another man, who was very well respected, asked why Obstacle Man always had to bring up obstacles instead of possibilities.

Obstacle Man wanted to know what attitude the other man would take toward the obstacles. The other man said he’d simply remove the obstacles—something he’d spent his entire life doing. He explained that his formula for removing obstacles was a Bible verse he carried with him: Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” These words had power, he explained—power to remove any obstacle. There was no more negative talk about the project, and it went forward to great success.

There are many examples in history of great people who have succeeded in the face of immense obstacles.

- The British General Tudor had a method to stand firm and break the obstacle. In fact, Winston Churchill said Tudor was like an iron peg in frozen ground—immovable.
A tennis champion named Gonzales wasn’t as skilled as some of the other players, but his championship win was credited to his staying power—he never let himself be defeated, even when the game didn’t seem to be going his way. He never got discouraged or let doubt creep in, so he kept the power needed to win.

**Faith Provides Staying Power**

Faith is what keeps you going when things get hard. When facing difficulties, try...

**Shortform Exercise: Defeating Defeat**

Understand that with faith, all things are possible.

Peale says that all the “little negatives” in our daily conversations can add up to create a negative mindset that blocks our faith in ourselves. What is a particular “little negative” you find yourself saying regularly? What can you replace it with?

**The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 9: How to Stop Worrying**

Worry is a destructive and unhealthy mental habit that can actually cause health problems. The word worry is derived from a word whose literal meaning is “to choke.” **Think of worry as choking the flow of your power.**

Some physicians have linked worry to arthritis, in particular, noting that in people with arthritis, factors including financial problems, grief, loneliness and other negative emotions are usually present. Another study of 176 executives around age 44 found that half had high blood pressure, heart disease or ulcers, with worry a factor for all with those ailments.

Worry can even shorten your lifespan. A study on longevity found that those who lived to 100 were busy, used moderation in all things, didn't overeat, had fun, went to bed and got up early, were free from worry, and had faith in God. Married people have been shown to live longer—perhaps because they share the burden of worry instead of doing it alone.

Worry is dangerous also because when you fear something for a long time, you can actually draw it to you, helping the fear come to pass.

**Breaking the Worry Habit**

The good news is that worry is a habit, and because you can change any habit, you can break the worry habit and live more freely and happily. There are 3 steps to this process:

1. **Believe you can:** The first step to banish worry is to believe you can. With God's help, you can do whatever you believe you can do.

2. **Empty your mind:** Emptying your mind is important because fearful thoughts can clog your thinking. The five minutes right before you go to sleep are particularly important because the mind will absorb the last ideas you're thinking while conscious.

   - To empty your mind, visualize yourself actually emptying your mind of your worries and anxieties. You can think of it as emptying a bathtub after removing the stopper, or you can imagine reaching into your mind and plucking out the worries one by one.

   - As you do this visualization, repeat an affirmation along the lines of, "I'm emptying my mind of all worry, fear and anxiety with God's help."...
Shortform Exercise: Releasing Yourself From Worry

Break the worry habit and live with faith.

Emptying your mind of all your worries, and refilling it with positive thoughts, is one method to break the worry habit. Try thinking of specific worries you harbor and visualize yourself plucking them out of your mind one by one. How does this make you feel?

The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 10: Solve Your Personal Problems

Problems will always come up in life, but with faith-based techniques, you can solve your problems in a correct manner that brings you the best outcome. These techniques include:

- Put your problems in God's hands and praying in a group of two or three.
- Imagine God as your partner.
- Have a plan in place to tap and use your inner powers.
- Practice faith attitudes.

Put Your Problems in God's Hands

Putting your problems in God's hands helps you solve your problems in the right way. Understand that the power to solve your problems is within you; **having faith in God lets you find the clarity to work out solutions and create a plan of action.**

Peale tells the story of his good friends, a married couple named Bill and Mary. Bill had worked at his firm for many years and was in line for its presidency. He had been led to believe he would be the next president, but when the current president retired, the firm brought in an outside man to fill the position.

Bill's wife Mary was angry and despondent, filled with humiliation and disappointment. She wanted Bill to resign immediately. Bill was disappointed, but more circumspect. He didn't really want to leave the company and felt he could still be of use there.

Peale suggested they pray about the problem and seek divine guidance. Knowing that God said, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20), Peale pointed out that God would be present to show them what to do. They prayed together and asked for guidance, even asking God to bless the new president.

Mary came around, saying she realized that this was the right approach, though it was difficult at first not to react with anger. They were able to overcome their disappointment and anger and Bill worked well with the new president. Two years later, the president moved to another company and Bill was promoted to president, much to the couple's joy.

Bill was struck by how practically and scientifically his problem was solved through prayer; Christianity, he said, is practical,...
The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 11: Heal Health With Faith

Faith, when understood and applied in the right manner, can be a powerful factor in overcoming health obstacles. One great surgeon who combined science with faith, Dr. Hans Finsterer, believed that the "unseen hand of God" helped in his surgeries. He felt that true progress in medicine would be made only when doctors became convinced of the importance of God's help in the treatment of patients.

There are many examples, back by medical evidence, of the role of faith—in combination with medical science—in healing. Faith is the added element that boosts the efficacy of medicine.

Peale met a man who came up to him at a luncheon to discuss his experience with faith and healing. Diagnosed with an inoperable tumor on his jaw, the man was at first despondent. Not very religious, he had the urge to read the Bible. He found great comfort in doing so and began to read it for longer periods of time, and his faith grew.

He began to notice his tumor shrinking; his doctors confirmed this, but warned that it was likely only a temporary respite. Still, his condition improved to the point that the tumor disappeared entirely. He had been cured for 14 years.

The amazing power of faith is not used enough in healing. Faith can work miracles, but these miracles are actually the result of spiritually scientific principles.

Faith Is Tied to Healing

For many centuries, religious faith was tied to healing activities. The word "pastor" comes from a word that means "the cure of souls." "Holiness" comes from a word meaning "wholeness." "Meditation" resembles the word "medication."

It's generally understood that there's a connection between how a person thinks and feels: the mental state has an effect on bodily health. Since religion deals with thoughts and attitudes, it fits that the science of faith would be involved in the healing process.

To keep a state of health and happiness, it's important to use medical science to the fullest but also apply the techniques of spiritual science.

Author and playwright Harold Sherman was contracted to do a radio...

Shortform Exercise: Health in Mind and Body

When medicine meets faith, healing can occur.

Do you currently have any health concerns? What do you think about Peale's assertion that physical ailments are often tied to emotional issues such as guilt, fear or resentment? If so, what lingering negative feelings do you hold?

The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 12: Get Rid of Anger and Other Negative Emotions

When you have an unhealthy emotional life marked by feelings of anger and resentment, your energy and vitality can sag and your physical health can diminish. But spiritual and emotional treatment can restore your vitality.

A businessman had been full of energy and creativity, but experienced a rapid decline in both. Vacations didn't help, so his boss sent him to Peale. The man was annoyed to be sent to a preacher and didn't seem to think praying or reading the Bible would help, but Peale informed him he'd be fired if this treatment didn't work, so he better get on board.
Peale explained that fear, anxiety, tension, resentment or a combo of these negative emotions can clog your emotional, spiritual and intellectual powers. The man admitted to being ensnared in a maze of lies in his life; he lived in constant fear of exposure. Peale coaxed him to reveal everything, and afterward the man felt freer and much better, having unburdened himself.

Peale then asked the man to pray with him, apologizing to God for all he did wrong, and asking for forgiveness and help never to repeat these actions. The man went back to work with his energy restored.

Thought patterns have an effect on your physical state. If you are harboring ill will or resentment toward someone, this can manifest in a decrease of energy and efficiency. Mental pain can have a profound effect on your physical condition.

For example, Peale knew a young woman admitted to the hospital with rheumatoid arthritis and a high temperature. It turned out that she was being coerced into marrying a man she didn't love. When told she didn't have to go through with it, her recovery was quick.

Chronic resentment can manifest in chronic aches and pains. For example, one woman kept breaking out with bouts of painful eczema. Her psychiatrist realized that something in her personal life was “eating at her,” and it turned out to be a family problem with her brother. When she was able to let go of resentment and hostility, her eczema vanished.

Emotional disturbances have been linked to the common...

---

**The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 13: Use Positive Thoughts to Change Your Circumstances**

Your thoughts are powerful; they dictate the type of life you lead, the kind of person you are, and the experiences you have. Your thoughts can create or change the conditions around you. You can think yourself into or out of a situation.

Great thinkers like Ralph Waldo Emerson understand that thoughts control your life. Emerson said, “A man is what he thinks about all day long.” Similarly, Marcus Aurelius said, “A man's life is what his thoughts make of it.”

Positive thoughts create positive outcomes; negative thoughts lead to negative outcomes. Thoughts can contribute to illness or health. If you're unhappy with your current circumstances, you can remake your life by getting rid of your old, negative thoughts and filling your mind with new thoughts that reflect faith, creativity, love and goodness.

Your thoughts can drive you to failure and unhappiness, but you can also think your way to success and happiness.

Peale knew a man who seemed to have a magic touch—always optimistic, never defeated. He asked the man what his secret was, and the man shared that he used to be negative and unhappy. His life was a mess, which he attributed to wrong thinking—he was resentful, opinionated and a know-it-all.

One day he came across a Bible his mother had given him, and one sentence put him on a path toward change: Psalm 27:1,3, “The Lord is the strength of my life... in this I will be confident.” He realized his lack of confidence drove his negative thoughts, which resulted in failure. He had a spiritual experience, shifting his thoughts from negative to positive.

He resolved to live by the principles in the Bible as best he could; he slowly flushed out his old thoughts and filled his mind with positive thoughts. His life improved immeasurably.

**Believe and Succeed**

When you start thinking differently, the conditions around you will change. To do this, form a positive mental picture of how things should be—don't just accept the way things are.

Hold that mental picture and believe it deeply; pray about it and do what you can to make it a...
Shortform Exercise: Believe and Succeed
Creative thinking can help you actualize what you visualize.

Think of something specific in your life's circumstances you want to change. What is it?

The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 14: Make Life and Work Easier by Relaxing
An inability to sleep, along with headaches, anxiety, nervousness and tension affect many people. Work stress is a common malady.

At Peale's clinic, ministers and psychiatrists worked side by side to help people with the tension and stress in their lives, respecting that both psychiatry and Christianity are sciences with methods and systems.

When someone came to the clinic, a psychiatrist would study the person's problem to understand the root causes of their unhappiness. For example, why does the person have an inferiority complex, or why are they making bad decisions? The idea is that self-knowledge is the first step toward healing. Then the psychiatrist would send the person to a minister, who would then prescribe therapies based in prayer, faith and love.

Psychiatrists and ministers pooled their techniques and therapies, and many people had good outcomes. The Christianity used in this kind of therapy is based on the practical, workable teachings of Jesus.

Slow Down
Tension is one of the main problems this clinic dealt with. People have difficulty relaxing and this stops them from living a full life. One method to reduce tension is to slow down. Consciously do everything more easily, slowly, and without pressure.

Baseball illustrates this idea. In baseball, the best way to hit is with a relaxed body; the muscles are flexible and work together. But when a batter tries to kill the ball and overdo it, he might miss it altogether. The baseball legend Ty Cobb was known for being in rhythm with his bat, a master of “easy power.”

This holds true for anyone who is a master at anything; they are efficient, able to do great things with a minimum of effort—maximum power for minimum effort.

A man Peale knew seemed to be always at ease, getting a great deal done calmly and efficiently. He attributed his “easy power” to keeping himself in tune with God. Each morning he and his wife spent a quiet 15 minutes together reading an inspirational message. They meditated together and pictured God filling them with quiet energy and strength. This man always...

The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 15: Be Liked
We all want to be liked; it’s a fundamental longing. William James once said, “One of the deepest drives of human nature is the desire to be appreciated.”

Being liked is more important than just boosting your ego. It's important to your success in life and in relationships. People who
are isolated, with no support system, may end up feeling not wanted or needed—negative emotions that can even lead to illness.

Striving after popularity won't work, and no matter what you do, you won't get everyone to like you. It's human nature. Even the Bible addresses this, saying that if the disciples went to a village and tried their best but still couldn't get along with people, they were to leave and "shake off the very dust from your feet." In other words, you won't get along with everybody and you shouldn't let it bother you too much.

Though you won't get everyone to like you, there are ways to make yourself into a person who gets along well with others, even if you're not very social or are considered "difficult."

A "Comfortable Person" Is Well Liked

No matter what your life has been like, you can become a well-liked, popular person. Becoming well-liked is a skill that can be developed.

First, be easygoing and natural, someone other people can be around without a sense of strain. Peale calls this being a "comfortable person." When you're too reserved and stiff, people don't know how to act or what to say around you.

To do this, Christianity suggests developing one trait: a sincere interest in and love for people. Getting other people to like you is simply a reflection of you liking them. When you can develop this trait, other positive traits will develop.

If you're not a "comfortable person," look inward. Don't assume people don't like you because something is wrong with them. Assume the trouble lies with you. Be honest about less than attractive personality traits and know they can be changed.

Peale once dealt with a good-looking, impressive man who found that others simply didn't like him and he wanted to know why. Peale found the man...

Shortform Exercise: Becoming Well-Liked

To get others to like you, you have to like them.

Think of a person in your life you don't get along with very well. As Peale advises, look inward. What trait do you have that may be impeding this relationship?

The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 16: How to Cure Heartache

Grief, sorrow and other forms of heartache and inner suffering are part of being human; it happens at some point to everyone. Peale encountered a young man who was having trouble rising above his sorrow. He asked for a “prescription for heartache.”

There are concrete things to do when you are hurting emotionally:

- **Get back to normal.** If you're in a bad situation, get out of it and return to your normal life and its activities. Being as normal and natural as possible helps to cure heartache. For example, if a loved one has died, don't avoid the places you used to go together.
- **Get physically active.** Avoid the temptation to sit and brood.
- **Get busy with a worthwhile project.** Make sure you stay busy with something creative to occupy your time (not just partying and drinking).
- **Feel your grief.** It's natural and helpful to cry when sorrow comes. Trying to bottle up your grief and not show emotion is
unhealthy. But you can't let crying and grieving get out of control, either. It's not healthy for it to become a habitual process.

- **Turn to God.** On a more spiritual level, curing your heartache requires turning to God with faith and trust. You don't have to carry your burden of sorrow alone; putting yourself in the presence of God is healing and soothing.

### Faith in Life After Death

There is no greater heartache than the death of a loved one. A spiritual way to help live with this heartache is to gain an understanding of the deeper meaning of life and death. **When you carry with you the faith that all life is connected—and when you die, you merely continue your journey in another form—you gain a deep peace and comfort about the loss of a loved one.**

For Peale, coming to the realization that there is no death—that "here" and "hereafter" are all part of one universe—brought him great comfort. This philosophy doesn't take away the sadness when a loved one dies, but it will help lift and dissolve grief. Knowing deep down that you haven't truly lost your loved one brings peace.

This philosophy is based on teachings from the...

### The Power of Positive Thinking Summary Chapter 17: Drawing Upon God's Higher Power

Many people are depressed and unhappy, but they don't have to live that way. The answer is to draw upon the Higher Power. The Higher Power can do everything for you.

How do we do that? **State your problem, then ask for a specific answer. Believe you will get that answer and believe that right now you are gaining the power to deal with your problem.** An important element of drawing upon the Higher Power is to relax and rest into that power.

Peale had a personal experience with this. As a young pastor called to a big church in a university community, he found himself working too hard, trying too hard, and feeling overwhelmed, like he'd lost his power.

He turned to a wise professor for help. The professor had him lie down and then read to Peale from the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. Part of it reads, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary...but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." While familiar with the text, Peale hadn't been living its ideas.

The professor told him to take three deep breaths and practice resting with and depending on God—to believe God was giving him power and not to lose touch with that power. He was to let the power flow through him.

The baseball analogy comes into play once again: the professor told Peale to give his job all he's got, but in an easy, relaxed manner, like a big-league baseball player with a good swing.

This advice stayed with Peale his entire life; no matter how busy he got, he used this formula to gather strength.

Another important element in drawing on the Higher Power is to be positive; keep an optimistic attitude toward every problem. The level of your faith is the level of power you will receive to meet your obstacles.

An example of this is a couple Peale worked with, Horace and Helen. They were both in declining health and were living in semi-seclusion when they came to Peale to ask for help. He told them that drawing upon the...

[READ FULL SUMMARY OF THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING](#)