

Is being always positive really positive? Toxic Positivity –

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ABSTRACT

Humans believe that while thinking on being positive or having positive sentiments primarily in life, one should always be optimistic and look for answers by anticipating good results and achievements by focusing on making life happy. It is a positive and upbeat attitude of mind that sees the bright side of life. Being constantly positive and having an excessive, ineffective overgeneralization of a cheerful, optimistic attitude across all situations, on the other hand, results in the denial, reduction, and invalidation of the actual human emotional experience, rendering the entire concept of positivity poisonous.

There will be facts and instances in this Argumentative (Persuasive) Research Paper that show how positivism is not always desirable.

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Introduction

Toxic positivity is the concept that regardless of how horrible or unpleasant a situation is, people should have a positive attitude and mindset. It's known as the "only good vibes" style of life. While being an optimist and indulging in positive thinking has advantages, poisonous positivity ignores difficult sentiments in favour of a joyful, often artificially cherry, appearance. When optimism is used to repress or cover up the human experience, it, like everything done in excess, becomes deadly. When we reject the presence of certain sorts of sentiments, we retreat into a shell of denial and repressed emotions, yet the fact is that humans are flawed. We get irritated, enraged, greedy, and resentful. By attempting to be "positive vibes all day," we distort our actual human sentiments and experiences.

Experiences, whether positive or negative, are vital in life. Having a positive outlook on life is advantageous to your mental health, but it is also vital to address and work through challenges in order to live a sane life, rather than rejecting them. These sentiments, while often unpleasant, are necessary and must be acknowledged and dealt openly and honestly. Dr. Jaime Zuckerman, a clinical psychologist in Pennsylvania who specialises in anxiety disorders and self-esteem, believes that "Toxic positivity is the belief, whether held by oneself or others, that regardless of a person's emotional suffering or difficult situation, they should only have a positive perspective or -my pet peeve term-'positive vibes,"

Toxic positivity drives positive thinking to its logical conclusion. Not only does this worldview emphasise the importance of optimism, but it also conceals and denies any proof of human emotions that aren't completely pleasant or good. Toxic positivity promotes optimistic thinking as the only solution to problems, encouraging individuals to avoid thinking about or expressing negative emotions. The majority of studies on positive thinking focuses on the benefits of keeping an optimistic attitude in the face of hardship. Toxic positivity, on the other hand, demands people to remain optimistic no matter what, possibly suffocating their sentiments and deterring them from seeking social aid.

Signs of Toxic Positivity

Toxic positivity might be subtle at times, but learning to recognise the signs can help you better identify this mode of functioning. Among the warning signs are:

1. Avoiding your problems rather than facing them while hiding and preparing the framework for your actual emotions.
2. Experiencing guilt for being easily disappointed or unhappy, and even for feeling what you feel.

3. Hiding your true feelings behind feel-good words that appear more socially acceptable, and masking your emotions by striving to "just get on with it."
4. Trying to tolerate or "get over" the unpleasant emotions.
5. Ignoring other people's thoughts and experiences because they make you uncomfortable and dismissing them with "It is what it is"
6. Taunting or condemning others when they do not have a positive attitude on an issue and offering perspective such as "it might be worse" rather than recognising their emotional journey.
7. Shaming or penalising those who display rage, impatience, or any other emotion other than positivity.

Toxic positivity has gone into overdrive in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Toxic optimism is an extremely pertinent notion right now, given the collective pain we're all facing as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. All those Instagram posts telling us to enjoy this experience, spend more time with our families, get in shape, take up a new hobby, study a new language, and finally write that novel? According to Noel McDermott, a psychotherapist in London, this is poisonous optimism. "One of the most egregious forms of toxic optimism is denial of the pandemic's painful character," McDermott added. "You notice it when individuals exclusively advocate the positive lockdown experience in which they have been on a path of self-development, learning to live in harmony with their inner world." "Even in normal times, being more inwardly oriented is always a problem, since we all have inner demons," he noted. Toxic positivity gently or not so softly says that if you're not remaining happy about this pandemic, you're in the wrong mindset, as illustrated in the popular tweet below. It delegitimizes people's very valid concerns about their health, the health of their family and friends, and putting food on the table when unemployed or worried about job security. The act of surviving is psychologically draining in the face of the epidemic; few want to work on a side hustle or learn a second language when they're worrying about their families and saying goodbye to COVID-stricken loved ones through Zoom funerals.

"Most of us will be more than satisfied if we get through this without losing family members," one guy commented to the productivity-boosting tweet above. Of all, we may also become victims of our own poisonous optimism. Consider your current situation: During this epidemic, are you imposing poisonous positivity on yourself? Have you given yourself enough time to process your sadness and discomfort about how your life has changed? Or do you try to push such thoughts aside as fast as possible in order to focus on remaining optimistic and appreciative for what you do have? Counting your blessings during such a trying moment is, of course, quite acceptable. However, you may do so while still expressing your discomfort, according to Jenny Maenpaa, a therapist in New York City. "You may combat toxic positivity by identifying or understanding that numerous complicated emotions might exist in you at the same time," Maenpaa explained. "You can be heartbroken by the loss of life caused by COVID-19 while still enjoying the hygge of quarantine."

Toxic positivity may also be used to combat systemic prejudice.

Toxic positivity can also influence how individuals perceive and respond to racial justice calls. The poisonous positivity pusher may listen to someone relate their own experiences with racism and minimize them. They may provide some clichés about the importance of love, peace, and good thinking. They don't want to linger on the unpleasant, as Jacquelyn UgochukwuIyamah recently pointed out in an Instagram post about poisonous positivity and racial discrimination. They may argue that focusing on race is detrimental to human advancement and that "avoiding any and all dialogues is a more gratifying and pleasant way to live life," as Iyamah put it. Of course, Black Americans and other people of colour understand that optimism alone will not end institutionalized racism.

"It's difficult to claim that the damage caused by these societal realities can only be addressed at the level of individual psychology," McDermott said. To demonstrate his argument, the therapist offered the example of a lady in an abusive relationship. "A woman who is enduring domestic violence cannot be encouraged to develop wonderful positive psychology techniques as a method of handling the abuse and remaining in the abuse," McDermott said. "She should be counselled to adopt physical safety measures as well as psychological measures to heal from the abuse."

Racism follows the same logic. To address social injustices and abolish white supremacy, social action must be performed. Putting the burden of "staying optimistic" on a Black person is an insult to their lived experiences and an evidence of white complacency. "Psychological effort alone will never suffice here," McDermott explained.

Why is it harmful? –

Toxic positivism may really harm others who are going through a tough moment. Instead of being able to convey their emotions and receiving needed support, many find their sentiments ridiculed, disregarded, or invalidated. We conducted a poll among the youth of Uttar Pradesh, and 137 of the 150 participants had firsthand experience with toxic positivity. The majority of them had at least one of these causes. It's shameful; To advise a person to remain silent about their troubles in order to establish a positive perspective on suffering is to push them to be silent about their struggles. Many of us do not want to be perceived as "different or evil," so when given the choice between being bold and honest and pretending that everything is normal and wonderful, we may be more tempted to choose the latter. They need to know that their thoughts and emotions are genuine, but that they may find solace and love in their loved ones when they are vulnerable. Toxic positivity informs them that the feelings they are experiencing are inappropriate.

Silence, concealment, and judgement, according to author and researcher Brené Brown, are the main sources of shame. In other words, if there are secrets, concealment, and denial, shame normally takes a back place. It fosters shame and avoidance of human feeling; it conveys an indirect message that if you can't find a way to be happy even in the midst of tragedy, you're doing something wrong. Toxic positivity serves as an avoidance tactic; when other individuals engage in this sort of conduct, it assists them to escape difficult emotional circumstances. But sometimes we internalize these harmful thoughts and turn them against ourselves. When we experience uncomfortable feelings, we reject, discard, and deny them. For example, in one study, participants were placed into two groups and given unpleasant medical procedure films while their stress levels were assessed (e.g., heart rates, pupil dilation, sweat production). The first set of individuals was instructed to view the movies while expressing their true emotions and thoughts, whereas the second group was instructed to watch the films while acting as if nothing was hurting them. Can you guess what happened? Participants who controlled their emotions and "behaved as if nothing troubled them" experienced considerably higher levels of physiological arousal (Gross and Levenson, 1997). The emotional suppressors may have seemed calm and cool on the outside, but tension was erupting on the inside!

These studies show that expressing a wide variety of emotions, including the "not-so-positive," having words to describe how we feel, and even weeping can help us control our stress response. It stifles growth: Toxic optimism helps us to avoid feeling things that are unpleasant and painful, but it also prevents us from facing difficult emotions that can lead to growth and deeper understanding. We begin to live insincerity with ourselves and others when we deny our truth. We lose touch with ourselves while making it harder for others to connect with and relate to us. On the exterior, we may appear unaffected or impenetrable, but on the inside, we're simply terrified young kids seeking for someone to hold our hands and give us hugs.

Social media; according to Zuckerman, "toxic positivity is, at its root, an avoidance mechanism used to drive away and reject any interior distress." However, avoiding your feelings actually does more harm. Nowadays, the internet is awash with messages on how to "take advantage" of quarantine. Everyone says to start a side hustle, learn something new, or be active, but what everyone fails to grasp is that not everyone copes with stress by becoming busy. And for many people, these messages are damaging, increasing feelings of sadness and worry. For example, one earlier study Trusted Source discovered that being instructed not to think about something makes you more inclined to think about it.

In addition, one study from 1997 found that repressing sensations might lead to increased internal, psychological stress. "Failure to appropriately process emotions in a timely manner can result in a variety of psychological disorders, such as interrupted sleep, increased substance addiction, the likelihood of an acute stress reaction, protracted grieving, or even PTSD." Have you ever been in the presence of a sweet, "just think positive thoughts" type of person? How comfortable are you with revealing your guts regarding your inner emotions? Even if that person has the finest intentions in the world, the message they are conveying subconsciously is, "only happy feelings are permitted in my company." As a result, it is really difficult to express yourself, and you wind up conforming to the implicit constraints of, "I can only be a specific sort of person with you; I can't be myself."

The relationship you have with yourself is frequently mirrored in the one you have with others. How can you ever be able to hold room for someone else expressing authentic sentiments in your presence if you can't be

honest about your own feelings? By creating a phoney emotional environment, we attract additional phoniness, culminating in phoney closeness and phoney connections.

Is it positive to sometimes not be positive?

A time of covid and worldwide fear can be compared to the moment your worry was about to spiral out of control. Humans experience a vast spectrum of emotions, all of which contribute to their overall well-being. Anxiety, for example, may warn you to a potentially dangerous circumstance or a moral responsibility, but rage is a natural reaction to abuse or injustice. Sadness may indicate the severity of a loss. According to some study, talking about emotions, even unpleasant emotions, may even help your brain absorb feelings more effectively. An earlier study discovered that identifying and discussing emotions decreased the strength of particular brain networks connected with certain emotions. Toxic optimism pushes individuals to disregard negative emotions, potentially amplifying their strength. This research implies that discussing sentiments might help them seem less overpowering.

Although positive thinking has its advantages, no one can think positively all of the time. Forcing someone to express only good feelings might limit communication and make them feel horrible about themselves for having negative ideas. Neglecting these feelings implies ignoring the action they can elicit. Furthermore, failing to discuss them will not make problems go away. Most people require assistance from time to time in dealing with their emotions. Simply expressing one's feelings may make them feel less overpowering, allowing one to feel less "stuck" by them.

CONCLUSION –

Being a healthy person necessitates being aware of one's own self and how we bring light into our surroundings. If you see yourself as a transmitter of poisonous optimism, it's time to break the cycle. By insisting on this changing perspective, you are harming yourself and the people you actually care about the most. Instead of processing poisonous optimism, strive for balance and the integration of both good and unpleasant mindsets and emotions. A period, particularly this worldwide panic, may feel like exactly the appropriate time for your anxiety to spiral out of control, but keep in mind that the tools on this record may be just what you need to get your mental health back on track.

If you're surrounded by toxic positivity, I encourage you to develop healthy boundaries with the person who passes judgement on your honest and authentic experience and to speak up. We all have one life, and it is up to you to determine whether you will survive by hiding your originality and attempting to fit in the malison walls of society, or by being your unapologetic real self. Make an informed decision!

REFERENCE –

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