

# Positivity

<b>Thought</b>	<b>Emotion</b>
<b>Things are going well for me.</b>	<b>Happiness</b>
<b>I performed well or admirably.</b>	<b>Pride</b>
<b>I have everything I need.</b>	<b>Contentment</b>
<b>This challenge is just within my capabilities.</b>	<b>Engagement/Interest</b>
<b>I feel connected and committed to others.</b>	<b>Love</b>
<b>People think well of me.</b>	<b>Esteem/ Respect</b>

# How To Experience More Positive Emotion – Practice the STAR Technique

## BACKGROUND:

For every emotion, whether positive or negative, it's what we think that determines which emotion we feel. It's pretty easy for most of us to pinpoint the negative emotion we're feeling in the moment – Anger, Anxiety, Frustration, Sadness, Embarrassment, Guilt or Shame – and the kind of thinking that caused it. From your Resilience training so far, you probably already know that Emotion Radar is what we call the specific type of thought that leads to each of these emotions. And you may already have a good idea what your "Signature" negative emotion is – the one that gets in your way more than any other and drains your resilience tank, especially when you need your resilience the most. We're good at spotting that Signature Emotion because we've got plenty of experience with it!

We know that spending less time in negative emotion helps to boost our resilience. But what about the positive emotions like Happiness, Love, Pride, Interest, Esteem/Respect, and Contentment? Findings from the field of positive psychology have also shown us that spending more time feeling good can build our resilience resources even faster than spending less time feeling bad.

When we ask people in the workforce which positive emotion they'd like to experience more, the overwhelming response is Contentment. When we ask them why, they tell us that because they spend so much time feeling frustration at work, the idea of feeling contentment and peace is appealing. If you think about it, Contentment is pretty close to being the emotional opposite of Frustration.

Let's take a closer look at this. You may remember that the Emotion Radar for Frustration is Lack of Resources – thinking that you just don't have what you need to accomplish the task at hand. So what's the Emotion Radar for Contentment? It's "I have everything I need."

So, if you'd like to spend more time feeling Contentment, a great place to start is by practicing thinking more about what resources you have at your disposal, and less about what you don't have. With some practice, you can actually learn to start spending more time thinking about what you have, and before you know it, you might find yourself feeling content!

Spending time feeling any positive emotion has lasting positive impact not just on our mood but also on our behavior and on our overall sense of ourselves. When we feel contentment, we tend to savor our current circumstances and to integrate them into other aspects of our lives. In other words, feeling content in one situation will help us feel content more easily in others. So let's practice feeling more Contentment. The great news is that once you learn how to use the STAR Technique with this emotion, you can use it to spend more time in any other positive emotion!

## Try the STAR technique:

STAR stands for **SCAN** your thinking, **TUNE** into how you're feeling, **APPRECIATE** how things are right now, and **REVEL** in how much better you're feeling. To get you started here's some more detail for practicing STAR to feel more Contentment:

**S**can for your Contentment Emotion Radar thoughts: Just like tuning into your thinking to help make sense of feeling Frustration, you need to pay attention and grab onto thoughts like "I'm pretty satisfied with the way things are", and "I've got everything I need right now".

**T**une into how you're feeling right now. If you've been able to find a Contentment thought, you should be starting to feel more at peace, more relaxed. Pay attention to all aspects of how you're feeling: Your body, your mind, your thinking, your motivation, your behavior. We're much better at getting stuck in the effects of our negative emotions. It takes practice to hang onto the ways that positive emotions affects us – and there's good reason to do so!

**A**ppreciate just about anyone and anything that you can think of. The power of appreciation and gratitude has been studied more broadly and deeply than just about any other aspect of positivity. The direct impact on feeling Contentment is huge, and it doesn't take much effort to start the ball rolling.

**R**evel in the good thoughts and feelings that you've tuned into. Remember that our brains continue to flex and adapt. If you can just stay in the zone for 17 seconds, your brain will notice. It takes practice to create these new pathways, but with a bit of effort, the payoff will be lower stress and greater resilience.

**TIP:** You may find that some negative thoughts and emotions are making it hard for you to find the positive ones. One quick technique for banishing negative thoughts and emotions is to find something positive to look at or to think about. It doesn't have to be specific or detailed. Something as simple as, "Wow, it's so beautiful outside", or "I really like the color of the walls in this room", can be enough to let the light shine on your positive thinking.

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