

## Semiannual Inspiration: Positive Thinking Always Works

Greetings!

This semiannual message offers the story of Ballo, the attendant from my gym. He is originally from Ivory Coast and perhaps the happiest person that I know.

However, before I begin, I would like to dedicate this message to Chris McGinnis, a good friend of mine from Delaware Investments who died very suddenly a few weeks ago. Chris was a very intelligent and compassionate man, and I know he would have enjoyed this message very much. I wish his family strength and peace in this very difficult time.

So, I will begin with the story of Ballo and then move into some key concepts and personal reflection questions derived from Norman Vincent Peale's classic book The Amazing Results of Positive Thinking. Though the book is heavy on Christian references (I am not saying this is a bad thing, but I know religion is not for everyone) and is a bit dated (it's from the 1950s and reflects the dominant attitudes of that period), it has some very powerful insights.

### THE STORY OF BALLO

Ballo always has a smile on his face, even when he's cleaning the toilet in the men's room. He knows all the members of my gym and has a smile and a kind word for everyone. In fact, I like him so much that I pop in to say hi even when I'm just passing by. When I returned from Korea and saw him again at the gym, he gave me a huge hug and exclaimed, "Brian! You're back from Korea! I knew you'd come back." Here's a guy who sees hundreds of members in a week; he does not see me for two years; and he remembers me fondly. I felt so special in that moment.

One day I asked him if he ever gets depressed. The answer came back quickly and decisively, "No." He continued, "I learned about the US when I was very young, and I was curious. I wanted to come here. So, I prayed to God about it, and now I am here. I love my job and my life." He's a Devout Muslim and has a prayer rug that he lays out in the men's locker room to pray two or three times during each shift – he works 7 days a week at the gym, from 2pm to midnight most of those days. And does he complain? No. He always tells me, "Every day is like Monday for me, that's all." So when I see him, he'll ask me how my Saturday, Sunday, or whatever day it is, and no matter what day it is, I'll ask him how his Monday is. And we laugh together. He's a very special person in my life.

Positive thinking always works for Ballo. Can't it work for you as well?

### POSITIVE THINKING ALWAYS WORKS – CONCEPTS AND REFLECTION

So, let's get you thinking about how positive thinking can always work for you. However, please know that it's okay to be sad or depressed; a previous semiannual inspiration message encouraged you to love yourself where you are. Nonetheless, I think Ballo and Vincent Peale offer some helpful insights.

Here are some learning nuggets from Vincent Peale that supplement Ballo's story, and they are followed by some personal reflection questions.

- Positive thinking always works. Negative things happen, but you don't have to dwell on them.
- Act as if it were impossible to fail. If you see your potential as limitless, it turns out that there is nothing you cannot do!
- Positive thinking is tough-mindedness; it's about refusing to be defeated. As it's sung in the musical Wicked, it's about no longer accepting limits. It's about defying gravity.
- No situation is so dark that there is not a ray of light.
- Put a friend who is sad or depressed in contact with someone who can help him or her think more positively.

- Do something nice for someone and only require that he or she pay it forward (i.e. do something nice for someone else).

And here are some personal reflection questions.

- What's one area of your life in which you can think more positively? How can you achieve this?
- Who or what is your ray of light right now?
- Who do you know that is sad or depressed right now? How can you help him or her?
- What's working in your life? What do you have to be thankful for?

## CONCLUSION

I hope that positive thinking will always work for you. I think positively of you, and I hope you do the same of me. Thanks for letting me be part of your world.

Jon and I are now happily settled in Philadelphia. We welcome you to visit us at any time. As always, if you need me, I am only an email, LinkedIn note, or blog comment away from you. Reach out anytime.

If you're in the Northern hemisphere, enjoy the spring! If you're in the Southern hemisphere, happy autumn!

Regards from Philadelphia,

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*Have you invested in your community today?  
The world only spins forward - the great work begins!*

PS – You receive a semiannual inspiration message from me approximately 3-4 times per year. If you would like to forward my message to others, please feel free to do so. If they would like to be added to the distribution list, please have them email me at [BFish@aol.com](mailto:BFish@aol.com). And if you ever decide you'd like to be removed from the list, please email me at [BFish@aol.com](mailto:BFish@aol.com).

PPS – Previous semiannual inspirational messages dating back to June 2008 can be found at <http://brianfishbone.typepad.com/becoming-the-blog/semiannual-inspirational-messages.html>.