

Safe and Healthy Schools

Classroom Meeting #1

How to Train Your Brain to Become More Positive

Goal of the Lesson – To assist students and staff in raising their level of productivity by becoming more positive

In the documentary “Happy”, (on Netflix and available for purchase online) we discover that psychologists have begun to study “happiness and positivity” the way they’ve studied “depression”. Most of us believe that our overall level of happiness is determined by life circumstances. If we’re “happy” it’s because positive things are happening and if we’re “sad” it’s because negative things are happening. What they’ve discovered is that our life circumstances only accounts for about 10% of our overall happiness. Their research has revealed that people who tend to be “happy and positive” have certain things they are doing that contribute to their level of happiness and positivity. Borrowing from the same research, Shawn Achor , in his 2012 Ted Talks appearance, describes five specific things we can do to become a more positive and productive person.

Learner Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, staff and students will have learned:

- Five specific things they can do to have a more positive brain

Materials Needed

- Computer and projector
- Lesson overview sheet titled “How to Train Your Brain to Become More Positive”
- Shawn Achors Ted Talks Video Clip - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLJsdqxnZb0>
- Dumb and Dumber Clip - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9lgLueodZA>
- The 28 Day Brain Train Challenge Log

Preparation Needed

- Read the lesson
- Pull up and test both video clips above prior to the beginning of class
- Make copies of “The 28 Day Brain Train Challenge Log”

Lesson Outline for Teacher (Begin lesson here)

- 1) Say, **today's lesson is on "How to Train Your Brain to Become More Positive"**. If you know of a positive student in the class, use that person as an example and describe what he or she does that appears positive. If not, tell about a positive person you know.
- 2) Say, **here's an example of somebody who was very positive...might not be reality based, but positive.**
- 3) Show the "Dumb and Dumber Clip" - - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9IgLueodZA>
- 4) Say, **"Recently, psychologists have begun to study "happiness and positivity" the way they've studied "depression". Most of us believe that our overall level of happiness is determined by life circumstances. If we're "happy" it's because positive things are happening and if we're "sad" it's because negative things are happening. What they've discovered is that our life circumstances only accounts for about 10% of our overall happiness. Their research has revealed that people who tend to be "happy and positive" have certain things they are doing that contribute to their level of happiness and positivity. Borrowing from the same research, Shawn Achor, in his 2012 Ted Talks appearance, describes five specific things we can do to become a more positive and productive person. See if you can remember the five things he says we should do.**
- 5) Show the Shawn Achors Ted Talks Video Clip - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLJsdqxnZb0>
- 6) Ask, **"Does anyone have any comments about what you just watched?"**
- 7) Ask, **"What were the five ways to have a more positive outlook?"**
 - Gratitude – Write down three things you're thankful for each day
 - Journaling – Write about something positive that happened in the last 24 hours
 - Acts of Kindness – send an email or text thanking or praising someone in your social support network
 - Exercise – 10 minutes per day
 - Meditation – 10 minutes per day - gives your mind a break
- 8) Ask, **"How many of you would be willing to try this for 28 days? If so, pick an accountability partner whose job will be to encourage you along the way. After 28 days, I'd like you to report back on what the challenge was like.**
- 9) Give all of those who want to take part "The 28 Day Brain Train Challenge Log" sheet.
- 10) Let them know it's alright if they just want to do the written part (gratitude, journaling, and acts of kindness). Encourage the students to make this a class project. Everyone participates.