# Positive Thinking Practice: Realize Your Potential

**Do you want to achieve your goals in life? Positive thinking expert Norman Vincent Peale says all it takes is a change of attitude.**

By Norman Vincent Peale, New York, New York

Experts generally agree that the average person uses only a fraction of their mental capacity. Some fix this at about 10 percent; a few raise it to 20 percent. No matter which percentage of brain power we use, it’s still a tragic situation. We should always aim to be all that we can be.

Here are three steps you can take to maximize your potential.

**1. Believe in yourself.**  
We do a terrible thing to ourselves when we limit ourselves. Many of us say, "I can’t go beyond this point." Then we start to settle for those limitations. 'This is what I am. Might as well accept it and be content."

Thus, a truly tragic fact that we must face is that many of us settle for—and actually practice—our limitations. We practice them so constantly and for so long that the limitations become habits. The first step to realizing your potential is to believe that you have potential.

**2. Know that nothing is impossible.**Dr. Norman Vincent Peale once had a boy come to him and say, "The things you write about may work for you, but they don't work for me."

"Why should they work for me and not you?" Dr. Peale asked.

"You aren't the product of a broken family, but I am," the boy replied.

Dr. Peale tried to talk to him but, like a broken record, he kept coming back to the fact that he came from a broken family. His mind held onto that idea and wouldn't let it go. But Dr. Peale’s persistent message gradually broke through his mental barrier. He finally “got” that nothing is impossible when you have faith.

Now, there are egotists whose bloated self-esteem is unpleasant but equally unpleasant is the self-deprecation that you hear from people. They explain over and over how little ability they have and constantly affirm their lack of talent.

What would this world be like if everyone facing a difficulty, handicap or infirmity were to sit back and accept his or her circumstances? Everything would grind to a halt. We all have some problem or deficiency that could hold us back.

Bob Wieland, a man who lost his legs stepping on a landmine in Vietnam, is someone who could have accepted his limitations. Instead he returned to the United States to become a champion weight lifter, marathon runner, tri-athlete, motivational speaker, television actor and an outspoken advocate for those who have no voice: the homeless, the hungry, and the spiritually confused.

Bob's greatest challenge came with a walk across America—propelling himself on padded knuckles—to raise money for the hungry. His handicap was not a hindrance; it was an incentive, a stimulus.

The varieties of self-imposed limitations are legion. Particularly widespread are those that have to do with growing old.

Medical specialists and surgeons at a Midwestern clinic came to the conclusion that anyone who expects to lose vigor or experience debilities or degenerative disorders as they age may in fact be producing the precise condition that they fear. Perpetuating the idea that we have to become old and infirm is a self-imposed limitation.

So to achieve our potential we need to stop telling the world and ourselves that we don’t have the capacity to live a good life.

20 Ways to Get Mentally Tough

(Excerpt from Training Camp: What the Best Do Better Than Everyone Else)

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1. When you face a setback, think of it as a defining moment that will lead to a future accomplishment.

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2. When you encounter hardships, remember, the best don’t just face hardships; they embrace it, knowing it’s not a dead end but a detour to something greater and better.

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3. When you face negative people, know that the key to life is to stay positive in the face of negativity, not in the absence of it. After all, everyone will have to overcome negativity to define themselves and create their success.

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4. When you face the pessimist’s, remember the people who believed in you and spoke positive words to you.

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5. When you face critics, remember to tune them out and focus only on being the best you can be.

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6. When you wake up in the morning, think about all the good things you have in your life. It will create a mind ready for success.

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7. When you fear, trust. Let your faith be greater than your doubt.

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8. When you fail, find the lesson in it, and then recall a time when you have succeeded.

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9. When you head into battle, visualize success.

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10. When you are thinking about the past or worrying about the future, instead focus your energy on the present moment. The now is where your power is the greatest.

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11. When you want to complain, instead identify a solution.

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12. When your own self-doubt crowds your mind, weed it and replace it with positive thoughts and positive self-talk.

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13. When you feel distracted, focus on your breathing, observe your surroundings, clear your mind, and get into The Zone. The Zone is not a random event. It can be created.

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14. When you feel all is impossible, know that with a strong desire, all things are possible.

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15. When you feel alone, think of all the people who have helped you along the way and who love and support you now.

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16. When you feel lost, ask for guidance.

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17. When you are tired and drained, remember to never, never, never give up. Finish Strong in everything you do.

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18. When you feel like you can’t do it, know that you can do it if you don’t give up.

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19. When you feel like your situation is beyond your control, focus on what you can control and let go of what you can’t.

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20. When you’re in a high-pressure situation and the game is on the line, and everyone is watching you, remember to smile, have fun, and enjoy it. Life is short; you only live once. You have nothing to lose. Seize the moment.