

Positive Quotes

Compiled by Lucy MacDonald, M.Ed.

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Learn to be an Optimist: A practical guide for achieving happiness

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About Lucy MacDonald

Lucy MacDonald, M.Ed., a Canadian author, has been a counselor in private practice for the last five years and is certified with the Canadian Counselling Association. Lucy has a Master of Education degree from McGill University with an undergraduate degree in Psychology from Concordia University.

In addition to her private practice, Lucy is an [accomplished speaker](#), working in private industry, government, academic and nonprofit organizations. Lucy's clients include Kraft Canada, Pfizer, Investors Group, McGill University and Concordia University. Lucy is known for her engaging, dynamic and straightforward speaking style, along with her sense of humor.

Lucy's first book, [Learn to be an Optimist](#) was commissioned by Duncan Baird Publishers in London, England in December of 2002. In [Learn to be an Optimist](#), a positive thinking self-help book, Lucy takes a practical and insightful approach to helping you increase your optimism and suggests realistic ways to transform daily living by developing a positive attitude. Learn to be an Optimist contains positive thinking tips,

Lucy is the author and presenter of a variety of seminars including *The Power of Optimism*, *Discover Your Life Purpose*, *Manage Your Stress Before Your Stress Manages You*, and *Understanding Burnout*.

Lucy is the parent of four children ages 20 to 30 and lives in Beaconsfield, Quebec, Canada.

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Sign up today and receive Lucy's free newsletter [Positive Perspectives](#) - a free monthly e-newsletter to help you develop a positive mental attitude so that you can enjoy happiness, prosperity, and good health. Positive Perspectives is filled with self-improvement articles, optimism quotes, tips for positive thinking, and positive thinking exercises.

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Ability

Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.
John Wooden.

Achievement

Nothing stops the man who desires to achieve. Every obstacle is simply a course to develop his achievement muscle. It's a strengthening of his powers of accomplishment.
Eric Butterworth

Plant the seeds of expectation in your mind; cultivate thoughts that anticipate achievement. Believe in yourself as being capable of overcoming all obstacles and weaknesses.
Norman Vincent Peale.

Action

A life of reaction is a life of slavery, intellectually and spiritually. One must fight for a life of action, not reaction.
Rita Mae Brown

Aim

An aim in life is the only fortune worth finding.
Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

Aspire

Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and follow where they lead.
Louisa May Alcott

Attitude

If you can't change your fate, change your attitude.
Amy Tan

Beliefs

Our beliefs about what we are and what we can be precisely determine what we will be.
Anthony Robbins

The only thing that stands between a man and what he wants from life is often merely the will to try it and the faith to believe that it is possible.
Richard M. De Vos

Believe

Believing in our hearts that who we are is enough is the key to a more satisfying and balanced life.
Ellen Sue Stern

Be Strong

Never grown a wishbone, daughter, where your backbone ought to be.
Clementine Paddleford

Certainty

You are all you will ever have for certain.
June Havoc

Change

Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future.
John F. Kennedy

Choices

In the long run we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.
Eleanor Roosevelt

Life is raw material. We are artisans. We can sculpt our existence into something beautiful, or debase it into ugliness. It's all in our hands.
Cathy Better

Our lives are a sum total of the choices we have made.
Dr. Wayne Dyer

You are free to choose, but the choices you make today will determine what you will have, be and do in the tomorrow of your life.
Zig Ziglar

Circumstance

I find that it is not the circumstances in which we are placed, but the spirit in which we face them, that constitutes our comfort.

Elizabeth T. King

Commitment

I can't imagine a person becoming successful who doesn't give this game of life everything's he's got.

Walter Cronkite

A total commitment is paramount to reaching the ultimate in performance.

Tom Flores

Control

Today I know that I cannot control the ocean tides. I can only go with the flow. When I struggle and try to organize the Atlantic to my specifications, I sink. If I flail and thrash and growl and grumble, I go under. But if I let go and float I am borne aloft.

Marie Stilkind

Arrange whatever pieces come your way.

Virginia Woolf

Compromise

Each of us does, in effect, strike a series of "deals" or compromises between the wants and longings of the inner self, and an outer environment that offers certain possibilities and sets certain limitations.

Maggie Scarf

Confidence

Class is an aura of confidence that is being sure without being cocky. Class has nothing to do with money. Class never runs scared. It is self-discipline and self-knowledge. It's the sure-footedness that comes with having proved you can meet life.

Ann Landers

I always thought I should be treated like a star.

Madonna

Never bend your head. Hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye.
Helen Keller.

I have always regarded myself as the pillar of my life.
Meryl Streep

Contentment

Everything has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn,
whatever state I may be in, therein to be content.
Helen Keller

I make the most of all that comes and the least of all that goes.
Sara Teasdale

I figure if I have my health, can pay the rent and I have my friends I call it
“content”.
Lauren Bacall

Until you make peace with who you are, you'll never be content with what
you have.
Doris Mortman

Courage

One of the most courageous things you can do is identify yourself, know
who you are, what you believe in and where you want to go.
Sheila Murray Bethel

Courage comes from acting courageously on a day-to-day basis.
Brian Tracy

Day by Day

It is only possible to live happily-ever-after on a day-to-day basis.
Margaret Bonnano

You have to count on living every single day in a way you believe will
make you feel good about your life, so that if it were over tomorrow, you'd
be content with yourself.
Jane Seymour

Desire

When you know what you want and you want it badly enough, you will find the ways to get it.

John Rohn

Be like a postage stamp. Stick to something until you get there.

Josh Billings

Encouragement

You never know when a moment and a few sincere words can have an impact on a life.

Zig Ziglar

Failure

Keep on beginning and failing. Each time you fail, start all over again, and you will grow stronger until you have accomplished a purpose--not the one you began with perhaps, but one you'll be glad to remember.

Anne Sullivan

Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.

Henry Ford

Remember there are two benefits of failure. First if you do fail, you learn what doesn't work; and second the failure gives you an opportunity to try a new approach.

Roger von Oech

Today is a new day. You will get out of it just what you put into it. If you have made mistakes even serious mistakes, there is always another chance for you. And supposing you have tried and failed again and again, you may have a fresh start any moment you choose, for this thing we call 'failure' is not the falling down, but the staying down.

Mary Pickford

Faith

You do build in darkness if you have faith. When the light returns you have made of yourself a fortress which is impregnable to certain kinds of trouble; you may even find yourself needed and sought by others as a beacon in *their* darkness.

Olga Rosmanith

Faith is to believe in something not yet proved and to underwrite it with our lives; it is the only way we can leave the future open.

Lillian Smith

Fear

I'm not afraid of storms, for I'm learning to sail my ship.

Louisa May Alcott

My recipe for life is not being afraid of myself, afraid of what I think or of my opinions.

Eartha Kitt

Feeling Inferior

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt

Forgiveness

If you haven't forgiven yourself something, how can you forgive others?

Delores Huerta

Friendship

Friendship with oneself is all-important because without it one cannot be friends with anyone else.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Future

The future belongs to people who see possibilities before they become obvious.

Ted Levitt

Genius

Genius is an infinite capacity for taking life by the scruff of the neck.

Katharine Hepburn

Get Going

I don't wait for moods. You accomplish nothing if you do that. Your mind must know it has got to get down to work.

Pearl S. Buck

Giving

Give to the world the best you have and the best will come back to you.

Madeline Bridges

Goals

Happiness, wealth, and success are by-products of goal setting; they cannot be the goals themselves.

John Condry

Goals give you the specific direction to take to make your dreams come true.

Bob Conklin

Good days

There is no shortage of good days. It is good lives that are hard to come by.

Annie Dillard

Gratitude

Every time we remember to say "thank you", we experience nothing less than heaven on earth.

Sarah Ban Breathnach

Happiness

The right to happiness is fundamental.

Anna Pavlova

We all live with the objective of being happy; our lives are all different and yet the same.

Anne Frank

One is happy as a result of one's own efforts – once one knows the necessary ingredients of happiness – simple tastes, a certain degree of courage, self-denial to a point, love of work, and above all, a clear conscience.

George Sand

One must never look for happiness; one meets it by the way.

Isabelle Eberhardt

To attain happiness in another world we need only to believe in something; to secure it in this world we must do something.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Life is not always what one wants it to be, but to make the best of it as it is, is the only way of being happy.

Jennie Jerome Churchill

True happiness is not attained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose.

Helen Keller

The happiness excitement in life is to be convinced that one is fighting for all one is worth on behalf of some clearly seen and deeply felt good.

Ruth Benedict

Scatter seeds of kindness everywhere you go;
Scatter bits of courtesy – watch them grow and grow
Gather buds of friendship, keep them till full-blown;
You will find more happiness than you have ever known.

Amy R. Rabbe

To be kind to all, to like many and love a few, to be needed and wanted by those we love, is certainly the nearest we can come to happiness.

Mary Roberts Reinehart

Happiness is not perfected until it is shared.

Jane Porter

The greatest part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions, and not our circumstances.

Martha Washington

Happiness is not a state to arrive at, but a manner of traveling.

Margaret Lee Runback

Hard Work

Working hard overcomes a whole lot of other obstacles. You can have unbelievable intelligence, you can have connections, you can have opportunities fall out of the sky. But in the end, hard work is the true,

enduring characteristic of successful people.
Rear Admiral Marsha Evans

Work hard at several projects. That way, no matter what is going wrong, something will be going right."
Donna Hanover

Inspiration

Inspiration usually comes during work, rather than before it.
Madeleine L'Engle

Joy

If we could learn how to balance rest against effort, calmness against strain, quiet against turmoil, we would assure ourselves of joy in living and psychological health for life.
Josephine Rahtbone

The mere sense of living is joy enough.
Emily Dickinson

Life is a test

To be tested is good. The challenged life may be the best therapist.
Gail Sheehy

Life is a gift

Every day comes bearing its own gifts. Untie the ribbons.
Ruth Ann Schabaker

I like living. I have sometimes been wildly, despairingly, acutely miserable, racked with sorrow, but through it all I still know quite certainly that just to be a grand thing.
Agathe Christie

Life is the first gift, love is the second, and understanding the third.
Marge Piercy

Living

To live and let live, without clamor for distinction or recognition; to wait on divine Love; to write truth first on the tablet of one's own heart – this is the sanity and perfection of living, and my human ideal.

Mary Baker Eddy

Looking Ahead

Instead of thinking about where you are, think about where you want to be. It takes twenty years of hard work to become an overnight success.

Diana Rankin

Mistakes

Mistakes are part of the dues one pays for a full life.

Sophia Loren

A mistake only proves that someone stopped talking long enough to do something.

Michael Leboeuf

While one person hesitates because he feels inferior, the other is busy making mistakes and becoming superior.

Henry C. Link

Opportunity

Opportunities are usually disguised as hard work, so most people don't recognize them.

Ann Landers

We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations.

Chuck Swindoll

Optimism

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.

Helen Keller

Personal Peace

If you do not find peace in yourself, you will never find it anywhere else.

Paula A. Bendry

Personal Satisfaction

How I related to my inner self influences my relationships with all others. My satisfaction with myself and my satisfaction with other people are directly proportional.
Sue Atchley Ebaugh

Problems

When life's problems seem overwhelming, look around and see what other people are coping with. You may consider yourself fortunate.
Ann Landers

Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines.
Robert Schuller

Responsibility

I am responsible for my own well-being, my own happiness. The choices and decisions I make regarding my life directly influences the quality of my days.
Kathleen Andrus

To wait for someone else, or to expect someone else to make my life richer, or fuller or more satisfying puts me in a constant state of suspension.
Kathleen Tierney Andrus

Champions take responsibility. When the ball is coming over the net, you can be sure I want the ball.
Billie Jean King

Simplicity

The nicest and sweetest days are not those on which anything very splendid or wonderful or exciting happens, but just those that bring simple little pleasures, following one another softly like pearls slipping off a string.
Lucy M. Montgomery

Success

Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it.
Maya Angelou

Believing in our hearts that who we are is enough is the key to a more satisfying and balanced life.
Ellen Sue Stern

Once you get rid of the idea that you must please other people before you please yourself, and you begin to follow your own instincts – only then can you be successful. You become more satisfied, and when you are other people tend to be satisfied by way you do.
Raquel Welch

Take Risks

I compensate for big risks by always doing my homework and being well-prepared. I can take on larger risks by reducing the overall risk.
Donna E. Shalala

Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out.
James. B. Conant

Accept that all of us can be hurt, that all of us can, and surely will at times, fail. Other vulnerabilities, like being embarrassed or risking love, can be terrifying too. I think we should follow a simple rule: if we can take the worst, take the risk.
Dr. Joyce Brothers.

People who don't take risks generally make about two big mistakes a year. People who do take risks generally make two big mistakes a year.
Peter Drucker

Time

Be wise in the use of time. The question in life is not how much time do we have? The question is what shall we do with it.
Anna Robertson Brown

Today

You had better live your best and act your best and think your best today; for today is the sure preparation for tomorrow and all the other tomorrows that follow.
Harriett Martineau

Yesterday is a cancelled check; tomorrow is a promissory note; today is the only cash you have – so spend it wisely.

Kay Lyons

Light tomorrow with today.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Today a new sun rises for me; everything lives, everything is animated everything seems to speak to me of my passion, everything invites me to cherish it.

Anne De Lenclos

Together

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

Helen Keller

Trust your hunches

Trust your hunches. They're usually based on facts filed away just below the conscious level.

Dr. Joyce Brothers

Visualize

All acts performed in the world begin in the imagination.

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

Before you begin a thing remind yourself that difficulties and delays quite impossible to foresee are ahead. You can only see one thing clearly, and that is your goal. Form a mental vision of that and cling to it through thick and thin.

Kathleen Norris

Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.

Joel Arthur Barker

See things as you would have them rather than how they are.

Robert Collier

About Lucy MacDonald

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