
Feel Hopeless?
Surround Yourself
with Optimism

Surround Yourself with Optimism and Positivity When You Feel Hopeless

If you have experienced a loss, had a major life change, or if you are living with a mental health condition like depression, you may feel hopeless. Perhaps you believe your situation will never improve.

Hopelessness involves despair, desperation, and utter sadness. You may pull back from life, isolate yourself, and avoid doing things you enjoy or spending time with people you love. Hopelessness can even lead to suicide.

If you feel hopeless, you may have no expectation of good or success. You may struggle to find solutions or feel successful. If you're hopeless, it might be easier to focus on what is going *wrong* and forget to appreciate what is going *right*.

One simple step you can take is choosing the people you spend time with. The people you spend the most time with influence your life, your moods, and your expectations. Surrounding yourself with optimistic, positive, and admirable people can result in you adopting those same traits. You may experience changes such as:

- an attitude adjustment.
- feeling better about yourself.
- increased motivation and energy.
- accomplishing more each day.
- less stress.
- connecting with other happy, optimistic people.
- a reduction in feelings of hopelessness.
- increased gratitude and generosity.

According to research, surrounding yourself with positivity can help you live longer than pessimistic people who tend to be negative. Optimistic people cope with disease better, recover from surgery faster, are healthier, and even live longer lives. Optimists also experience greater happiness, healthier hearts, stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure, and a reduced risk for stroke.

Positive and optimistic people are not always happy. They *do* typically try to keep a positive attitude – and they often have your best interests at heart. They can motivate and encourage you.

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How can you become more positive and optimistic? It has a lot to do with the people you spend time with. Surround yourself with happy people who motivate you to become a better person and believe in the importance of positivity. They can actively cheer you on and lend you emotional support. Here are a few suggestions.

1. Positivity is contagious. Other people's emotions "rub off" on you and impact the way you feel. Choose optimistic, joyful, and motivated people and absorb their positivity.

2. Feel good to feel unstoppable. Your success is influenced by positivity and optimism. If you are physically and emotionally healthy, you are more likely to be successful. If you always feel down, unhealthy, or sluggish, you will not feel motivated and you are less likely to experience achievements. Identify at least one way to feel good every day – preferably doing an activity that involves other people.

3. Tap into inspiration. Who inspires you? Can you think of people in your life that genuinely inspire you? If not, find others (living or deceased) that are an inspiration. Connecting with people who inspire you fuels your passion and desire to grow and expand. So read books, watch movies, or otherwise learn more about inspiring people.

4. Strive for integrity. Being a "good person" involves consistently prioritizing your values. This may include supporting great causes, obeying laws, caring for the environment, always trying to be kind to others, and so on. When you do this, you will find yourself becoming a more optimistic and positive person – and when you are engaged in these activities, you will connect with others that place a high value on their own values!

5. Always express appreciation and focus on gratitude daily. Gratitude isn't a cure-all, but it can contribute to making you feel better if you practice every day. Regularly reflect on what you are grateful for and express your appreciation to the important people in your life.

This worksheet will help you reduce feelings of hopelessness by surrounding yourself with optimistic people.

Mastery Steps

Now, for the next two weeks, use the following chart to record the activity you do each day to spend time or connect with positive and optimistic people. Write down the date, describe the situation or activity, and write down how you felt. Finally, if you found yourself feeling hopeless, write down what you could have done differently.

Date	Activity	How did you feel?	What could you have done differently?

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Date	Activity	How did you feel?	What could you have done differently?

Reflections

Do you feel less hopeless? Why or why not?

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Did this exercise help you surround yourself with positive and optimistic people? Explain.

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