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You know that one person who is *always* happy? The person who had a car accident and got a broken collar bone but they're talking about how bad it *could have been* instead of the agony they are mostly likely in. That lady down the street who always gives those pesky teenagers the benefit of the doubt. That guy who can't catch a break, but he's the friendliest person you ever met. *Those people.* What kind of special sauce do they have access to that makes them like that? Don't they live in the same world we do? They do, actually! And rather than question their sanity, research actually suggests that the rest of us (because, really, we grouches and glass-half-empty folks are the majority) take a cue from them. My dad always used to say "garbage in, garbage out." And the way we see things around us is no different. Finding that silver lining in the mundane; choosing to find a positive note from the mass of negative ones, seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary gives us hope. And the more hope we can see around us, the more we begin to notice it, and the more we notice it the more positive we feel. Sometimes being positive is an active choice. Not likely an easy choice at first, but the more often we do it the more habitual it becomes. JV

"Keep your thoughts positive because your thoughts become your words. Keep your words positive because your words become your behavior. Keep your behavior positive because your behavior becomes your habits. Keep your habits positive because your habits become your values. Keep your values positive because your values become your destiny." ~Mahatma Gandhi

You can learn more about positive psychology at www.authentichappiness.com, the website of Dr. Martin Seligman, Director of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania. The website offers a wealth of information about positive psychology, including free questionnaires that measure character strengths and aspects of happiness. You can also learn about positive psychology theory (which is continuing to evolve, according to the site) and initiatives and sign up to receive newsletters. In addition, the website offers numerous links to other online resources about the field. Enjoy! SN

When problems arise, we are often unaware of the messages we give ourselves. We say "things never work out right" or "there is no point to trying." What we tell ourselves impacts how we view our problems. Engaging in negative thinking makes problems worse. People who persevere through tough times are able to encourage themselves using positive self talk. Essentially, they give themselves a pep talk with words of encouragement. Soothing oneself with reminders that problems will pass and you can make it through the tough times effectively calms the body and the mind which lessens anxiety and stress. The next time you encounter a problem, use positive self talk to pep yourself up. With consistent use, you will definitely notice a decrease in stress and anxiety. CR