

## TEN FORMS OF POSITIVITY\*

### JOY

“Visualize this: Your surroundings are safe and familiar. Things are going your way – even better than you expected. At the moment the situation requires little effort on your part. These are the circumstances that spark joy....Perhaps your co-workers have just surprised you with a birthday party. Or you open a letter to find an unexpected bonus. Or you’re out to dinner with new friends and delighting in their good company.

Joy feels bright and light. Colors seem more vivid. There’s a spring in your step. And your face lights up with a smile and an inner glow.”

### GRATITUDE

“Imagine you’ve just realized that someone has gone out of their way to do something good for you. Your neighbor...offers to entertain your kids for a few hours one afternoon. A mentor gently steers your career in the right direction. Your spouse cleans up and makes dinner on your busiest day so you don’t have to. We can feel grateful for breathing clean air, having able bodies, or having a safe and comfortable place to rest when weary.

In any case, gratitude comes when we appreciate something that has come our way as a gift to be treasured.”

### SERENITY

“Like joy, serenity enters when your surroundings are safe and familiar and require little effort on your part. But unlike joy, serenity is much more low-key. It’s when you let out that long, luxurious sigh because your current circumstances are so comfortable and so *right*...It’s strolling down a sandy beach on a bright morning with ocean sounds filling your head and a cool breeze tingling your skin. It’s curling up with a good book and a warm lap cat, with your favorite cup of tea beside you...

Serenity makes you want to sit back and soak it in. It’s a mindful state that carries the urge to savor your current circumstances and find ways to integrate them into your life more fully and more often...It often comes on the heels of other forms of positivity, like joy, pride amusement, or awe.”

# TEN FORMS OF POSITIVITY\*

## INTEREST

“Although you’re feeling perfectly safe, something new or different draws your attention, filling you with a sense of possibility or mystery. Unlike joy and serenity, these circumstances call for effort and increased attention on your part. You’re utterly fascinated. You’re pulled to explore, to immerse yourself in what you’re just now discovering. It’s when you see a new path in the woods and want to find out where it leads. It’s when you uncover a new set of challenges that allow you to build your skills...It’s that fascinating new book that awakens you to new ideas.

When you’re interested, you feel open and alive. You can literally feel your horizons expanding in real time, and with them your own possibilities. The intense pull of interest beckons you to explore, to take in new ideas, and to learn more.”

## HOPE

“Although most positivity arises when you feel safe and satiated, hope is an exception. If everything were already going your way, there would be little that you’d need to hope for. Hope comes into play when your circumstances are dire – things are not going well for you, or there’s considerable uncertainty about how things will turn out. Hope arises precisely within those moments when hopelessness or despair seem just as likely. Perhaps you’ve just failed an important test, lost your job, found a lump in your breast, or scooped up your child after a bloody bike accident. Hope, in desperate situations like these, is ‘fearing the worst but yearning for better.’

Deep within the core of hope is the belief that things can change. No matter how awful or uncertain they are at the moment, things can turn out better. Possibilities exist. Hope sustains you. It keeps you from collapsing into despair. It motivates you to tap into your own capabilities and inventiveness to turn things around. It inspires you to plan for a better future.”

## PRIDE

“Pride is one of the so-called ‘self-conscious emotions.’ We all know its evil cousins, shame and guilt. These painful feelings overcome us when we’re to blame for something bad. Pride is the opposite: we’re ‘to blame’ for something good. As one of the so-called seven deadly sins, pride has a mixed reputation...But when specific and tempered with appropriate humility, pride is clearly a positive emotion.

Pride blooms in the wake of an achievement you can take credit for...Or when you recognize that you made a difference to someone else, through your help, kindness, or guidance...It kindles dreams of further and larger achievements in similar domains: *If I can do this, maybe I can...*In this way, pride fuels the motivation to achieve.”

## TEN FORMS OF POSITIVITY\*

### AMUSEMENT

“Sometimes something unexpected happens that simply makes you laugh. A friend makes a funny face after she tries your latest dinner creation...A colleague jokes about the worst time of day to hold meetings...

Heartfelt amusement brings the irrepressible urge to laugh and share your joviality with others.”

### INSPIRATION

Every so often, you come across true human excellence. You transcend the ordinary, seeing better possibilities than usual. Witnessing human nature at its very best can inspire and uplift you. Perhaps you see a colleague step away from his own pressing schedule to patiently help a disoriented older man find his way through the labyrinth of the medical center...Or you witness one of your role models doing what she does best.

Feeling inspired rivets your attention, warms your heart, and draws you in...Inspiration doesn't simply feel good, it makes you want to express what's good and do good yourself.”

### AWE

“Closely related to inspiration, awe happens when you come across goodness on a grand scale. You literally feel overwhelmed by greatness...Awe makes you stop in your tracks. You are momentarily transfixed. Boundaries melt away and you feel part of something larger than yourself...Sometimes we're awed by nature...Other times we're awed by humanity.

It compels us to see ourselves as part of something much larger.”

### LOVE

“There's a reason love is called a many-splendored thing. It's not a single kind of positivity. It's all of the above, encompassing joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, and awe. What transforms these other forms of positivity into love is their context.

When these good feelings stir our hearts within a safe, often close relationship, we call it love. In the early stages of a relationship...you're deeply *interested* in anything and everything this new person says and does. You share *amusements* and laugh together, often as a result of the awkwardness of coming together for the first time. As your relationship builds and perhaps surpasses your expectations, it brings great *joy*...

Each of these moments could equally be described as a moment of love...Viewing love in this way can sharpen your ability to see love as a momentary state – as a surge – and not simply as a description of one of your relationships...”