

The POSITIVE Lawyer® - The Power of Language

It's amazing how simple it can be to be think, feel and be more positive!

Words have energy so choose them wisely!

Evidence Base

There is so much research, evidence, and innumerable studies in the field of positive psychology that is it too difficult to pick out and reference just a few of them. It is a research area that has absolutely boomed since Martin Seligman threw down the challenge to the world of psychologists to look at how to promote positivity rather than simply stage interventions once situations were out of control.

As a reminder, Martin Seligman is recognised as the founder of Positive Psychology in the late 90s. Positive Psychology is the scientific study of human flourishing, and an applied approach to optimal functioning. Many of the concepts and activities contained within The POSITIVE Lawyer draw on the field of positive psychology and associated research.

So, are you ready to make a conscious choice to think, live and work more positively? This has never been more critical for lawyers and the perfect time to get started is NOW!

The impact of negative words

So, let's look at language and how it generates positive or negative states of mind.

Lawyers have highly developed language skills as the right or wrong expression chosen in the field of law can have major consequences. Although, how does language impact on their mental and physical wellbeing?

Negative words impact the way our brains work, they generate negative energy and attract negative outcomes. So, it's unfortunate that some people, and even some professions, seem to be hardwired to think and express everything in negative ways.

It can be a reflex reaction and a way to let off steam or cope with frustration.

It can also sabotage mindset, reduce potential, and erode happiness.

Research shows that negative words and attitudes affect our wellbeing by increased levels of stress hormones and anxiety that lead to a diminished ability to think, reason and form memories.

"Flash the word "NO" for less than one second, you'd see a sudden release of dozens of stress-producing hormones and neurotransmitters. These chemicals immediately interrupt the normal functioning of your brain, impairing logic, reason, language processing, and communication.

In fact, just seeing a list of negative words for a few seconds will make a highly anxious or depressed person feel worse, and the more you ruminate on them, the more you can actually damage key structures that regulate your memory, feelings, and emotions." Dr Lafont at <https://www.vidamind.com.au/the-destructive-power-of-negative-thoughts-and-words>



I love this excerpt of a post from Dr Lafont. Take your time to read it and consider the implications.

The importance of language

For the past 5 years I've been actively working to eliminate and replace negative words from my vocabulary. This was the time that my now best friend introduced me to a book "How to have a bug free mind" by Andy Shaw and more recently I've been seeking out any study I can find on the power of language.

I've been consciously editing my spoken and written language and working even harder to remove or reframe negative thoughts...the word BUT still creeps in from time to time. The word JUST has been one of the hardest to remove.

Some words are obviously negative. Others seem neutral or positive, although when you dig a little deeper you realise how sabotaging they can be.

I've saved you lots of time by compiling a list of words that have negative or weak connotations. These are the ones that I am actively seeking to remove and replace in my thinking, speaking, and writing.


I've also included a list of alternatives that have far more positive intent...

THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE?

WORDS HAVE ENERGY SO CHOOSE THEM WISELY

REMOVE these WORDS			USE these WORDS		
BUT	TRY	STUPID	AND	WILL	I AM
FAIL	JUST	HOPE	LEARNING	SUCCESS	CHOOSE
COULD	SHOULD	MUST	CAN	DO	ABLE
PERFECT	WRONG	LUCK	MAY	GROWTH	IMPROVE
CAN'T	COULD	SHOULD	HOW	WHEN	WHY
WANT	ALWAYS	NEVER	POSSIBLE	YES	AGREE
IMPOSSIBLE	NOT	ONLY	OPPORTUNITY	INTERESTING	

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 the POSITIVE lawyer™

Let go of SHOULD and WANT

In my experience, SHOULD and WANT both fall on the negative side of the positive language equation, mostly due to the insipid intentions conveyed by both words. Wanting to do something is not the same as being determined to do it, thinking that you should do something implies some form of guilt because you haven't done it yet.

Far better alternative include WILL and I AM, in that you will do something, or you are doing something. These have great positive energy and commitment.

Last week I was reading an article in one of my favourite hardcopy subscriptions, the Australian monthly Wellbeing magazine, Issue 193, Letting go of should – don't should yourself in the foot. It was all about letting go of the word SHOULD and replacing it instead with WANT. I had an immediate and vehemently negative reaction to the sentiment that was put forward by the psychotherapist who contributed the article. SHOULD is wishy washy and implies some sort of guilt because you haven't done it yet. WANT is also negative and implies some form of need that arises from scarcity thinking. I could go on and on about the benefits of abundant thinking versus scarcity thinking – perhaps this a topic for another article.

What is LUCK anyway?

I also take issue with the notion of LUCK or being LUCKY. My daughter and her father (ex-husband) both say that I'm lucky and I say that I've –

- worked hard to obtain credentials and experience;
- been noticed due to those credentials and experience;
- been presented with opportunities; and
- been brave enough to say YES.

This has nothing to do with LUCK. It's all about hard work and bravery. Thinking of someone as LUCKY both diminishes their achievements and indicates a form of jealousy. Perhaps we feel better when we believe someone else is LUCKY because it lets us off the hook for not achieving more ourselves?

I believe that my daughter thinks I'm lucky because she is young and naive, my ex-husband believes I'm lucky because it makes his feel better about the opportunities that he has missed in his life.

The power of YES and NO

You may notice that NO is missing from the list of negative words and YES is included in the list of positive words. This is not an oversight; it is a deliberate choice that I made. It might seem contradictory given the excerpt from Dr Lafont on the negative impacts on our brains from the word NO.

No definitely gets a bad wrap when it is the first and automatic response to every question and when it is part of an overarching negative state of mind.

There is a definite upside to the word NO when it is used appropriately to express boundaries and to protect your time for your most important priorities.

There's also a lot to be said, for the power of YES. Yes supports risk-taking, courage, and an open-hearted, positive approach to life.

Changing your thoughts and language

How do we stop using negative words?

We cease our endless train of negative thoughts...

Easier said than done!

Don't beat yourself up if you notice the negative words scattered all through your thoughts and conversations. It's natural, it's the way we've been programmed over many decades. I treat it as a fun game, I take note of my thoughts before I speak them aloud, and many times I'm able to intervene and adjust my thoughts and language before it comes out or becomes embedded. Like anything, with practice you'll achieve improvements and eventual mastery.

Here's a simple set of steps to support more positive thinking. It would be great if you commit to them and make it part of your journey towards a more positive life!

1. Decide firmly to leave the negative behind
2. Create awareness around language traps
3. Identify the words, phrases and beliefs that don't support your purpose
4. Select positive replacements and swap them out every time you catch yourself
5. Be kind to yourself as it takes a long time and deliberate action
6. Affirm yourself and allow yourself to feel happy
7. Celebrate your progress! This bit is the most important as rewards help to consolidate improvements...

About the author...



Hi, I'm Therese Linton, a global leader in legal project management legal process improvement and personal productivity. Over the last decade I've worked with thousands of lawyers to introduce innovative ways of working that delights clients, reduces stress, improves work-life balance and leads to better legal outcomes.

I've been encouraged by my best friend, business partner and many clients to expand the positive impact of these ways of working with the NEW Positive Lawyer coaching program.

I've been growing and learning throughout this journey myself. I have firsthand experience with learning new skills, along with the ups and downs that are inevitable when striving for mastery.

Announcing an amazing new program - THE POSITIVE LAWYER®

The Positive Lawyer provides the new 'non-negotiable' approaches to legal work, and a well-researched collection of tools and techniques to support positive mindsets, improve resilience and uplift legal working environments.

It's the solution for lawyers who want to stress less and live more! Participants will be supported with a ground-breaking coaching program, tailored to address the complex challenges faced by lawyers today. Over 12 weeks you will participate in 6 face to face sessions, or workshops, and have fortnightly contact to complete guided activities to support your breakthrough and transformation.

If you're committed to releasing yourself from limiting beliefs; learning new skills that are critical to your success; developing and implementing realistic action plans; reigniting your enthusiasm for your career...then register your interest at <https://basaltgroup.clickfunnels.com/registerpl>.

You will be the first to know when the program is available and we'll keep you motivated and updated along the way.

My aim is to inspire you to achieve great things and I look forward to joining you on your journey! Cheers....T