

## **The Charge of the “light” Brigade: The ignorance of attempting to “be positive”**

There is a rampant ideology constantly associated with the practise of medicine and so-called “self-development” which is the idea of “positive thinking” or “positive belief” being the “foundation” of health. The concept is simple: that if I think and act in positive ways then my nature will become like this. This has been taken on in more complex ways by such groups as those advocates of NPL as well as much more ancient religious movements and ideologies with the practice of meditation like the “inner-smile” or even the outer-smile in order to create the inner smile!

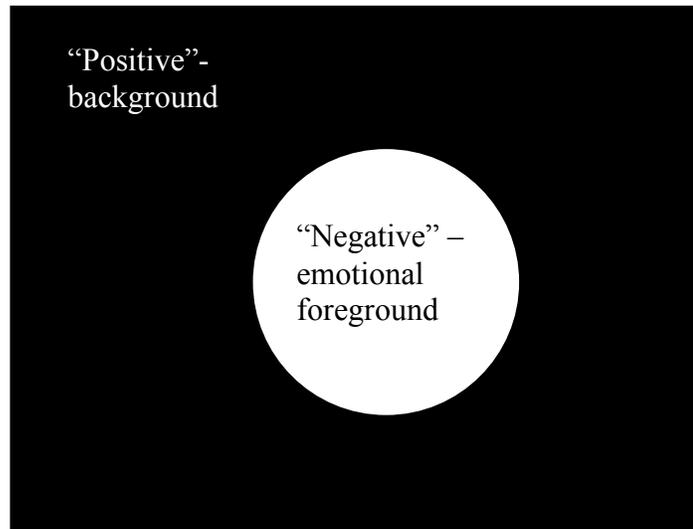
These are all a form of belief system based on the premise that “if I act a certain way then I will become like the thing which I am acting like”, or “if I mirror this way of behaviour I will become like this”. On a very superficial level this is in fact possible, we can change and adapt and are totally One, so if everyone is feeling truly happy there is less likelihood of there being as much sadness. However “positive thinking” itself does not engender happiness, it is merely an add-on method which needs to be practised in order to feel happy, far from an osmotic process it is something which is “taken on” by the individual, a belief that “if I do this I will feel better” a notion usually used for example by a practitioner or a hierarchical peer.

While this works very well in the short term and miraculous transformations may arise such as those we see in the evangelical churches, these processes are usually incredibly short-lived because they are a belief system and a belief system requires a lot of energy. Much like supersition, the belief needs to be powered and perpetuated, based fundamentally on a fear of failure. Similarly with the Roman Catholic process of confession which is set up because humans “can’t be perfect all the time” so there is a need to be like Christ and “follow his example”. This model has been copied to varying degrees and also practised by many who are intent on self-development, although it proclaims to be anything but “religious”. The point is that to put this “application” onto the “iphone” of “individualism” is something that devours much of the remaining circuitry until there is a “lapse” back into old patterns which we then repeatedly try to escape or to re-program rather than accept implicitly.

In order to clarify this issue we need to understand firstly what it means to “be negative” or “positive”, although these terms we will see are totally arbitrary and misleading. The mental-emotional patterns, *all of them*, are actually “negative”, this includes anger, jealousy, anxiety, over-excitement, fear, grief etc., because they are founded in the belief that these things are happening to a “person” called “me”.

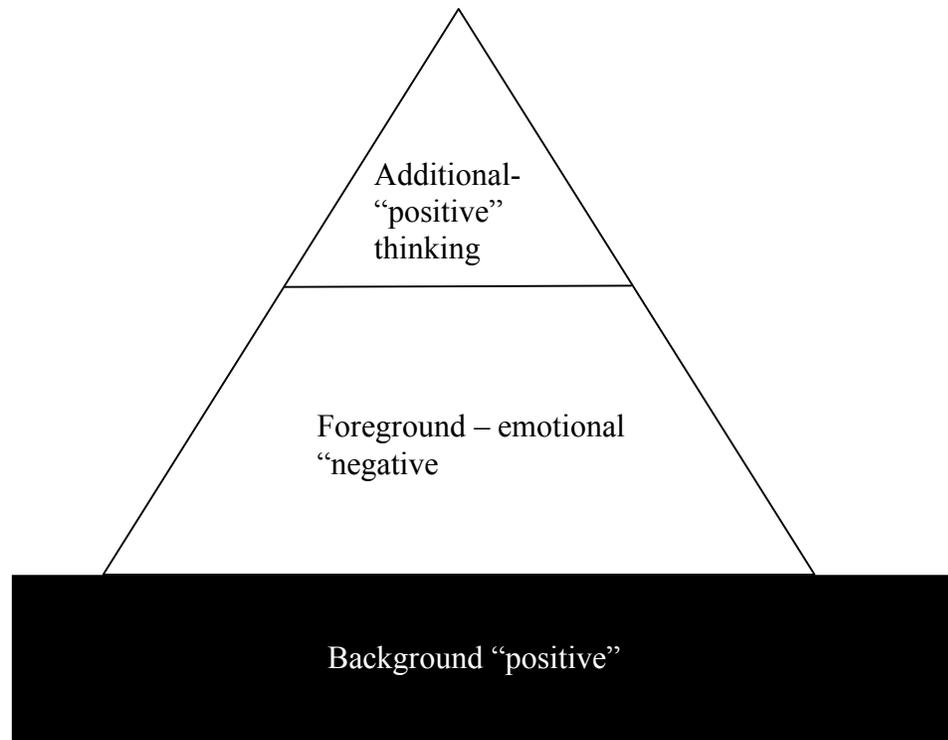
So what then are the “positive” emotions. Well actually the only thing that is different from emotion is simply without-emotion, when this happens then there arises spontaneously joy/happiness, peace, clarity, contentment. These aspects have no opposite to them, happiness is not opposite to grief-sadness for happiness can be there in the background of grief-sadness, but the opposite is not true. Hence to call happiness positive would be to lose its meaning, it is in fact Non-dual by nature.

The point is that so-called “positive” is not “versus” the so-called “negative”, they are on an utterly different plane energetically (although utterly unified at root), and so defy comparison. We could draw it like this, as foreground and background:-



Understanding that the background state, or ever-present nature of existence, is “positive” poses the question firstly of why this requires a “belief”? If something already exists without intervention but is pervaded by an ideology of belief in the “negative” surely all that is required is not to gain a belief system in “the positive” from within the boxed thinking of the “negative”, but actually to completely drop the idea that “negative” exists at all.

Numerous disciplines of medicine have attempted to create the “positive” from the box of the “negative” but this is destined to fail. The negative beliefs eventually always take over because they are foundational to the more positive ideas which we are exhorted to take on:-



The triangle above represents the illusory structure of an “individual” and as such additions to the top of the process such as “I must now think positively”, affect only that, the top of the tree and the root fundamental beliefs remain unaffected. There are millions of people who practise some form of “Positive thinking” method as though this will somehow magically endow them with happiness. This occurs not only in modern therapeutics but also very ancient techniques which adjust belief systems and ways of being in order to “imagine” the background state of being and connect to it. However unless this is actually osmotically felt inside-out, and naturally experienced without the impediments of belief, ideology or practices and methods like “I must”, “should”, “could”, “might”, there is never simply an acceptance of what is, without the addition of anything else.

It is a total ignorance of medicine and natural understanding to go around urging people to “be happy” or “be positive about”, to “relax” or “STOP PANICKING”. This in fact causes the opposite effect and will hinder the process of healing or add yet another belief that one can “be happy” which may bring immediate short-term relief but after this has passed, the person is still entangled in the myth that “I should do this or I’m not going to achieve happiness”, and thereby the cycle of problematic processes is prolonged.

Techniques such as NLP and similar methodologies lack or have lost along the way the fundamental understanding of ancient origin obviously connected to by the work of Milton Erickson, wherein there is an intrinsic understanding of a non-forceful non-practitioner-centered process. Here usually the patient is naturally seated in acceptance

and allowed to unfold simply by the use of pertinent questioning turning to the patient's "self"-enquiry, (highlighted in an ultimate way in the work of Douglas Harding, please see [www.headless.org](http://www.headless.org)) rather than answering the questions and taking people through an imaginary journey which only the practitioner presumably has the "way" to access. The practitioner who is truly as One with the patient, not enforcing their own agenda or hierarchical control but simply allows natural processes to take over, will inspire a gradual breakdown and erosion of the so-called "negative" base of individuality rather than an add-on of more things "to do" to get there and as result more.

This halts the process of seeming "failures" or "achievements" enabling a natural process of unfolding, unrelated to the endless ordered and regimented ideologies which extol the virtues of "practising" daily or you just "won't get there" which ultimately only increase the "negativity", their lists and recommendations are endless.

Forceful action or "charging" towards the so-called "positive" is something that cannot be achieved, it occurs through a process of a letting-go, not an addition. Any addition of information, ideas or structures ultimately hampers the process of simply letting-go and reverts to a mental-emotional process which latches onto something in order to keep itself identified. Ikeda Masakazu, whose vital expression rings true in Classical Oriental medicine, has in the past suggested practitioners do not burden their patients with lists of recommendations and moralization but simply express information about the nature of the illness. In this way the patient begins to realize they are not required to "do" anything and there is a winnowing of beliefs leading to a letting-go as they simply listen to instinct.

This understanding is evident in certain people's work but is actually foundational to all the religious dogmas and attempts to emulate Christ, Buddha, Lao Tzu or any so-called "enlightened" expression. As always there is a massive difference between legal structuralism and a conformity to rules built up around these ancient people, versus simply being natural, which was their direct message. It is so easy to get onto the bandwagon of "positive thinking" and debate its meaning or attempt to re-connect to past feelings. The emphasis is always on us to "do" something in order to "get" somewhere. Very little attention is afforded to the deep and unadulterated simplicity of the present moment and its absolute reality which is utterly beyond belief and imagination, simply as it is without requirement, and as Tony Parsons explains, this is an "open invitation" which truly is the constant so-called "positive" within Non-dualism.

David Nassim  
24/ 4/ 2011