

It's All About Attitude

At the end of the day, do you tend to focus on the one bad thing that happened that day? Or do you think about the good things that happened? Your answer can reveal your attitude about life. Positive people tend to focus on the good times, while negative people usually focus on the bad times.

Researchers have studied the effects of positive thinking. People who have a positive attitude live longer and feel less stress. Adults are less likely to have a heart attack. Positive people are even less likely to catch a cold!

If you have a positive attitude, keep it up. If you find yourself thinking mostly negative thoughts, you can train yourself to become more positive. Begin by using positive self-talk. Self-talk is that never-ending stream of thoughts inside your head. If you find yourself thinking a negative thought like, "I'll never figure this out", think of a way to turn that thought into something positive like, "I'll give it another try."

Next, stop yourself throughout the day, and check your self-talk. If your thoughts have been mainly negative, try to think of positive things you can tell yourself to replace those negative thoughts.

Finally, spend time with positive people. Hang around positive people who give you helpful advice. Then you will be more likely to be positive yourself! When possible, limit the time you spend with negative people.

Life is full of ups and downs. Why not focus on the good things and reap the benefits of having a positive attitude?

Write a 3-4 sentence summary in the space below.

Adaptation Study: The Rabbit

Rabbits have been roaming the earth for millions of years. In fact, many scientists believe that they appeared around 65 million years ago, shortly after the time of the dinosaurs. Long ago, they looked different. Over millions of years, they have adapted so that they would have the best chance of survival. An adaptation is a characteristic that enables a plant or animal survive in its environment. Let's examine the rabbit's appearance, and identify body parts that have helped ensure its survival.

First, rabbits are known for their long ears. Few animals on the planet have ears like those on a rabbit. A rabbit's long ears help them to hear sounds, like the footsteps of approaching predators. Hearing has become the rabbit's most important sense because it warns them of danger. A rabbit's ears can turn toward sounds or lie back when it needs to hop away.

Rabbits are also known for their short, white tails, which is another important adaptation. A short tail makes it unlikely that a predator that is chasing a rabbit will be able to reach out and grab it by its tail. Also, the white color of the tail confuses predators. The predator sees the rabbit's white tail appear and then quickly disappear, like a flash, as it makes sharp turns. This causes the predator to have to slow down and refocus each time the rabbit turns. This can give the rabbit just enough time to escape.

A rabbit's curving spine and long hind feet help it to move quickly. The curving spine helps the rabbit propel its body forward. The large, flat feet give it a good grip when it's ready to run. For rabbits that live in snowy conditions, the large feet act like snowshoes that can easily move across the top of the snow.

The rabbit's ears, tail, and feet are just a few adaptations of the rabbit have helped it survive for many millions of years. It will likely continue to roam the earth for many years to come.

Write a 3-4 sentence summary in the space below.

Titanic Predictions

Before its fateful crash into an iceberg on April 14, 1912, many people thought that the *Titanic* was “unsinkable”. However, there were some who predicted the disaster before the *Titanic* ever set sail.

Frank Adelman and his wife had tickets to travel on the *Titanic*. Mrs. Adelman felt a sudden sense of danger, and didn’t want to board the ship. They tossed a coin. Mrs. Adelman won, so they took another ship. Mr. Shephard was also warned by his wife. He was traveling in England on business when he received a letter from his wife begging him not to board the *Titanic*. She had had a nightmare in which the *Titanic* had sunk. Mr. Shephard listened to his wife, and returned home on another ship.

There were also two stories published in the 1800s that foretold of a large boat hitting an iceberg and sinking. One story was written in 1886 by William Stead as a warning to ship owners. In his story, written 26 years before the *Titanic* sunk, Stead described how a steamer hit an iceberg in the Atlantic and sank, and many people died because there were not enough lifeboats for all of the passengers. William Stead was on the *Titanic* and died when it sank.

Another novel was published in 1898, 14 years before the *Titanic* disaster. In *Futility* by Morgan Robertson, an ocean liner called *Titan* hits an iceberg in the Atlantic, and many people die because there are not enough lifeboats.

Another interesting prediction took place in Egypt, where a Canadian family was traveling. A palm reader told Alice Fortune that she would be in danger if she traveled by sea. Just a few months later, she and her family set sail on the *Titanic*. She survived with her mother and sisters, but her father and brother died.

Write a 3-4 sentence summary in the space below.

Cesar Chavez

Cesar Chavez was born in Arizona. He and his family moved to California when they lost their family farm in the 1930s. Cesar, his parents, and his five siblings became migrant workers. They traveled from farm to farm picking crops, and living in small, metal shacks with no running water. They worked twelve hours a day, six days a week for very little pay. When they finished harvesting at one farm, they would move to another and begin again. Cesar attended more than 30 schools by the time he was in eighth grade.

Cesar quit school after eighth grade and found a job picking grapes. He became frustrated with the poor living conditions and low pay. He met a man named Fred Ross who worked for the Community Service Organization (CSO). Ross's group tried to help migrant workers. When Cesar's boss found out that Cesar was doing volunteer work for the CSO, Cesar was fired. Then, Cesar worked only for the CSO.

In 1962, Cesar decided to start his own group, the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). This group began to fight for the rights of farm workers who were being treated unfairly.

Cesar and the NFWA members wanted better pay for farm workers. In 1965, they decided to do something drastic: they went on strike. The farm owners responded by hiring workers from Mexico who were willing to work for little pay. Cesar knew they had to do something else. He traveled all over America and gave speeches. He explained how the migrants were suffering, and demanded fair treatment. He asked people to boycott California grapes. Cesar asked the store owners not to sell them. He asked the truck drivers not to deliver them. He asked Americans not to buy them. The strike lasted five long years, and later included other farm products. The strike finally ended in 1969. The farm workers won!

Cesar Chavez continued to work with migrant workers until his death in 1993. He is remembered for making life better for thousands of people.

Write a 3-4 sentence summary in the space below.

Toppling Down

Landslides and avalanches are natural disasters that can wipe out entire towns. Both are deadly forces that can bury people and things. Once a landslide or an avalanche starts, there is no way to stop this downward force. There are, however, some important differences between landslides and avalanches.

Perhaps the most obvious difference is the substance falling in each type of disaster. A landslide involves a huge amount of soil or mud that breaks off from a mountainside and slides downhill. In contrast, an avalanche is a huge slab of snow and ice that breaks loose and plummets downhill.

Avalanches and landslides can both be caused by earthquakes, but they also have other possible causes. An avalanche occurs when snow gets too heavy, or overloaded. If the conditions are right, small sounds can trigger an avalanche, like a skier or a slammed car door. Since loud sounds can trigger an avalanche, yodeling is banned in the spring in some Swiss mountain villages! Landslides, on the other hand, cannot be caused by a sudden loud sound. Volcanoes, heavy rains, and removal of vegetation are known to cause landslides. A landslide can also occur along a coastline. When waves constantly crash into the bottom of a cliff, it can erode away. If the cliff becomes too top-heavy, it can collapse into the sea.

Avalanches and landslides move at different speeds. While landslides reach speeds up to 70 miles per hour, avalanches can reach speeds up to 200 miles per hour. Although avalanches and landslides are incredible sights to behold, they are natural disasters that can do great damage.

Write a 3-4 sentence summary in the space below.