

HEALTH

Possibility thinking turns negatives into positives

By Pierre A. Clark
Special to Sentinel-Voice

As an entrepreneur, challenges will come fast and furiously. You will be confronted with financial difficulties, disputes with staff and suppliers, stagnant sales and dozens of other issues.

These challenges will call for you to "keep your head when everyone else around you is losing theirs," to quote Rudyard Kipling's famous poem.

Your greatest external challenges will be from the very people who you might normally count on for support — friends, family, co-workers.

The internal challenges will manifest themselves in that little voice inside you that says, "This is crazy. You'll never make any money. You'll never establish a successful business. Why are you putting yourself through these circumstances — you should just quit before you create debt you can't pay back or alienate family and friends any further."

Those voices really are the seeds of doubt

that resound in all of us from childhood. They are planted by teachers, parents, friends, acquaintances, people whose words seem to always focus on what's difficult or impossible instead of what's possible or positive about our course of action. They grow an oak tree of small thinking and insecurity that spreads its leaves across our mental landscape and blocks any invigorating psychic light.

The classic manifestation of how they are planted and can take hold can be found in the now-famous Michael Jordan Gatorade commercial. The announcer's words as Michael makes his lonely climb up the mountain that embodies his own self-image, spotlight every doubt and fear he's ever experienced — from trying out again for the high school basketball team after being cut to coming back to pro basketball after retiring in 1993. At the top, he stands on the peak towering over all the challenges and obstacles and answers the question, "Have you had enough?" with "Just getting started."

So if you think you're alone in hearing these

voices, you're not. Every one of us, even the superstar, hears them. The famous philosopher James Allen said, "As a man thinketh, so is he." The voices of self-doubt that are the vanguard of small thinking are always there to prove the wisdom of that phrase.

Some tips:

(a) Confront your negative thoughts. Some people will say that you should ignore them, but like a toothache, those thoughts expose a far greater mental malady. So don't ignore them, confront them and deal with them.

(b) Identify the sources of your voices of doubt. Every voice has an author — a parent, a relative, a friend, an acquaintance. They are the voices you have heard since childhood, and like the famous public service commercial showing parents criticizing kids, those voices linger. Identifying those voices is the next step in managing them.

(c) Devise a response to those thoughts. If you're going to defeat the voices of self-doubt, you have to answer them. "You can't be a successful businessman," says the voice. Your

response should be, "Why? What's different about me? Why can't I be successful?" What you'll find is that those voices won't be able to answer that question. So then you can respond, "So if I can't hear a reason why I can't, there must not be one, and I can proceed to look at reasons why I can."

Challenge your own mentality. You can control what you think, you just have to reassert your ability to do it.

Learn from failures and setbacks. This is possibly the hardest facet of possibility thinking. The essence of possibility thinking is saying that everything in life is either a lesson or a blessing.

Possibility thinking is the cure for small thinking, the antidote for self-doubt, the fertilizer that grows seeds of confidence from seeds of doubt. All successful entrepreneurs employ possibility thinking and learn to leverage this resource to their advantage.

Pierre A. Clark is a nationally known self-employment expert and entrepreneurship columnist.

Keep a constant eye on glaucoma

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Glaucoma slowly steals your sight.

It is the second leading cause of irreversible blindness in the United States. But if diagnosed early, the blindness may be prevented.

Glaucoma is a condition that causes pressure in the eye to build up to an abnormally high level. This high pressure eventually damages the optic nerve.

Since there are no symptoms, people with glaucoma often don't realize they are beginning to lose their sight.

Vision loss starts gradually with the peripheral, or side vision, and often goes unnoticed until blindness is

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advanced. Usually by the time vision is noticed the damage is severe and irreversible.

Ophthalmologists at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston recommend annual screenings beginning at age 40 for most people. Since the disease is more common in persons with a family history and in African Americans, these groups should begin annual screenings at age 30.

A glaucoma screening, called applanation tonometry,

is simple and painless and is part of a regular eye exam. The technique measures the pressure within the eye. Glaucoma screenings are also often available free of charge at community health fairs.

If increased pressure is discovered, glaucoma usually can be controlled with prescription eye drops. However, any vision already lost cannot be restored. Continued screening and vision testing by an eye doctor is

usually done to ensure that the pressure is being controlled.

Annual glaucoma screenings are critical for early detection. And in turn, early detection means less vision loss.

Your vision is invaluable. Be sure you and your loved ones get a screening exam for glaucoma each year.

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