



January/February 2016 Tri-Center Newsletter



**High School 485-2257 Middle School 485-2211
Elementary 485-2271**

www.tri-center.k12.ia.us

Superintendent's News and Comments ... Dr. Tony Weers, Ed.D.

I have read the Gallup book *How Full Is Your Bucket?* countless times. This book points out that every person experiences approximately 20,000 individual moments everyday. If this is true, we all experience over 100,000 moments every week. The thought of over 100,000 moments each week along with the James Clear article from the Huffington Post listed below make me wonder...What can I do to make sure the majority of my moments are positive? And when I do maintain a balance of positive moments, what impact does this have on my friends, family, coworkers, and community? Positive people get more done and enjoy what they are doing more. Let's work together to ensure our Tri-Center community can focus on positivity.

The Science of Positive Thinking: How Positive Thoughts Build Your Skills, Boost Your Health, and Improve Your Work

James Clear, September 2013

Positive thinking sounds useful on the surface. (Most of us would prefer to be positive rather than negative.) But "positive thinking" is also a soft and fluffy term that is easy to dismiss. In the real world, it rarely carries the same weight as words like "work ethic" or "persistence."

But those views may be changing.

Research is beginning to reveal that positive thinking is about much more than just being happy or displaying an upbeat attitude. Positive thoughts can actually create real value in your life and help you build skills that last much longer than a smile.

The impact of positive thinking on your work, your health, and your life is being studied by people who

are much smarter than me. One of these people is Barbara Fredrickson.

Fredrickson is a positive psychology researcher at the University of North Carolina, and she published a landmark paper that provides surprising insights about positive thinking and its impact on your skills. Her work is among the most referenced and cited in her field, and it is surprisingly useful in everyday life.

Let's talk about Fredrickson's discovery and what it means for you...

What Negative Thoughts Do to Your Brain

Play along with me for a moment.

Let's say that you're walking through the forest and suddenly a tiger steps onto the path ahead of you. When this happens, your brain registers a negative emotion -- in this case, fear.

Researchers have long known that negative emotions program your brain to do a specific action. When that tiger crosses your path, for example, you run. The rest of the world doesn't matter. You are focused entirely on the tiger, the fear it creates, and how you can get away from it.

In other words, negative emotions narrow your mind and focus your thoughts. At that same moment, you might have the option to climb a tree, pick up a leaf, or grab a stick -- but your brain ignores all of those options because they seem irrelevant when a tiger is standing in front of you.

This is a useful instinct if you're trying to save life and limb, but in our modern society we don't have to worry about stumbling across tigers in the wilderness. The problem is that your brain is still programmed to respond to negative emotions in the same way -- by shutting off the outside world and limiting the options you see around you.

For example, when you're in a fight with someone, your anger and emotion might consume you to the point where you can't think about anything else. Or, when you are stressed out about everything you have to get done today, you may find it hard to actual start anything because you're paralyzed by how long your to-do list has become. Or, if you feel bad about not exercising or not eating healthy, all you think about is how little willpower you have, how you're lazy, and how you don't have any motivation.

In each case, your brain closes off from the outside world and focuses on the negative emotions of fear, anger, and stress -- just like it did with the tiger. Negative emotions prevent your brain from seeing the other options and choices that surround you. It's your survival instinct.

Now, let's compare this to what positive emotions do to your brain. This is where Barbara Fredrickson returns to the story.

What Positive Thoughts Do to Your Brain

Fredrickson tested the impact of positive emotions on the brain by setting up a little experiment. During this experiment, she divided her research subjects into five groups and showed each group different film clips.

The first two groups were shown clips that created positive emotions. Group 1 saw images that created feelings of joy. Group 2 saw images that created feelings of contentment.

Group 3 was the control group. They saw images that were neutral and produced no significant emotion.

The last two groups were shown clips that created negative emotions. Group 4 saw images that created feelings of fear. Group 5 saw images that created feelings of anger.

Afterward, each participant was asked to imagine themselves in a situation where similar feelings would arise and to write down what they would do. Each participant was handed a piece of paper with 20 blank lines that started with the phrase, "I would like to..."

Participants who saw images of fear and anger wrote down the fewest responses. Meanwhile, the participants who saw images of joy and contentment, wrote down a significantly higher number of actions that they would take, even when compared to the neutral group.

In other words, when you are experiencing positive emotions like joy, contentment, and love, you will see more possibilities in your life. These findings were among the first that suggested positive emotions broaden your sense of possibility and open your mind up to more options.

But that was just the beginning. The really interesting impact of positive thinking happens later...

How Positive Thinking Builds Your Skill Set

The benefits of positive emotions don't stop after a few minutes of good feelings subside. In fact, the biggest benefit that positive emotions provide is an enhanced ability to build skills and develop resources for use later in life.

Let's consider a real-world example.

A child who runs around outside, swinging on branches and playing with friends, develops the ability to move athletically (physical skills), the ability to play with others and communicate with a team (social skills), and the ability to explore and examine the world around them (creative skills). In this way, the positive emotions of play and joy prompt the child to build skills that are useful and valuable in everyday life.

These skills last much longer than the emotions that initiated them. Years later, that foundation of athletic movement might develop into a scholarship as a college athlete or the communication skills may blossom into a job offer as a business manager. The happiness that promoted the exploration and creation of new skills has long since ended, but the skills themselves live on.

Fredrickson refers to this as the "broaden and build" theory because positive emotions broaden your sense of possibilities and open your mind, which in turn allows you to build new skills and resources that can provide value in other areas of your life.

As we discussed earlier, negative emotions do the opposite. Why? Because building skills for future use is irrelevant when there is immediate threat or danger (like the tiger on the path).

All of this research begs the most important question of all: If positive thinking is so useful for developing valuable skills and appreciating the big picture of life, how do you actually get yourself to be positive?

How to Increase Positive Thinking in Your Life

What you can do to increase positive emotions and take advantage of the "broaden and build" theory in your life?

Well, anything that sparks feelings of joy, contentment, and love will do the trick. You probably know what things work well for you. Maybe it's playing the guitar. Maybe it's spending time with a certain person. Maybe it's carving tiny wooden lawn gnomes.

That said, here are three ideas for you to consider...

1. Meditation --Recent research by Fredrickson and her colleagues has revealed that people who meditate daily display more positive emotions than those who do not. As expected, people who meditated also built valuable long-term skills. For example, three months after the experiment was over, the people who meditated daily continued to display increased mindfulness, purpose in life, social support, and decreased illness symptoms.

2. Writing -- This study, published in the *Journal of Research in Personality*, examined a group of 90 undergraduate students who were split into two groups. The first group wrote about an intensely positive experience each day for three consecutive days. The second group wrote about a control topic. Three months later, the students who wrote about positive experiences had better mood levels, fewer visits to the health center, and experienced fewer illnesses. (This blew me away. Better health after just three days of writing about positive things!)

3. Play -- Schedule time to play into your life. We schedule meetings, conference calls, weekly events, and other responsibilities into our daily calendars... why not schedule time to play?

When was the last time you blocked out an hour on your calendar just to explore and experiment? When was the last time you intentionally carved out time to have fun? You can't tell me that being happy is less important than your Wednesday meeting, and yet, we act like it is because we never give it a time and space to live on our calendars.

Give yourself permission to smile and enjoy the benefits of positive emotion. Schedule time for play and adventure so that you can experience contentment and joy, and explore and build new skills.

Happiness vs. Success (Which Comes First?)

There's no doubt that happiness is the result of achievement. Winning a championship, landing a better job, finding someone you love -- these things will bring joy and contentment to your life. But so often, we wrongly assume that this means happiness always follows success.

How often have you thought, "*If I just get ____, then I'll be set.*"

Or, "*Once I achieve ____, I'll be satisfied.*"

I know I'm guilty of putting off happiness until I achieve some arbitrary goal. But as Fredrickson's "broaden and build" theory proves, happiness is essential to building the skills that allow for success.

In other words, happiness is both the precursor to success and the result of it.

In fact, researchers have often noticed a compounding effect or an "upward spiral" that occurs with happy people. They are happy, so they develop new skills, those skills lead to new success, which results in more happiness, and the process repeats itself.

Where to Go From Here

Positive thinking isn't just a soft and fluffy feel-good term. Yes, it's great to simply "be happy," but those moments of happiness are also critical for opening your mind to explore and build the skills that become so valuable in other areas of your life.

Finding ways to build happiness and positive emotions into your life -- whether it is through meditation, writing, playing a pickup basketball

game, or anything else -- provides more than just a momentary decrease in stress and a few smiles.

Periods of positive emotion and unhindered exploration are when you see the possibilities for how your past experiences fit into your future life, when you begin to develop skills that blossom into useful talents later on, and when you spark the urge for further exploration and adventure.

To put it simply: Seek joy, play often, and pursue adventure. Your brain will do the rest.

Buses . . . Kids and Drivers

Much is assumed and too much is taken for granted when it comes to our students, the buses they ride and most importantly, the drivers who are operating the buses. All students are expected to respect the bus driver and view them as the ultimate authority on the vehicle. Riding the bus to and from school and activities is a privilege. Riding the bus can be revoked at any time and for any period of time depending upon the inappropriateness of the behavior. As a parent, please understand the role and responsibility of the driver and refrain from rushing to judgment if a situation arises that involves a conflict between your child and the driver. The ultimate concern of the driver is the safety of the children.

Tri-Center bus drivers are well-qualified and loyal employees of the district. They are under constant pressure to perform their duties without fail and many times in adverse conditions. They are to be appreciated for all they do to ensure the welfare of our kids as they very diligently haul them to and from home and school for 180 days each year. Please take the time to thank them and encourage your kids to admire them for the job they do.

Midwest Winter Weather

Snow, ice, fog, wind chills, and days of below freezing temps are always a reminder and indication that winter in Iowa is back. In the event that we have school on a day when getting from home to school is too risky or impossible, please call the school and let us know your children will not be coming. Keep in mind that our district

encompasses almost 200 square miles and there will undoubtedly be some spots that are impassable. Most of our kids live in town and therefore can ride the bus or drive in conditions that may be much better than those which exist on country roads or outlying areas. So, there may be times that the decision is based simply upon being able get most of our kids to school on a given day. We will do our best to exercise good judgment, but that does not mean it will be in agreement with every parent, student, or community member. This is Iowa and we all understand the adjustments that need to be made during a Midwest winter, so let's approach it that way. Thanks for your assistance and cooperation.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

--Nelson Mandela



**From the Principal's Desk
... Angie Huseman**

We, as parents, are models all the time. It is easy to forget, though. I forget how powerful my mere presence around my daughter is, until I see in her a reflection of my habits--both good and bad. As we close out our winter sports seasons, I think now is a good time for reflection. It is easy to get caught up in the game, but do not let yourself get so caught up that you forget that the student athletes on the floor are trying their very hardest. I have coached, and I have been an athlete on a number of high school teams, and if there one thing that I am certain of, NO ONE in high school goes out on to the floor in front of their whole peer group and parents and messes up intentionally.

I read this story that was printed in Michael Josephson's Character Counts newsletter, and thought that it would be a good thing to share with you all.

We Expect More Out of Adults

Though 11-year-old Mark wasn't much of an athlete, his dad Rick urged him to play youth baseball. Mark liked to play, but he was really hurt

by some of the remarks of teammates and even parent spectators when he struck out or dropped a ball. Just before the fourth game of the season, Mark said he didn't want to go. "I'm no good," he said, "and everyone knows it."

Rick urged him to stick with it. "Just do your best," he said. "That's all anyone can ask, and your best is good enough."

Mark struck out his first two times at bat, and each time looked over to his father who struggled to look positive. In his last at-bat, Mark hit the ball solidly, the first time all season. It was a hard grounder to third, and the play at first was close. When the umpire called Mark out, Rick went wild. "Kill the ump!" he yelled. "Are you blind or just stupid? If you can't do the job, stay off the field!"

On the way home, Mark broke a long silence. "Dad, you said that all anyone can ask is that we do our best."

"That's right, son," Rick assured him. "But you did your best, and I'm proud of you. That jerk of an umpire robbed you with a bad call."

"I wasn't talking about me," Mark replied. "I was talking about Billy's dad. He was the umpire. I know he was doing his best, but you got really mad at him."

Rick was taken aback, but he said, "Yeah, son, but he's an adult, and we should expect more out of adults."

Mark looked his dad in the eye. "That's what I thought, too. By the way, I was out."

Despite Rick's good intentions, he didn't set a very good example. We should expect more from adults--more fairness and sportsmanship and more self-restraint.

I work hard to tell the kids they need to yell FOR our team, not AGAINST the other team. I expect them to exhibit good sportsmanship. I would appreciate any help you could give me in helping to instill this virtue.

I am also including an article entitled "Curing Victimitis" which is also written by Michael Josephson; I believe the message here is also an important reminder for all of us. I believe it is more important than ever to make sure our kids know how to be resilient, rather than the victim.

Curing Victimitis

Watch your thoughts; they lead to attitudes.

Watch your attitudes, they lead to words.

Watch your words; they lead to actions.

Watch your actions; they lead to habits.

Watch your habits; they form your character.

Watch your character; it determines your destiny.

These words of unknown origin tell us that our silent and often subconscious choices shape our future. Every aspect of our lives, at home and at work, can be improved if we use our power to think, reflect, and make conscious choices about our thoughts, attitudes, words, actions, and habits.

Instead, many of us think of ourselves as victims. We complain about our circumstances and what other did to us. Whatever psychological comfort there is in feeling powerless and blameless when things aren't going right, victims lead unsatisfied lives in the end.

We're most vulnerable to victimitis when we're under the influence of powerful emotions like fear, insecurity, anger, frustration, grief, and depression. These feelings can be so overwhelming that we believe our state of mind is inevitable. Our only hope is that they'll go away on their own. Yet it's during times of emotional tumult that using our power to choose our thoughts and attitudes is most important. We can't make pain go away, but we can refuse to suffer.

Even when we don't like any of our choices, we do have some--once we realize we can take control. It isn't easy, but what we do and how we choose to feel about ourselves can have a profound impact on the quality of our lives. Victims may get sympathy for a while, but that isn't nearly enough.

Taking personal responsibility for our happiness and success can be scary, but the payoff is enormous. Although we can't make our lives perfect, we can make them better--usually a lot better.

You can find these articles and many more at Michael Josephson's website:
<http://whatwillmatter.com/>



Counseling Comments ...By Tami Harman

Seniors: You should be in your final stages of planning for your post-secondary options. College visits, college applications, scholarship searches, etc. should all be in process or almost completed. I have met with 24 seniors and their parents to go over college planning information. I would still like to meet with the remainder of seniors and their parents to finalize plans. I will begin meeting with those seniors that I have not touched base with individually here in the next week or so.

Senior Parents: The FAFSA applications can and should be completed and sent in as soon as possible. This must be submitted in order for any financial aid packages for the fall term of college. The website is www.FAFSA.ed.gov. If you need assistance please do not hesitate to call the high school for assistance. Many colleges have priority deadlines, make sure you are aware of those deadlines for colleges your son/daughter may be applying to in the fall. Remember to make copies of your completed FAFSA and tax returns. You and your son/daughter will also need an ID username and password, which replaces the PIN number before completing the FAFSA.

I will be holding a Senior Scholarship Workshop on Monday, February 8th from 6:00 - 8:00 in the high school computer lab. This is a time that seniors can research scholarships, apply for scholarships and receive some guidance about the process. Please inform your son/daughter of this important date.

Juniors: The junior class will be taking the ASVAB (Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery) here at Tri-Center on February 18th. This assessment is given to assist the students in career exploration and to gain knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses in relation to different careers. It also helps students begin exploring future educational and career plans.

Juniors should be gathering information on the colleges they may want to attend, visiting with representatives from different schools and planning when to take the ACT test. Juniors should try to take the ACT test once their junior year and again in the beginning of their senior year. There will be an ACT John Baylor Test Prep course offered before the April 9th ACT test date this year for juniors and another in early fall of next year for those students wanting this extra resource to help with the format of the ACT test.

Sophomores and Freshmen:

They need to keep focusing on their academics and being active in school activities as well as community organizations. Class rank, cumulative grade point averages, attendance, and ACT scores will determine their success.

National Honor Society News:

The Tri-Center Blood Drive will be held Tuesday, February 23rd from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm in the Middle School Gym. Mark your calendar!! Call 712-485-2257 and ask for Tami Harman to make an appointment.

Second semester sophomores, juniors and seniors that qualify for National Honor Society will be given an application in early February to complete and return. Students that fill out the application are then ranked by staff and those rankings are brought before a panel for final evaluation and a selection process is used to determine those students that meet the qualifications for admission into National Honor Society. Please watch the Tri-Center website for more information on National Honor Society applications.

The Annual Asbestos Report on the Buildings at Tri-Center Schools

The inspection done at the Elementary, Middle and High School buildings **shows no change**. The inspection of Asbestos is done every six months by Kerry Courtier. Ames Environmental Inc. does a three year inspection, which was done this year.



Yearbook News and Information

...Sarah Elliott

2015-2016 Publications Staff Members:

Seniors: Hannah Larsen, Editor Whitney Matthews;
Juniors: Alyssa Baatz, Tori Masker; **Sophomores:** Callie Eckmann, Danielle Elliott, Kaleb Harrison, Tillie Heim, Jaika Horne, Braxton Larsen, Pete Turner; and **Freshmen** Brooklyn Hundt, Olivia Maassen, Chaeli Moir, and Jordan Ring.

2016 YEARBOOK SALES!!! Sales of the **2016 Trojan Yearbook (#WeAreTC)** have begun, and we will also be doing on-line sales beginning by P-T Conferences or sooner. Some specials and discounts will be offered to those purchasing their books at events throughout the year and at conferences in the spring. **BUY EARLY AND SAVE!** The 2016 books are \$50, with the namestamps, icons and/or itags \$6 each or \$10 for a namestamp and icon combo. We do except a \$25 non-refundable deposit if you wish to make payments.

2015 YEARBOOKS! The **2015 Trojan Yearbook, Trojan Survival Guide: Tips and Rules of 2015**, arrived in early November. We appreciate your patience with both the Publications staff and the publisher (Walsworth Publishing). We have just 4 extras which may be purchased for \$60 each or \$50 each with the purchase of the 2016 book for \$50 (\$100 for the two). See/Contact Adviser Mrs. Sarah Elliott at the high school at 485-2257, ext. 100 or selliott@tctrojans.org.

PAST YEARBOOKS! In addition to any extra 2015 copies, we do have extras of other past yearbooks. Purchase any year's book at regular price and get \$5 off the second and on lower priced books. Past books costs are: \$30 for 2014 and 2013, \$20 for the 2011 and 2010, \$10 for the 2009 and 2008 and just \$5 for the 2003. Sorry, we are completely out of 2012 books. **We need to clean out the closet and fund the printing of the current book; so get your yearbooks today.**

SENIOR PICTURES: Seniors and senior parents, pictures are due to the yearbook by Tuesday,

December 22, 2015 and then Friday, January 29, 2016. Pictures may be in color or black and white, but they should be wallet-sized, and head and shoulder shots work or look best. Don't assume your photographer did or will send them in to us. If the photo is not received by the deadlines, it may be difficult to include it – we are working hard to get back on a timely schedule of printing and publishing the book, and it is difficult to meet our deadlines when others don't meet their deadlines. We would like to picture all the seniors, so **PLEASE GET PICTURES IN or CONTACT ADVISER SARAH ELLIOTT** to make arrangements.

PARENT AND PERSONAL ADS: Support the yearbook and honor your son/daughter, grandson/daughter, sibling, friend, or others at the same time. Parent and personal ads are \$30 (\$25 with the purchase of a 2016 yearbook) and includes the honored person's name, a small photo or two, and a message limited to approximately 25 words. Senior parents can expect to receive a letter in the next two to four weeks. Parent and personal ads can be purchased from Publications Adviser Sarah Elliott or Yearbook Editor Whitney Matthews at 485-2257, ext. 100.

PICTURES ARE ACCEPTED: The Publications staff is in need of and will accept pictures for possible use in the yearbook. Pictures can be submitted by email (selliott@tctrojans.org) or brought in for scanning and returned ASAP. We will also be getting the Community Upload set up soon. The staff is currently in need of Homecoming dress-up days, student sections, fun/candid pictures for all grades 9-12, student individual and/or group selfies, and photo remakes.

SPONSORSHIP/AD CAMPAIGN: We will be finishing our sponsorship/ad campaign soon. If you are or know of someone and/or a business owner who may want to sponsor a spread and/or advertise, contact Adviser Sarah Elliott at 485-2257, ext. 100. Sponsors/Advertisers not only help fund a yearbook of which the district and surrounding communities can be proud, but also have the opportunity to support an educational program that teaches students valuable skills in writing, design, photography, computer use, and business. The sponsorships/ads are \$50 and we are still in need. We would of course, accept tax-deductible donations in any amount if you would like to donate less or even more than \$50.00.



**Elementary Principal
...Diane White**

January/February Highlights

Happy New Year!

- Jan. 5 Welcome back to school, students!
- Jan. 7 NWMSU Children’s Theatre at TC
1:15 and 2:15
- Jan. 8 End of 2nd Quarter – 1:30 Dismissal
- Jan. 15 No Preschool
- Jan. 15 Elem. Student Council Meeting 3:30
- Jan. 16 Lego League to State Competition in
Ames
- Jan. 18 No School – In Service
- Jan. 22 No PK
- Feb. 2 Groundhog Day
- Feb. 5 No PK
- Feb. 9 Hearing Test Rechecks
- Feb. 14 Valentine’s Day
- Feb. 15 President’s Day
- Feb. 17 No PK
- Feb. 17 1:30 Dismissal for P/T Conferences
- Feb. 18 1:30 Dismissal for P/T Conferences
- Feb. 19 No School
- Feb. 22 No School – In Service

- 13. See how far you can jump in snow
- 14. Have a snowball fight
- 15. Ice skating tag
- 16. Shovel the driveway and sidewalks
- 17. Snow art- allow kids to spray the snow with
water colored with food coloring
- 18. Tic Tac Snow- use sticks, rocks, pinecones
- 19. Play freeze tag
- 20. Create an obstacle course in the snow

For more fun ideas please visit:

www.livehealthyiowakids.org

Special Olympics

. . . . Julie Theulen

The Special Olympic team will be traveling to IWCC on Tuesday, January 19th to compete in basketball skills. Athletes include Joslyn Puntaney, Elijah Bearley, Cole Osbahr, Kaleigh Gillespie, and Matthew Killpack. The event is in the Kanseville Center and opening ceremonies begin at 9:50 and competition starts at 10:00. First place winners are eligible to compete at state in Iowa City on March 12th. Hope to see you there to cheer on the team!



School Nurse

. . . . Jennifer McGee, R.N.

Family Winter Outdoor Activities:

- 1. Create creatures in the snow
- 2. Blow bubbles and watch them freeze
- 3. Ice Skating
- 4. Snowshoeing
- 5. Sledding
- 6. Snowboarding
- 7. Skiing
- 8. Have a snowball making contest-who can roll
the biggest snowball
- 9. Snowball throwing contest-create a target
- 10. Build a snowman
- 11. Run a race in deep snow
- 12. Build a snow fort





Who:

Children ages birth to 5 who live in the Tri-Center Community School District and are **not** presently in Kindergarten.

What:

A developmental screening which gives you the opportunity to see if your child is playing, moving, thinking and talking at his/her age level. Screenings include: vision, hearing, speech-language, overall development, and a growth assessment.

Why:

The Preschool Screening can give your child a better educational start when they enter school and your child should attend the screening as a part of the preschool application process.

When:

Friday, April 1st, 2016

8:30 a.m. To 2:30 p.m.

Must call for an appointment!

Where:

Tri-Center Preschool Room

Tri-Center Elementary

For Appointment:

Please contact the Tri-Center Elementary Office at 485-2271. Please bring your child's Immunization records, Birth Certificate and Social Security card to your appointment.

Screening Cost:

It's **FREE** for all children, fun for all children and reassuring to parents.

Preschool Programs

If you are interested in signing your child up for the 4 year old Tri-Center Preschool Program, you should attend the Preschool Screening. This screening is also used to qualify children for the All Day Preschool Program.

Kindergarten 2016-2017

If you have a 5 year old not attending our preschool program, please call and make an appointment to come to screening.