

How to stay positive in the autism journey : 11 simple practices that will transform your life.

By Priya Magesh | spectruminorder.com

As a mother of a child with autism, I am sure you have struggled to keep a positive mind from the time your child had an autism diagnosis. To be positive through life obstacles, especially when it involves your child is an immense challenge.

It requires a mighty mindset that has been put into a lot of practice to be positive, no matter what life throws on you. Besides, how do you stay positive in the autism journey?

Positivity is a state of mind. It is being mindful of the importance of having a positive attitude about life, despite challenges that come our way.

Greenchild



What is your attitude right now?

It's hard to be stress-free when you have a child with autism since you face endless challenges every day, affecting your mental, physical, and social well-being, forcing you to focus on the negative aspects of this beautiful life.

Every individual has negative feelings from time to time, that's ok. Although, if the negativity is making you anxious and depressed, preventing you from enjoying your child's beautiful smile, then it is time to take a call, considering it is not a healthy atmosphere for your child's betterment, either.

My transition to positivity

I am thankful to my son's OT, who persuaded me not to disregard the power of being a mother and my mindset. You can read about my life-changing experience [here](#).

That particular incident put me in place, and thus I began my quest to find out, How to stay positive in the autism journey?

In the past eight years, I have researched and implemented 11 simple practices in my everyday life that have never failed to guide me to stay positive in my younger son's autism journey. While sometimes I descend backward, I have the grit and resilience with an optimistic outlook to keep focusing on my goal.

Today, I would like to share with you these 11 simple practices to implement in your everyday life and learn how to stay positive in the autism journey. These tips are nothing but simple mindful awareness.

Let's Dive in!

11 powerful yet simple practices that will transform your life to stay positive in the autism journey

1. Accept
2. Embrace your emotions
3. Replace negative elements
4. Teamwork - communicate
5. Educate yourself
6. Focus on solution not the problem
7. Find inspiration
8. Celebrate small wins
9. Take care of yourself
10. Breathe
11. Hydrate

Why you have to be Positive in your child's autism journey?

Before proceeding answer these two questions;

- Do you wake up in the morning with enthusiasm?
- Do you enjoy your child's smile without thinking about his/her chronological age?

If the answer is 'No' to both, you are not in the place currently to perceive positiveness since you are holding yourself up by the mindset you possess right now as to what is the point anyway. Am I right?

On the other side, people who have taken that Big first step and made a positive mindset shift will wake up with enthusiasm and be happy to enjoy their child's smile, no age, or diagnosis as a barrier.

*Being Positive is a method or practice observed.
None of us are born with this trait.*

It's the immediate transformation that cannot happen until YOU take the Big first step, demanding in this process is your mindset shift.

What are the benefits of being Positive?

Before making that mindset shift, you need to know the value of being positive. Here are a few points that will benefit you when you make this mindset shift;

- Several studies have proven that Positive people who repeatedly manifest positive emotions are more resilient to face adversity, stress, and challenges.
- Children of positive parents are happier and are ready to take up challenges.
- Develops a strong bond between you and your child that increases love and affection in your child.

Positive people can sustain a broader perspective and view the big picture, which helps them identify solutions instead of negative people supporting a narrower view and focusing on problems.

Barbara Fredrickson

Hope, you are convinced to take up your Big First Step to being Positive in this challenging yet beautiful journey of Autism.

Now here are the 11 simple yet powerful practices that will help you to stay positive in the autism journey.

1. Accept

The past cannot be forgotten, changed, or erased; it can only be accepted.

Dandapani

Acceptance is the most essential element for the betterment of your life. We all know that to think clearly and make positive decisions one needs to have a clear mind. Since you have accepted the situation, now you have a clear mind to contemplate numerous methods to support your child thrive. With a depressed mind, it wouldn't have been possible.

With acceptance comes a significant relief. Now you have endless possibilities as you enter a new world by eliminating the mental barrier you had for such a long time.

2. Embrace Your Negative Emotions

I realize it would have been excruciating and sorrowful while discovering your child on the spectrum.

It's perfectly fine to grieve over the diagnosis. Of course, you had so many dreams that got shattered. Life just slammed the door at your face.

Inspiration is everywhere

I read a famous book sometime back, 'Tuesdays with Morrie' by Mitch Albom. Morrie is the protagonist who is suffering from a rare disease and will face death soon. The book is about Morrie and the writer's conversations about life, relation, trust, etc.

Every discussion between the protagonist and the writer is very inspirational, but I was highly motivated by this one;

The writer asks Morrie, if he ever felt sorry for himself. Morrie, the protagonist says;

"Sometimes in the mornings," I mourn the slow, insidious way I'm dying. But then I stop mourning."

Just like that? Asks the writer.

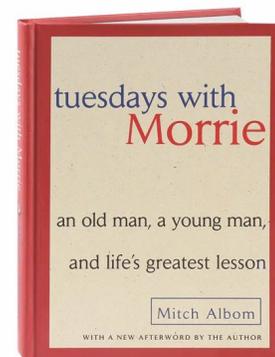
"I give myself a good cry if I need it. But then I concentrate on all the good things still in my life."

Yes, I hear you, the slammed door brings tears. The disappointments are a pain.

But don't give up. Don't lose hope. Trust yourself, you can overcome this.

As Morrie says, pouting periodically about your grief is natural for any human being rather than brushed under the carpet. It's okay to embrace your negative emotions and shed a few tears, but don't stay there too long.

So why not? Go ahead, grab a nice warm tea, a tissue box and get your chest out. You will feel relaxed!



3. Replace the negative elements

OK...congratulations! I appreciate your braveness to accept, and now you are ready to take the Big first step towards Positivity for your child who needs extra help from you.

Please take a piece of paper and write down all the negative elements that stop you from moving towards Positivity. Usually, the top most negative elements that might be pulling you down are:

- Your own negative mind
- Negative friend/relatives
- Negative effects of the internet and social media.

Your own negative mind -

- Are you in the rut of saying, why me and my fate?
- Are you frequently judging your motherhood?
- Do you think that your child's Autism is because of you?
- Are you always walking with a 'self-pity' cloud on top of your head?
- If the answer is 'YES' for all the above, then it's time to take a positive spin before your negative beliefs take a toll on your mental health.

Try these 3 points to shift your negative thoughts to positive-

- Write down one strong strength you and your child have.
- Focus on what you can control.
- If your best friend was in this situation what would you advise her to do to make her come out and focus on good things in her life?

Change your thoughts and you change your world

Negative friend/relatives-

- Do you have friends or relatives who are not supporting you in your child's autism journey?
- Are they forever passing adverse criticisms, stating that you are spending your time and money on therapies, etc.?

If your answer is "Yes" to the above questions, then it is time to overlook those friends/relatives.

It's time to focus on your inner peace. Replace the negative friends with personalities who encourage and guide you. Even if it is just one friend, that is the person you deserve, your true well-wisher.

People inspire you, or they drain you—pick them wisely.

Hans F. Hansen

Negative effects of internet and social media

Suppose you're spending an extreme amount of time on social media reading/watching several autism-related stories that people complain and vent about. Then naturally, feelings of sadness and frustration are sure to affect you.

Various studies have proven a definite link between too much social media and an increased risk for depression, anxiety, loneliness, and self-harm.

It's time to revisit your online practices and find a healthier balance. Read more about it in step no. 5.

4. Teamwork - communicate

Family members perform a vital role in your child's care, which includes contributing to the decision making regarding therapies, school, addressing issues that involve social skills, etc.

Bring your family members on board. Involve your partner, your child's siblings, your extended family, and even your friends.

If you haven't shared your child's diagnosis yet with your family members or friends, now is the time to communicate with them and seek their cooperation and support.

Trust me, once you communicate with everybody with an open mind, you will be poured with unconditional love and support.

5. Educate yourself

With Acceptance comes skepticism; what does the future hold for my child? Will he/she go to school? Will he/she have friends? Will he/she have a job? What will happen after me?.

The answers to all the above questions will be to get educated about Autism and have Autism awareness. Here are the top 3 ways to educate yourself about Autism. Grab a cup of coffee and let's get you started.

- **Read Autism related Books** - The most beautiful piece about a book is its strength to show a tiny part of ourselves. When you relate yourself to a story or a character, you get a better perception of who you are and your purpose. Read [The Top 3 Autism books for parents and caregivers](#) to adequately understand the diagnosis and help your child with activities to do at home.

- **Online resources** - Sure enough, Google is a handyman, though beware of what is delivered to you. Not all resources are valuable; one click to a link and another from there can make you anxious and overwhelmed. Here's a list of websites that you can follow to seek help to understand Autism and help your child-
 1. www.marybarbera.com - I have been following Mary Barbera for 6 yrs. She is a board certified behavior analyst as well as an Autism mom. Her website is filled with plenty of practical strategies you can start immediately for your child.
 2. www.autismspeaks.org - This site has a wealth of information Their purpose is to promote solutions, across the spectrum and throughout the life span for individuals with autism and families.
 3. www.spectruminorder.com - You can always count my blog to provide you with helpful resources to navigate this autism journey without being stressed.
- **[Autism Parenting Magazine](#)** - This is a paid subscription magazine that is packed with advice from professionals, latest news and autism research data that will be very helpful to make further decisions.

6. Focus on the solution not the problem

Always look at the solution, not the problem. Learn to focus on what will give results.

Jim Rohn

We usually tend to dwell on the problems; that's when we start getting cynical. The more you have negative thinking, the more problems you will discover. It would help if you began to start focusing on ways to resolve the situation by focusing on solutions.

There may be days where you will be facing non-stop behavior issues by your child. Try not to panic and focus on how you can address this situation, take time to thoroughly analyze the problem and then make a list of possible solutions to find out what are the resources you have to get support. This is when you have to go back to step 5.

7. Find inspiration

When you feel too overwhelmed with the current problems, indications are your brain will stop working. It's ok. Taking a mental break once in a while is like recharging to focus again. Meanwhile, when you are reviving, view other autism moms or autistic adults for sources of inspiration. The impressions and beliefs of others can assist you to greater heights.

I want to share how I got my first inspiration; when my younger son with autism was three and non-verbal, his school had a different classroom with physical disabilities children from the age group of 3 - 6.

While picking up my son, I used to notice how parents struggled to lift their kids to place them in the car seat as they couldn't walk. Yet, the mothers/fathers had a big smile on their faces to see their kids come out of the classroom carrying some craftwork they created with the teacher's help.

The first time I saw them, my entire depression vanished, thinking, I do not even have the right to complain.

I cried because I had no shoes, then I met a man who had no feet.

Mahatma Gandhi

To this day, after 6 yrs on the autism journey, at any time I am dispirited, I think of those [moms](#) and get back to my route.

I am also inspired by [autistic adults](#) who have walked in this path that gives me hope for my son.

8. Celebrate small wins

According to The Harvard Business School studies, no matter how small the accomplishment, it activates the reward circuits of our brains. When this pathway opens up, the essential dopamine releases, giving us a feeling of achievement and feel-good aura.

When I say small win, it could be just that; your child made eye contact with you for a sec. He/she gave a hi-five, he/she tried to speak and many more.

Don't forget to include your child in your happiness, show him/her that you are proud of his/her achievement. Give your child a big hug, tell him he has done a great job.

Congratulate yourself on doing an excellent job for your child's progress.

When you feel happy with your child, please share it with your family and friends, who are your well-wishers.

Celebrating small wins builds confidence making you strong to keep working for your child.

9. Take care of yourself

Self-care is important to maintain a healthy relationship with yourself. It means doing things to take care of our minds, bodies, and souls by engaging in activities that promote well-being and reduce stress. Doing so enhances our ability to live fully, vibrantly, and effectively. The practice of self-care also reminds both you and others that your needs are valid and a priority.

activemind

Respect yourself and focus on your self-care. In a day, plan to have at least 5-10 minutes for just yourself. Get some facial done, write a gratitude journal, etc. My favorite is to read in my kindle for a minimum of 15 minutes at the end of the day. This ritual gives me a sense of accomplishment, and also rejuvenates me for the next day. What is your favorite?

Your kids don't need a perfect mom, they need a Happy mom

10. Breathe

Recent research proves that we are all tied up with more activities than before, and it becomes overwhelming. We sometimes want to escape from the situation, which is not the solution, though.

Breathing can be beneficial in these difficult circumstances. It calms you and allows you to drop the mental heaviness of your negative emotions. It can help you find a healthier perspective as your mind becomes clearer to focus again on your child's betterment.

11. Hydrate

Last but not least, in my list, to stay positive in your child's autism journey is to hydrate sufficiently throughout your stressful day.

Water has natural calming properties, addressing dehydration effects on the body and brain. Drinking enough water is an essential step in handling your anxiety. Drinking adequate water can generate feelings of relaxation.

Additionally, according to the *Calm* Clinic, "Water also appears to have natural *calming* properties. Drinking water can be soothing, and often your body will benefit from the added *hydration* during times of intense stress."

Now, over to you!

Did you find this list useful? Please follow it regularly to have a positive approach to your child's autism journey.

Thanks for being a part of spectruminorder.com. I'll cheer you up!

Priya Magesh

"Mother love is beautiful, and powerful energy of nature, so use it to positively help your child."