

One Simple Idea: How the Lessons of Positive Thinking Can Transform Your Life

Mitch Horowitz

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This expansive history of positive thinking also offers specific self-help techniques.

One Simple Idea is a thorough chronicle of the concept of positive thinking, from the early 19th century to the present day. Writing with a storyteller's skill, Horowitz brings to life the philosophy and principles put forth by such figures as Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy; Emma Curtis Hopkins, first an apostle and then an apostate of Eddy's; Bill Wilson and Bob Smith, cofounders of Alcoholics Anonymous; *Think and Grow Rich* author Napoleon Hill; business guru Dale Carnegie; positive-thinking minister Norman Vincent Peale; and former president Ronald Reagan. Horowitz shares fascinating and intimate details that offer insights about each of these important individuals as well as others.

Woven throughout this historical perspective, Horowitz draws a relationship between belief systems and the application of life lessons. "Mind Metaphysics Playbooks" come at the end of chapters and recap the philosophical concepts discussed, and suggest methods for applying them, such as "Express Gratitude" and "Radically Forgive," said to be able to lead to "remarkable changes in both your inner and outer experience."

By the end of the book, one cannot help but have a greater appreciation for the significance of the work and thought devoted to positive thinking, even though Horowitz points out that "the positive-thinking philosophy is taken seriously almost nowhere in mainstream culture today" because of its dedication to "extremist self-responsibility." Still, Horowitz seems to believe that, as a way of life, positive thinking has the power to overcome even the most challenging and tragic obstacles: "The continuation of one's life following a tragedy is to accept an irreplaceable gift. We have been given life for a purpose, which is: to be generative."

One Simple Idea is rich with historical perspective, but the book's real importance is the fact that it will be sure to stir up much thought about the notion of positive thinking.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (Fall 2016)

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