

题目：A simple trick to improve positive thinking

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Hi everyone. Gosh, I wish I could dance, but I can't, and you really don't want me to. So instead I thought I would talk a little today about how people think. I'm fascinated by this question. I'm a social **psychologist**, which basically means I'm a professional people watcher.

psychologist
n. 心理学家

大家好！唉，我希望我会跳舞，可惜我不会。你们也不会想看我跳舞。所以今天我将分享一点我对人类如何思考的认识。我对此非常感兴趣。作为一名社会心理学家，我是个专业的人群观察者。

So, this is what I do; I try to figure out how humans think and how we might be able to think better. Here's something I noticed a few years ago about how I seem to think; here's a **typical** week in my life, which usually seems to revolve entirely around publishing papers.

typical
adj. 典型的

我的工作就是去研究人类如何思考，以及如何更好地思考。几年前我发现了一些关于我如何思考的事情。这是我生活中典型的一周，一切围绕着发表论文展开。

So here I am, at maximum of my artistic abilities as a stick figure, going along at baseline, and a paper gets accepted. I get this rush, this blip of happiness, and then I'm back to **baseline** by about lunch time. A few days later, a paper might get rejected, and that feels pretty awful. And I wait for that blip to end, but somehow I just can't stop thinking about it.

baseline
n. 基线

我在这里，以我最大的美术能力画出来的火柴人，在基准线上前行。当一篇文章通过审稿时，我迅速到达了兴奋的顶峰。接近午餐时，我回到了基准线状态。几天后，一篇文章也许被拒绝了，我很难受，并等待这阵糟糕情绪的结束。但是不知怎么地，我就是停不下来地想着这件事。

Here's the craziest part: even if another paper gets accepted the next day, well, that's nice, but somehow I can't get that pesky **rejection** out of my head. So, what is going on here? Why does a failure seem to stick in our minds so much longer than a success? Together with my colleague Amber Boydstun in the Political Science Department, I started thinking about this question, this question of, "do our minds get stuck in the negatives?" We all know **intuitively** that there are different ways of thinking about things.

更疯狂的是，即使第二天另外一篇文章通过审核，我本可以高兴起来，之前文章收到的烦人的拒绝也始终在我脑海中徘徊。发生了什么呢？为什么感觉失败比成功在我们脑海里停留的时间长得多？我与我在政治系的同事Amber Boydstun，一起开始了对此问题的研究。为什么我们的大脑被困在负面情绪里？我们都本能地知道，人们对于事情有很多不同的思考方式。

The same glass, the saying goes can be seen as half-full or half-empty. There's a lot of research in the social sciences showing that depending on how you **describe** the glass to people, as half-full or half-empty, it changes how they feel about it. So if you describe the glass as half-full, this is called the gain frame, because you're focusing on what's gained, then people like it. But if you describe the same glass as half-empty, a loss frame, then people don't like it. But we wondered what happens when you try to switch from thinking about it one way to thinking about it another way.

盛有半杯水的杯子就可以被看成半满和半空的。社会科学上有大量研究表示，当你向人们描述这个杯子的时候，半满和半空的表达会改变人们对其的感受。如果你说这个杯子是半满的，你是在获益框架下思考，因为你关注的是得到的那部分。人们便会喜欢这个杯子。相反，如果你认为这个杯子是半空的，你则是在损失框架下思考，人们也就不会喜欢这个杯子。如果你试着去改变思维方式，又会发生什么呢？

rejection

n.拒绝

intuitively

adv.直觉地

describe

v.描述

Can people shift back and forth, or do they get stuck in one way of thinking about it? Does one of these **labels**, in other words, tend to stick more in the mind? Well, to investigate this question, we conducted a simple experiment. We told participants in our experiment about a new **surgical** procedure, and we **randomly** assigned them to one of two conditions.

人们是否能反复改变思考的角度？还是会被困于一种固定的思考模式？换句话说，是否会有有一种模式更容易被长期使用？为了解答以上问题，我们开展了一个简单的实验。我们告知实验参与者，此实验有关于一个新手术。然后将他们随机分成两组。

For participants in the first condition, the first group, we described the surgical procedure in terms of gains; we said it had a 70% success rate. For participants in the second group, we described the procedure in terms of losses; we said it had a 30% failure rate. So it's the exact same procedure, we're just focusing people's attention on the part of the glass that's full, or the part of the glass that's empty. Perhaps **unsurprisingly**, people like the procedure when it's described as having a 70% success rate, and they don't like it when it's described as having a 30% failure rate. But then we added a twist: we told participants in the first group, "You know, you could think of this as a 30% failure rate." And now they don't like it anymore; they've changed their minds.

对于第一组参与者，我们强调手术的正面效果。即其有70%的成功率。而对于第二组参与者，我们强调手术的负面影响。即其有30%的失败率。手术步骤完全相同。我们使这些参与者的注意力放于杯子里有水的那一半，或者空着的那一半上。也许并不奇怪，当人们得知手术成功率为70%时，他们会肯定这个手术。如果他们关注于30%的失败率，则不会接受这个手术。但是我们随后告知第一组实验者，“你们也可以认为手术有三成可能失败。”他们改变了想法，不再倾向于这个手术。

label

n. 标签

surgical

adj. 外科手术的

randomly

adv. 随机的

unsurprisingly

adv. 不出所料地

We told participants in the second group, "You know, you could think of this as a 70% success rate", but unlike the first group, they stuck with their initial opinion; they seemed to be stuck in the initial loss frame that they saw at the beginning of the study. We conducted another experiment.

我们也告诉第二组实验者，“你们也可以认为手术有七成可能成功。”与第一组不同的是，他们保持了原有意见，他们似乎从始至终都在一开始的损失框架下思考。我们还做了另外一个实验。

This time we told participants about the current governor of an important state who is running for re-election against his opponent. We again had two groups of participants, and we described the current governor's track record to them in one of two ways. We said that when the current governor took office, statewide budget cuts were expected to affect of about 10,000 jobs, and then half of the participants read that under the current governor's leadership 40% of these jobs had been saved.

这一次我们告诉实验参与者一个重要州的时任州长正在参与改选。同样还是两组实验者，我们以两种不同的方式来阐述这位州长的业绩。我们告诉实验者在时任州长刚上任时，州际预算缩减被估计会大约影响一万个工作岗位。一组实验者了解到在这位州长的带领下，40%的职位被保留了下来。

They like the current governor; they think he is doing a great job. The rest of the participants read that under the current governor's leadership, 60% of these jobs had been lost, and they don't like the current governor; they think he's doing a terrible job. But then, once more, we added a twist.

因此，他们认为时任州长业绩不错，从而欣赏他的表现。另一组实验者则了解到在这位州长的领导下，职位减少了60%。他们由此认为州长业绩很差而不支持他。再一次地，我们改变了表达方式。

initial

adj.最初的

For participants in the first group, we **reframed** the information in terms of losses, and now they didn't like the current governor anymore. For participants in the second group, we reframed the information in terms of gains, but just like in the first study, this didn't seem to matter. People in this group still didn't like the current governor. So notice what this means. Once the loss frame gets in there, it sticks. People can't go back to thinking about jobs saved once they thought about jobs lost. So in both of these **scenarios** actually the current governor gets ousted in favor of his opponent.

对于第一组来说，在我们更换了表达方式以强调负面影响后，他们不再认可时任州长。在面对第二组实验者时，我们的表达突出了正面的效果。但与第一个实验相同，他们并没有改变对州长的态度。第二组实验者们始终不欣赏时任州长。所以以上两个实验告诉我们：损失框架会一直延续，人们一旦想到职位减少，就无法反过来考虑保留下来的工作岗位。所以在这两个实验组的情景下，时任州长都会被他的改选对手打败。

At this point we were getting curious: why does this happen? Could it be that it's actually mentally harder for people to convert from losses to gains than it is for them to go from gains to losses? So we conducted the third study to test how easily people could covert from one frame to another. This time we told participants, "Imagine there's been an **outbreak** of an unusual disease and six hundred lives are at stake." We asked participants in one group, "If a hundred lives are saved, how many will be lost?" And we asked participants in the other group, "If a hundred lives are lost, how many will be saved?"

相信大家听到这里会有些好奇。为什么会发生这种现象呢？是不是对于人类来说，思想上从损失到获益的转换比从获益到损失的转换更难呢？于是我们又进行了第三项研究，旨在探索人们转换思考框架的难易程度。这一次我们告诉实验者“想象现在一种罕见的疾病开始大规模爆发600个生命可能会受到影响。”第一组实验者被问到：“如果100人得到救助，有多少人将因疾病失去生命？”第二组则被问到：“如果100人因病离世，有多少人将获救？”

reframed

v.给（照片）换框

scenarios

n.情节；脚本

outbreak

n.爆发

So everyone just has to calculate 600 minus 100, and come up with the answer of 500 but whereas people in one group have to convert from gains to losses in order to do that, people in the second group have to convert from losses to gains. We timed how long it took them to solve this simple math problem, and what we found was that when people had to convert from gains to losses, they could solve the problem quite quickly; it took them about 7 seconds on average. But when they had to convert from losses to gains, well now it took them far longer, almost 11 seconds.

“他们只需简单计算——600 减去 100 等于 500。但是第一组实验者需要将思维模式从获益转换到损失，而在计算的同时，第二组实验者则要将思维模式从损失转换到获益。我们对两组人们计算这个简单的数学问题进行了计时。并发现从获益转换到损失模式的人们计算速度更快，平均需要7秒钟。而从损失转换到获益模式的人们则需要更长的11秒钟来完成计算。

So this suggests that once we think about something as a loss, that way of thinking about it tends to stick in our heads and to resist our attempts to change it. What I take away from this research and from related research is that our view of the world has a **fundamental tendency** to tilt toward the negative. It's pretty easy to go from good to bad, but far harder to shift from bad to good. We literally have to work harder to see the upside of things. And this matters. So, think about the economy. Here's economic well-being from 2007 to 2010. You can see it tanked, just like we all remember, and then by late 2010 it has recovered by most **objective** measures.

所以，一旦我们从损失的角度思考，这种思维模式更容易长久存在，也 更难被改变。我从此项和其他相关研究中发现 我们对世界的认识 从根本上倾向于负面影响。从好到坏很简单，但从坏到好的转变就会难得 多。我们需要付出更多的努力去看到事物积极的一面。而这很重要 所以，想想当今的经济。这是从2007到2010年的经济情况。如我们记忆中 的一样，你可以看到经济状况的不景气。2010年后期，根据大多数客观 测量，经济已经开始复苏。

fundamental

adj. 根本的；必须的

tendency

n. 趋势

objective

adj. 客观的

But here's consumer confidence over the same time period. You can see it tanks right along with the economy, but then it seems to get stuck. Instead of **rebounding** with the economy itself, consumers seem to be psychologically stuck back there in the **recession**. So oddly then, it may take more effort to change our minds about how the economy is doing then to change the economy itself.

但是这是同时期消费者信心的情况。你可以发现它随着经济情况一起下降。但是它似乎没有好转。消费者们的心理始终被低潮所困，并没有随着经济复苏而上升。奇怪地，相比真正改变经济，我们需要付出更多才能改变我们对经济的态度。

On the more personal level, what this research means to me is that you have to work to see the up-side. Literally, this takes work, this takes effort. And you can practice this; you can train your mind to do this better. There's research out at UC Davis, showing that just writing for a few minutes each day about things that you're grateful for can **dramatically** boost your happiness and well-being, and even your health. We can also **rehearse** good news and share it with others. We tend to think, right, that misery loves company, that venting will help get rid of our negative emotions, that we'll feel better if we just talk about how terrible our day was.

从个人的层面上说，这项研究告诉我 人们需要努力才能看到正面的效果毫不夸张地说，这必须要努力，需要尝试。而且你可以练习，训练你的思想更积极正面的思考 我们加利福利亚大学戴维斯分校有一项研究表明，每天花几分钟时间写一写 你想感谢的事情，就能明显地提高你的快乐和幸福感受，以及你的健康。我们也可以复述好消息并与其他人分享。我们常认为痛苦需要陪伴，发泄可以帮助我们减轻负面情绪，说出了我们这一天过得多糟糕，感觉就好多了。

rebounding

v. 弹回；
回升

recession

n. 衰退

dramatically

adv. 剧烈地，
明显地

rehearse

v. 排练；排演

And so we talk, and we talk, and we talk about the boss who's driving us crazy, and that friend who never called us back, and that meeting at work where every little thing that could go wrong, did. But we forget to talk about the good stuff. And yet, that's exactly where our minds need the most practice. So, my husband who has this **disconcerting** habit of listening to what I say other people should do, and then pointing out that, technically speaking, I'm a person, too, has taken to listening to me for about two minutes on days when I come home all **grumpy** and complaining about everything, and he listens, and he says, "Okay, but what happened today that was good?"

disconcerting
adj. 令人不安的

grumpy
adj. 脾气坏的

所以我们不停地谈论那些把我们逼疯了领导、那些从不回电话的朋友、还有那些恼人的任何细节都可能出错的工作会议。但是我们忘记了倾诉那些好事情，可这正是我们的大脑需要的。我的丈夫有个烦人的习惯总是听我说其他人应该怎么做，然后点明严格意义上讲，我也是人类的一员。他花两分钟的时间听我回家后脾气暴躁地抱怨一切事情，他倾听着，并提示我“很好，那今天有发生什么好的事情吗？”

So I tell him about the student who came up to me after class with this really interesting, **insightful** question, and I tell him about the friend who emailed me out of the blue this morning just to say, "hello". And somewhere in the telling, I start to smile, and I start to think that maybe my day was pretty **decent** after all. I think we can also work in our communities to focus on the upside. We can be more aware that bad tends to stick. One mean comment can stick with somebody all day, all week even, and bad tends to propagate itself, right?

insightful
adj. 富有洞察力的

decent
adj. 得体的

“我告诉他我的学生在下课时来问我了一个很有趣、很有意义的问题。然后我告诉他早上一个朋友出乎意料地给我发邮件，只为了问好。在讲述这些事情的时候，我开始微笑，我开始想，我的一天终究还是很顺利的。我想我们可以携手努力，去关注正面的一切。我们了解了负面影响更容易留存。一句刻薄的评论可以影响人一整天，甚至一整个星期。负面情绪更会被传递给别人，对吧？”

Somebody snaps at you and you snap back, and you snap at the next guy, too. But what if the next time somebody snapped at you, you forgave them? What if the next time you had a really grumpy waitress, you left her an extra large tip? Our minds may be built to look for negative information and to hold on to it, but we can also retrain our minds if we put some effort into it and start to see that the glass may be a little more full than we initially thought.

grumpy

adj.脾气坏的

waitress

n.女服务员

initially

adv.起初地

当有人谩骂你的时候，你会骂回去，甚至不放过下一个人。但是如果下一次有人再谩骂你，你原谅了他们呢？如果下一次你面对着一位很暴躁的女服务员，你给了她更多的小费呢？我们的大脑的构造也许就是为了寻找负面信息并且牢牢记住。但是如果我们愿意努力，就可以重新训练我们的大脑，并开始意识到玻璃杯里有比我们起初认为更多的水。