

ENCOURAGE POSITIVE THINKING IN CHILDREN

Life is filled with both good things and challenges. It is never as straightforward or comfortable as we sometimes wish it to be. Some challenges are small and manageable, while others come with deep emotional pain, stress, disappointment, anxiety or frustration. These situations affect not only our daily lives, but also our mental well-being and the way we think, respond and make decisions. At times, challenges cloud our thinking and weaken our ability to remain focused on the important issues. When pressure increases, many people stop thinking objectively and slowly surrender to negative thoughts. In such moments, hopelessness silently grows in the mind and heart.

Whenever we allow difficult situations to control our emotions and thoughts, we create room for fear, discouragement, anger and emotional exhaustion. Some people lose their peace, fail to sleep well, lose their appetite, or struggle to concentrate even on simple tasks. Others begin to doubt themselves and assume that everyone around them is judging them.

Negative thinking slowly changes how we communicate and relate to others. A person who is emotionally overwhelmed may react harshly to even innocent questions or simple conversations. They begin interpreting messages from a judgmental perspective and eventually isolate themselves emotionally from their families and friends.

POSITIVE THINKING AND POSSIBILITIES

Positive thinking does not imply pretending that problems do not exist. It means choosing to face life with hope, resilience, courage and a willingness to learn and overcome challenges. A positive thinker believes that every challenge carries a lesson, every setback can become a stepping stone and every difficult season can produce growth. Positive thinking encourages us to ask important questions, such as, "What can I learn from this situation? How can I survive this challenge without emotionally or spiritually destroying myself? What steps can I take to improve this situation? Who can guide or support me during this season?"

These questions shift our minds from blame, self-pity and procrastination toward solutions, healing and progress. Positive thinking creates space for creativity and innovation. It helps us to reflect carefully before reacting emotionally.

DANGER OF NEGATIVE THINKING

Negative thinking drains energy and weakens motivation. A person trapped in negativity often

magnifies problems and minimises opportunities. They stop believing in themselves and become prisoners of fear and doubt.

Over time, negative thinking can destroy relationships, reduce productivity and affect physical and emotional health. Many people fail not because opportunities are unavailable, but because they lose hope and stop believing they can overcome their circumstances.

Children who grow up in environments filled with constant criticism, fear, shouting, hopelessness, or emotional neglect may develop negative thought patterns. They may begin to perceive themselves as incapable, unwanted, or inadequate. Therefore, parents and guardians must intentionally create environments that nurture hope, encouragement, confidence, and healthy communication.

TRUST GOD

Human strength alone is often insufficient to overcome painful moments in life. Some situations leave people emotionally drained, confused and discouraged.

MODELLING POSITIVE THINKING

Children learn more from what they see than from what they are told. Parents are the first teachers and role models in their children's lives. The way parents respond to challenges, disappointments, conflicts and stressful moments greatly shapes how children learn to face life in the future.

A child who sees their parents handling difficulties with calmness, wisdom, prayer, patience and hope grows up feeling emotionally secure. Such children learn that problems are part of life, but they should never destroy their confidence or faith.

However, when children constantly witness anger, hopelessness, insults, panic, or emotional breakdowns without guidance, they may develop fear and insecurity about life.

Let children hear words of encouragement from their parents. Let them see their parents solving problems peacefully and confidently and remaining hopeful, even during difficult seasons. When parents model resilience, their children learn to approach life with courage.

TEACHING POSITIVE THINKING

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is to teach them how to think positively and respond wisely to challenges. Life is not easy and children must grow up knowing that setbacks are a part of life. However, they should also learn that problems are not permanent and the



PARENTING
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situation requires reflection, critical thinking, patience and responsible action.

Positive thinking also teaches children to be emotionally mature. They learn to communicate meaningfully, manage anger, empathise with others, maintain healthy relationships and remain hopeful, even during difficult moments.

CONVERSATIONS THAT BUILD HOPE

Every moment spent with children is an opportunity to shape their thinking and outlook on life. Parents should create time to openly discuss life with their children. Listen to their fears, dreams, frustrations, questions and ambitions. Encourage them to believe in themselves and understand that mistakes and failures do not define their future.

Children require faith, encouragement and inspiration. They need adults to remind them that their future is still meaningful despite the challenges around them. When children are constantly reminded that they are valuable, capable and loved, they develop confidence and emotional resilience.

POSITIVE THINKING BUILDS RESILIENCE

Resilient people are not those who do not have problems. They refuse to allow problems to define them, destroy their hope, and purpose. Positive thinking strengthens the mind to endure difficult moments without giving up. It allows individuals to rise after disappointment, learn from failure and continue to believe that better days are ahead. As parents, teachers, leaders and mentors, we must intentionally raise children who believe in possibilities and approach life with faith, wisdom and hope.

TRUST GOD IN DIFFICULT MOMENTS

Human strength alone is often insufficient to overcome painful moments in life. Some situations leave people emotionally drained, confused and discouraged. In such moments, trusting the Lord gives us strength, peace and hope. The Word of God is filled with encouragement for every circumstance we face.

When children grow up in homes where prayer and God's word are valued, they develop inner confidence and spiritual stability. They learn to seek God for wisdom and guidance rather than surrender to fear.

The writer is a parenting coach



Kyateeka listening to Wamara during the launch of the initiative. The project is expected to directly benefit 800-1,000 girls

Graca Machel partners with govt to empower girls

By Rhyman Agaba

According to official reports, roughly 24%-25% of girls aged 15-19 in Uganda are having or pregnant. As a result, many adolescents drop out of school, ending up in early marriages and deprived of opportunities.

As part of the effort to reverse this trend, the Government has partnered with the Graca Machel Trust, a non-governmental organisation run by former South African first lady Graca Machel to empower adolescent girls in Uganda with life skills to enable them to make informed choices under a programme named Pan-African Adolescent Girls' Movement.

Speaking during the launch held in Namugongo, Wakiso district, Juliet Kimotho, the project manager, described the movement as one that intends to enable African girls maximise their potential.

"This is a leadership programme born out of the need to ensure that adolescent girls grow into a new generation of leaders who can make informed decisions about their lives," Kimotho said.

She said the movement started in 2021 in South Africa and has since expanded to 10 countries. The movement is already in South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia and Nigeria.

"Uganda is the 11th country. By

the end of 2026, we aim to reach 16 countries and impact 10 million girls across Africa by 2030 and 20 million by 2035," she said.

Kimotho said so far, the programme has directly reached about 9,000 girls on the continent, with an additional 145,000 engaged through digital platforms.

"In Uganda, the programme is expected to directly benefit between 800 and 1,000 girls in its first year, which commenced this month," she said. Among the areas targeted for training is leadership, mentorship, entrepreneurship, climate action, education, health, food security and peacebuilding.

Mondo Kyateeka, the assistant commissioner for youth and children's affairs who represented the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, welcomed the development, saying investing in girls is critical for development.

"Whenever we see partners coming in to support empowerment initiatives, we are ready to collaborate because investment in girls is investment in the future," Kyateeka said. He noted that the biggest chunk of Uganda's population is made up of young people yet many are dropping out of school due to early pregnancies.

"With 73% of Uganda's population below the age of 30, targeted interventions like this are essential," he added.

THE JOURNEY TO UGANDA

The movement's journey to Uganda followed a request from one girl. Damon Wamara, the executive director of Uganda Child Rights NGO Network, who also chairs the Eastern Africa Child Rights Network, said the movement was initiated following a request from a Ugandan girl who attended the African Climate Summit in Nairobi in 2023. "One of our girls met Graca Machel and asked her to bring this movement to Uganda. As a network, we followed up to ensure that this request became a reality," Wamara said.

"This movement will enable girls to become leaders and problem-solvers. It will also create a platform for networking, learning and sharing experiences across countries," he

