

HOW (AND WHY) TO GET EXCITED ABOUT THE GOOD AHEAD OF YOU



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In a world driven by instant gratification, anticipation is pretty underrated. How often do we take the time to get excited about the future, as opposed to dwelling on the past or worrying about what's on our plate right now?

That's why we included the "What I'm Excited About" section in your Panda Planner. It harnesses the power of positive anticipation to kickstart a happier day.

Curious about the research-backed benefits of positive anticipation? You're in the right spot – we'll take a look and show you how to use this section of your planner for maximum benefits.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY POSITIVE ANTICIPATION?

Stop to really think about it, and you'll find that anticipation is an important element in many areas of life. It's what drives our fight or flight mechanism. It's that moment in a Beethoven symphony where tension builds and we wait, with goosebumps, for it to be released.

But anticipation isn't a single emotion. Instead, [research suggests](#) that it comprises many – from excitement to anxiety. Therefore, anticipation doesn't always feel good. When we talk about positive anticipation, we're referring to the kind that's associated with pleasant emotions.

The surprising, and frankly pretty awesome, thing about positive anticipation is that it in itself is beneficial – regardless of the outcome of the event you're anticipating. Let's look at the science.



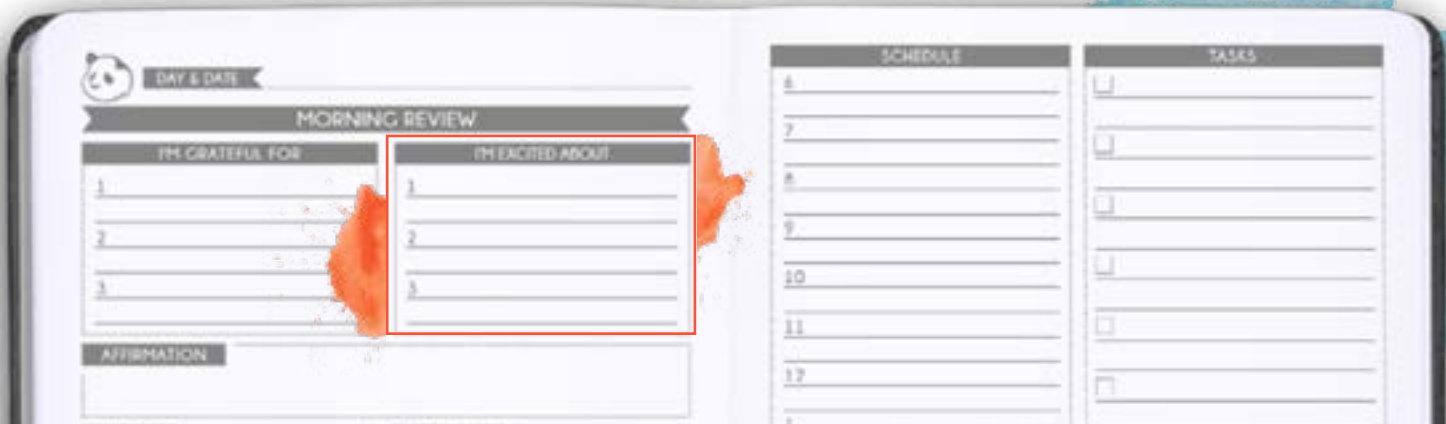
THE BENEFITS OF LOOKING FORWARD

Here are just a few of the research-backed benefits of positive anticipation.

- **Greater life satisfaction:** In [an interesting study from 2007](#), researchers showed that “anticipation is more evocative than retrospection”. In other words, we experience stronger emotions from looking forward than by thinking about the past.

On top of that, the researchers linked anticipation to how satisfied we are in life. “Our research suggests that the enjoyment people glean from anticipation might also be an important component of life satisfaction,” they state. “One’s satisfaction with life is influenced both by looking backward and by looking forward.”

- **Increased levels of well-being:** [A 2017 study](#) actually took brain scans while participants were anticipating either positive or neutral future events. With the positive events, a part of the brain associated with higher levels of well-being lit up.
- **Endorphin release:** In his book [The Happiness Advantage](#), Shawn Achor relates a study in which people’s endorphin levels were raised by 27 percent just because they thought about watching their favorite movie. “Anticipating future rewards can actually light up the pleasure centers in your brain as much as the actual reward will,” he concludes.
- **Improved coping with stressful events:** [A 2015 study](#) set out to test whether merely anticipating a positive event would be enough to improve recovery after a stressful event. The answer? Yes. “Anticipating a positive event is uniquely able to induce positive emotions both during and after stress, and that this boost subserves improved coping and recovery,” say the researchers.



3 TIPS FOR USING THE “WHAT I’M EXCITED ABOUT” SECTION OF YOUR PLANNER

So now you know how beneficial it can be to get excited about the future. It’s one thing to know this; it’s another to actively put it into practice. That’s where your Panda Planner comes in. The Daily section prompts you to stop and consciously consider what you have to look forward to each day.

As for how to use it, it’s pretty self-explanatory. But to make sure you’re really getting the most out of it, here are some key tips.

1. **Choose things you’re genuinely looking forward to.** Trying to trick yourself into thinking you’re excited about going to the dentist is probably not going to work.
2. **To get more bang for your buck, list down experiences rather than material goods.** [Research suggests](#) that anticipating experiences is more likely to bring about positive feelings than anticipating things. That’s why booking a flight home to spend Christmas with the family gives us all the feels, while the joy of ordering a new iPhone tends to be short-lived.
3. **Use the things you’re excited about as a basis for planning.** For example, if you notice that going to the movies ends up on your list repeatedly, set aside time in your calendar for regular movie dates. That way you’re leveraging the power of positive anticipation by including more of it in your life.

Says author and doctor Alex Lickerman:

“

ANTICIPATORY PLEASURE
*is so important to my sense of well-being,
in fact, that I now plan my life in such a way that I almost*
**ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING
TO LOOK FORWARD TO.”**



15 EXAMPLES TO GET YOU STARTED

Remember, you don't have to book an international vacation to have something to look forward to. Think about the things, both big and small, that make you excited, and include more of them in your every day.

Here are a few examples to help get your ideas flowing:

I'm excited about...

- Presenting my new project at work.
- Having family dinner tonight.
- Giving my new pair of shoes a spin.
- Going to the gym.
- Reading my book on the train.
- Booking concert tickets.
- Babysitting my niece.
- Having birthday lunch with my colleagues.
- Ticking off my day's tasks.
- Getting my bike back from the repair shop.
- Meeting with my boss to discuss my ideas.
- Spending the night in with my partner.
- Going to my dance class.
- Watching the sunset.
- My daily meditation.

Ready to get excited? We're confident that you'll find this daily activity positive and beneficial. If you have any questions, comments, or just want to let us know how your daily planning is going, be sure to let us know. We always look forward (see what we did there?) to hearing from you.

THANK YOU!

We're on a mission to help you take back control of your time, reclaim your happiness, and flourish in every way. If you're getting value out of the Panda Planner and our educational resources, please consider inviting your friends, family members, and colleagues to join the movement. Be sure you check out our other eBooks and videos over on mypandaplanner.com.



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