

## The Positivity Plunge: Veterans Riding the Optimism Wave to Nirvana

Ah, positive thinking – that magical cure-all that can transform even the most jaded veteran into a veritable ray of sunshine. Who needs therapy or support when you can just slap on a smile and sprinkle your life with fairy dust and rainbows, right? Let's take a deep dive into the wonderful world of positive thinking and find out how veterans can harness the power of optimism to conquer life's challenges – and maybe even find a unicorn or two along the way.

**Step 1: Ignoring Reality, Embracing Fantasy:** The first step to positive thinking is simple: just ignore all those pesky problems that keep cropping up in your life. You know, the ones that keep you awake at night, gnawing at the back of your mind like a persistent mosquito. Instead, envision a perfect world where everything is rainbows and unicorns, and every challenge is just an opportunity to frolic through fields of daisies. Who needs to confront reality when you've got a one-way ticket to La La Land?

**Step 2: The Incredible Shrinking Stress Ball:** Feeling stressed? No problem! Just close your eyes, take a deep breath, and imagine all your worries and concerns shrinking down into a tiny little stress ball. Now, imagine yourself squeezing that stress ball until it's nothing more than a speck of dust. Poof! All your problems, gone in an instant! Who needs professional help or coping strategies when you can just imagine your stress away?

**Step 3: The Positivity Mantra: Fake It 'Til You Make It:** Now that you've got your rose-colored glasses on and your stress ball in hand, it's time to master the art of the positivity mantra. Just repeat after us: "I am a beacon of happiness, radiating joy and light in all directions." Doesn't that feel better? Keep repeating it until you've convinced yourself that everything's hunky-dory. Remember, when it comes to positive thinking, it's all about faking it 'til you make it – or until you can't keep a straight face anymore.

**Step 4: Embrace the Sunshine, Deny the Rain:** It's a well-known fact that positive thinking is all about focusing on the bright side of life, even when it's pouring rain outside. So, next time life throws you a curveball, just channel your inner Pollyanna and find the silver lining in every cloud. Sure, your car might've broken down on the side of the road, but hey, at least it's not on fire! Embrace the sunshine, deny the rain, and watch as your life transforms into a magical wonderland of unicorns and rainbows.

**Step 5: The Art of Grinning and Bearing It:** One of the key principles of positive thinking is the art of grinning and bearing it, no matter what life throws your way. Got a flat tire? Just smile and whistle a happy tune. Accidentally put salt in your coffee instead of sugar? Laugh it off and take a swig anyway. Embracing the power of positive thinking means never letting life's little annoyances get you down – even if it feels like you're starring in your very own comedy of errors.

Complete article is on [The Veteran Doctor Blog](http://www.theveterandoctor.com/). Please go to <http://www.theveterandoctor.com/>



## Who is your Stick? What brings you Joy?

So, I recently went on a Veteran's Outdoor Adventure Retreat with Waypoint Vets, and it was both transformational and inspirational! But before I get into the trip's details, let me set the tone and backstory for this trip! Waypoint Vets was founded by Sarah Lee, and it is a 501(c)(3) organization to unite and empower Veterans through activities and adventure. They facilitate unique opportunities of Camaraderie and Healing for Military Veterans across America at no cost to them. Their experiences combine mental and physical intensity with the beauty of nature. Their participants engage in various activities and challenges during the day, and evenings are spent reflecting and enjoying the camaraderie. Their goal is to deliver meaningful and lasting experiences that their Veterans can look forward to and reflect upon. Waypoint's mantra is to "Honor our Fallen by *Living*" and take back our health and happiness *together*. On each of their Adventures, Veterans carry customized dog tags engraved with names of those they have lost in combat. A Waypoint is where troops come together to reset, refuel, and recharge, enabling them to continue and complete their mission successfully. That is precisely what they want their outings to deliver by providing camaraderie, adventure, physical challenges, mental empowerment, and lasting clarity.

So, when Sarah invited me to Waypoint Vets, I was so excited; however, I did not know exactly what to expect. The trip was set to a backdrop of Zion National Park. I have been to Zion before and know how beautiful the terrain is; however, its beauty can never be understood until you meet and experience the guides who assisted Waypoint Vets from Jonathan, and his staff, at Zion Guru (more on this later in the article). So, as I arrived at the Las Vegas Airport, I was greeted with smiles from the Waypoint staff, who were busily gathering the 15 other Veterans from all over the United States. Once we accounted for all participants, we began our 2.5-hour journey to Zion National Park. This journey was enlightening as all 16 Veterans and staff started to engage in conversation and establish a bond through camaraderie, stories, and commonalities. Before we knew it, we were at Zion to begin processing, briefings, and our adventure. The evening quickly faded away and ended with an unforgettable view of the beautiful star-filled sky in Zion Canyon.

The next day started early with a Yoga session to stretch and relax our bodies and minds. This occurred in a beautiful Yoga Studio where we stayed at Nama Stay. Nama Stay is run by Jonathon and Atonka Zambella, who has lived and guided in this region for over 26 years. Nama-Stay is a **journey** and a **destination**. It is a place of LOVE with rich, wide-open views. It is thoughtfully designed to be in harmony with nature and surrounded by the beauty of Zion National Park. This beautiful property provides you with the comfort of actual sanctuary space. From the beginning, it was clear that this property could not be limited to only a "vacation and retreats." Instead, it needed to reflect the energy of Nama, our origins, and our purpose. In meditation, Nama was defined as the original force that gave birth to Mother

Earth. They have had many visitors from various countries enjoy the creativity of Nama-Stay and contribute to the different meanings of Nama from other cultures and languages. They are so grateful for all who feel guided to contribute to the Spirit of Nama. These contributions continue to expand their views far beyond where they initially imagined.

After Yoga, we were treated to a wonderful breakfast and the plan for the day. The plan was a guided tour down a beautiful trail called "The NARROWS." Everyone was elated with joy with this plan and could not wait to get started. This historical beauty of the NARROWS is legendary and known around the world. However, today was different as it was January and the temperatures were very cold, especially in the canyon and water. Zion Guru was our next stop, where we were outfitted with specialty equipment to brave the cold water of the NARROWS. This equipment included a dry suit, neoprene socks, ice spikes, boots, and a large stick. Once outfitted, our guides led us to the entrance of the NARROWS trailhead. The beauty on this trail is almost indescribable, and it takes away your breath as all your senses become overloaded. As guides took everyone down the path, it became apparent that distinct groups formed based on experience, ability, and fitness levels. Upon entering the water for the first time, a quick lesson on the use and trust of your equipment became quickly apparent with how it kept you warm and dry. It was a fantastic lesson and experience.

So as a quick disclaimer, I have been down the NARROWS in the summertime. It was a fantastic experience too, but it was so crowded, and my trip was limited due to a lack of equipment, causing the cold water to affect my abilities on the trail. In the wintertime (off-season, as they say), it becomes a different experience with the proper equipment, fewer people to distract you from your sensory overload, and the unique perspective and knowledge from professional guides. A simply AMAZING day of hiking with beautiful scenes of waterfalls, ice, rock formations, and sights/sounds that will be forever etched into our minds!! So, as we progressed down the trailhead, we encountered numerous water crossings and obstacles in the water. The stick we were giving was used to assist us through these obstacles and provide balance when our footing became uncertain under the water. This stick was later discussed in feedback/debrief with comfort, support, and security symbolisms. The question of the day was then presented to us, "Who is your stick?" Is it a family member, pet, or friend? Many different individualized answers transpired upon discussion. My answer was my amazing girlfriend, Becky. She has always been my support system, both emotionally and physically. This is amazing to think about when such a simple item as a "stick" could bring so much meaning simply from a hike down a river.

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## ADVENTURE THERAPY: HELPING VETERANS WHO'VE SEEN IT ALL

Oh, the great outdoors! That vast expanse of land teeming with more mosquitoes than there are stars in the sky. The place where you can smell the fresh scent of bear poo (if that's your thing) and take selfies with squirrels (not recommended). But you know who can benefit from all this "natural beauty"? Veterans! Yes, those heroes who've seen it all could use a little adventure therapy, and here's why.

**Battling PTSD with a Backpack:** You might be asking, "what's adventure therapy?" and we're glad you asked. It's the cutting-edge, scientifically proven method of strapping on a backpack, lacing up your boots, and battling PTSD with nothing but sheer determination and a compass that probably doesn't work. It's like throwing them back into the trenches, but with more trees and a touch of tranquility. And let's face it, it's probably better than being cooped up in a therapist's office with a box of tissues and a potted plant that's seen better days.

**The Great Outdoors, AKA Boot Camp 2.0:** So, what exactly do these "adventure therapy" sessions entail? You know, the usual: hiking, kayaking, rock climbing, rappelling, and the occasional screaming contest with the local wildlife. It's just like

being back in boot camp, but with less shouting from drill sergeants and more bonding with Mother Nature. What could be more therapeutic than navigating a treacherous mountain trail or paddling through class-five rapids? We hear it's like an adrenaline shot straight to the funny bone.

**Teamwork Makes the PTSD Work:** Nothing screams therapy like being stuck in a tent with someone who snores like a freight train while you try to zip up a sleeping bag that's more like a straightjacket. But here's the twist: it's actually great for bonding with fellow veterans! They'll share stories, laugh at each other's misery, and navigate the trials and tribulations of the wilderness as one cohesive unit. And if that doesn't sound therapeutic, we don't know what does.

**Rediscovering Inner Peace (and Mosquitoes):** Sure, adventure therapy might be all about embracing the chaos of the great outdoors, but it's also about finding that inner peace that's been MIA since basic training. Between the roaring campfires and the less-than-ideal sleeping conditions, there's something to be said for staring up at the night sky and reflecting on life. It's a chance for veterans to find solace in the

quiet moments between the mosquito bites and the surprise rain showers.

**Creature Comforts and Uncomfortable Creatures:** Sleeping under the stars might sound romantic, but when you're sharing your campsite with a family of skunks, things can get a little... pungent. Outdoor adventure therapy is all about letting go of creature comforts and embracing the uncomfortable creatures that call the wilderness home. Veterans are encouraged to face their fears head-on, whether that means conquering a challenging rock climb or sharing their deepest emotions with a therapy raccoon (not an actual therapy animal, but it could be).

**Conclusion: Adventure Therapy, Because Uncle Sam Says So:** So, there you have it! Adventure therapy: the perfect blend of adrenaline, camaraderie, and therapeutic mosquitoes. For veterans seeking a break from the mundane, it's the ideal opportunity to rediscover their love for the great outdoors and maybe, just maybe, find some peace in the process. And hey, if it's good enough for Uncle Sam's heroes, it's good enough for us.

For the complete article, please go to [www.theveteransdoctor.com](http://www.theveteransdoctor.com)

## Monthly Resource Picks



### Waypoint Vets

[www.waypointvets.org](http://www.waypointvets.org)

Waypoint Vets is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization that facilitates unique opportunities of Camaraderie and Healing for Military Veterans across America. Our adventures combine mental and physical intensity with the stillness and beauty of nature. We strive to deliver meaningful and lasting experiences that our Veteran participants can look forward to and reflect upon. The Heartbeat of Waypoint's Mission is to Honor our Fallen by *Living*, and by taking back our Health and Happiness – *together*.



### NV Outdoor Adventure Foundation

[www.nvoaf.org](http://www.nvoaf.org)

The Nevada Chapter of the Outdoor Adventure Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) We provide Hunting, Fishing, and outdoor adventures for veterans in need, some are wheelchair-bound caused by injury during active military service or who have lost a limb during active military service.

We also provide hunting, fishing, and outdoor adventures for children under the age of 18 and young adults under the age of 25 with cancer or another life-threatening illness.

Our Outdoor adventures include numerous Big game and Bird Hunts Including Dove, Pheasant, and Quail, Fresh and Saltwater Fishing trips, Camping and many other outdoor adventures.

## Upcoming Local Events

- SNVCC Veteran Coffee Connections – Roma Coffee– 3700 S. Hualapai Way Suite 109 Las Vegas, NV 89147 - Tuesday, April 4, 2023 @ 9:30am
- Eight Cigar Lounge-Quarterly Business Mixer-Eight Lounge (Resorts World)- 3000 S Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89109, USA - Wednesday, April 5, 2023, @ 5:00pm
- Professional Sales Training Workshop w/ADP & Peak Performance Partners- WeWork Town Square-ADP Office- 6543 S Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89119, USA– Wednesday, April 12, 2023, @ 11:00am
- Honor Flight Southern Nevada-Harry Reid Airport-Terminal 1-Level 2 above Baggage Claim-5757 Wayne Newton Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89119 USA– Sunday, April 16, 2023, @ 11:30-12:30am
- Ground Poundin' 5K Fun Run/Walk – Mountains Edge Regional Park– 8101 W Mountains Edge Pkwy, Las Vegas, NV 89178, USA- Saturday, April 22, 2023, 8:30am



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