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“Think positive!” quotes are found everywhere, but contrary to popular belief merely thinking positively about the future hurts effort and success. Research conducted over more than 20 years finds that dreams about a desired future lead to low effort and little success. So, how can we avoid the perils of positive thinking? By juxtaposing our dreams with personal obstacles, we pursue desired futures that can be realized and we let go from those that cannot. I will talk about this self-regulation strategy, called mental contrasting, its non-conscious mechanisms, and how people can use it autonomously as a cost-and time-effective tool to fulfil their wishes and resolve their concerns. Combining mental contrasting with implementation intentions (MCII) has proven to be particularly effective in changing thought, feeling, and behavior. MCII or – Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan (WOOP) – can be used as a multifaceted self-regulatory tool to improve one’s everyday-life and long-term well-being.

All are welcome

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