

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

An overly optimistic host speaks to the camera.

HOST

Hello. And welcome to the wonderful world of positivity! We recognize that sometimes it can be hard to be positive. And for certain Gloomy Gus's it can be super hard, but if you put your mind to it, you can do anything! Just through the power of positive thinking.

SWISH TO:

INT. ACROSS THE ROOM.

Auntie Sarah Tonin watches the host with a bemused expression.

AUNTIE SARAH TONIN

Do you want to tell her or should I?

Standing next to her is Risa.

RISA

Oh, dear Hades, you are not allowed to talk to Positive Pansy over there.

Sigh.

RISA (CONT'D)

I'll take care of this.

Kicks off from the wall.

HOST

You may have to adjust your thinking. And it's easier said than done. But it's possible for anyone to feel lighter through-

RISA

Excuse me.

HOST

Yes, hello dear, I'm sort of in the middle of something.

RISA
I have a question.

HOST
Please save all questions for the end.

RISA
It's kind of important. I think I found a problem in your thesis.

HOST
(sugary)
Oh, now I think we have one of those glum bugs we were talking about earlier.

RISA
No, I feel fine at the moment, actually. As a matter of fact, I'm in a pretty good mood right now.

HOST
(Through a gritted teeth grimace)
Then what do you want?

RISA
I was just wondering about people like me who have mental health problems. How do you account for us?

HOST
I'm actually glad you bring that up. There are a lot of misunderstandings about positivity and mental health.

RISA
Oh, good. It sounds like we're on the page.

HOST
Certain misguided people believe that individuals that have
(with air quotes)
"mental illness" can't simply look on the bright side of things. This simply isn't the case.

RISA

And we've torpedoed my hope. Okay,
we're gonna have to do this. Excuse
me?

HOST

What?!

(regaining composure)

I mean, please hold all questions-

RISA

Not a question.

HOST

Or comments until the end of the
talk.

RISA

I'm sorry to do this to you, but
there's a real harm in what you're
doing.

HOST

What could possibly be the harm in
positivity?

RISA

Positivity is a great thing and a
wonderful tool, and for some people
maybe these ways of thinking work?
But there's a very real thing
called toxic positivity that very
often creeps up and is extremely
harmful to a certain group of
people. Some people may just find
this schtick annoying.

HOST

Poor misguided souls.

RISA

But that's not what I'm talking
about here. By and large, when
someone hears that someone close to
them is struggling. They want to
help and support is so so
important. But sometimes those
people, in their effort to be
supportive, say things that make
you feel worse.

HOST

But you can just chose to be happy!

BUZZER noise. The host looks around.

HOST (CONT'D)

Wha-

RISA

Exhibit A. Thank you for your participation. But actually. There's a chemical imbalance. Positive thinking can't fix a physical ailment. That's like saying happy thoughts would heal a broken leg.

HOST

That's totally different. Doctors and

(air quotes)

"Specialists" use words like that, so they can pump you with useless drugs. You don't need drugs to be happy!

RISA

Then why can I actually feel a marked difference after taking medication?

HOST

Placebo effect.

RISA

Oh, St. Thomas in a speedo.

HOST

It's all in your head!

RISA

At last, something we agree on! The problem is the ailment is in the brain and your suggested cure is in the mind. Do you get the difference?

HOST

Now you're just arguing semantics.

RISA

Yes, because isn't that the entire basis of your position? Words and how using them in a certain way will affect things?

HOST

I can tell things are getting a little heated, but only happy thoughts here.

Buzzer sound.

RISA

Exhibit B. This invalidates the other persons honest feelings. You're telling them to feel a certain way, but they feel the way they feel. They need to recognize their feelings, accept them, and maybe analyze them. None of those things can happen if they're wearing a mask of happy thoughts, so the people around them are more comfortable.

HOST

If you really want to be happy, you just need to make the choice to be happy.

Buzzer sound.

RISA

Exhibit C. Victim blaming. Phrases like this put the onus on the person who isn't feeling positive. As though it's their fault. As though they should just be able to snap out of it. And suggests that, because they can't, they've done something wrong.

HOST

Well, you're just...just...just...

RISA

A self-righteous SJW snowflake? Here's my dirty secret. I'm on your side. I think positivity is a gift. I think shiny happy people make it possible for the rest of us to keep existing. And you know what's even better than positivity?

HOST

What?

RISA

Hope. I believe hope is the most powerful, most dangerous, and most wonderful emotion in the world. Better than unbridled joy. Hope for us. Hope with us. Hope against hope. That way it's sure to win. And just listen. Like, actually listen. Actually feel. You'll get results.

HOST

Noted.

RISA

That's all I had to say really.

Walks off.

HOST

Bitch.