

FIREPROOFING YOURSELF AGAINST NEGATIVITY

By Hadley Griggs

How just a little bit of “positive influence” can keep your day from popping.

MATERIALS

- Two unfilled balloons
- Candle
- Match or lighter
- Some water



Some days, it can seem like everyone is against you—a friend at school spreads a mean rumor about you, your older sibling yells at you, and even when you look in the mirror you just don’t feel your best. It’s easy to get discouraged. But you are awesome! President Thomas S. Monson tells us that “in this challenging world, the youth of the Church are the very best ever.” And lucky for us, there are ways to protect ourselves from all that negativity! Use this fun experiment to see how.

1. Fill one of the balloons with air and tie it off. Explain that the balloon represents one day. Now light the candle.

2. The candle represents all of the negative things that people can say or do to us. And when you hold the balloon above the candle flame, it’s as if you’re exposing your day to all of the negativity that can and does bombard you. Lower the balloon closer and closer to the flame, and watch out—the balloon will pop! Explain that when we come into contact with negative influences, without the proper preparation and protection, it’s very hard to stay positive, and we can feel like the day was terrible.

3. Now, take the second balloon. This balloon also represents one day. But before you fill it with any air, add a few ounces of water. The water represents all of the positive ways we can arm ourselves against negativity: we love our families, we pray daily, we remind ourselves of Christ’s love, we serve others, we smile. Now, fill the balloon with air and tie it off. (Be careful not to let go before you tie it off, or you’ll spray yourself with water!)

4. Hold this balloon above the candle. Now lower it down until it’s touching the flame. Guess what? It doesn’t pop! The water conducts the heat from the candle away from the latex of the balloon and protects it from popping. Cool! This shows us the way that our daily efforts to stay positive can protect us from letting the negative influences of the world ruin our day.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID HABBEN

After your amazing trick, discuss with your family how you can all make goals to have the “water” necessary to protect your day from the candle flame. Consider the words of President Thomas S. Monson: “So much in life depends on our attitude. The way we choose to see things and respond to others makes all the difference. To do the best we can and then to choose to be happy about our circumstances, whatever they may be, can bring peace and contentment. . . . We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. For maximum happiness, peace, and contentment, may we *choose* a positive attitude.”² *NE*
The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” Apr. 2005 general conference.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Living the Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2012, 4.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Broken Vessel,” Oct. 2013 general conference.

Note: Severe depression is “more than mere discouragement” and won’t go away if we “just square [our] shoulders and think more positively.” We should “seek the advice of reputable people with certified training, professional skills, and good values [and] prayerfully and responsibly consider the counsel they give.”³

