Positive Thinking Exercises—Start the New Year off in a positive way!

Seek out uplifting company
This goes back to the old adage of “you are who you hang out with”. Spending time with people who have an optimistic and supportive viewpoint can rub off on you. It is the same for the opposite viewpoint; if someone is constantly negative and unsupportive, that attitude can bring you down. Find friends who have a positive outlook on their future and support your future.

Pay attention to your thoughts
“Checking in” with your thoughts throughout the day can help you manage your subconscious thoughts and focus on what is really important. Like the late automobile industrialist Henry Ford said, “If you think you can do a thing or think you can’t do a thing, you’re right.” When you focus on something positive, you will be less apt to doubt or criticize yourself, according to The Mayo Clinic.

Cultivate hope for the future
Thinking positively can create a hopeful outlook for your future. You can increase your optimism while being on the “lookout” for exaggerated and irrational thoughts. Keep a look out for exaggerated or irrational thoughts, like taking the memory of a poor performance on your last job interview and expecting that performance to happen again and again. Confront these distorted views by writing them down along with challenge sentences, for example: "I wasn't prepared for that last interview, but I know more about the company I am interviewing with next week." . . . The goal here is to stop irrational negative thoughts from overtaking future events, replacing them with the feelings of hope and optimism.

Make peace with the past
Have you ever made yourself cringe or blush at the very thought of something you have done in the past? Those emotions are always created by negative thoughts and you can work to change those thought patterns in order to avoid those emotions. First, take control of thought about the past by focusing on gratitude. Create a “gratitude list” of all the things in your life for which you are grateful. You can even go so far as to say “I am grateful for this event, because it taught me to not do this...” or perhaps something as simple as “I am grateful for my job and the opportunity to work and make money”. Although you may not be ready and able to forgive every slight from the past, your gratitude journal will help you feel more in control and cultivate positive emotions.

Practicing these exercises takes time and requires patience. Don’t worry if it takes some time to get to a positive place, mentally and emotionally. Just like physical change -- mental and emotional change takes time. Keep thinking positively!

http://www.livestrong.com/article/129583-tricks-positive-thinking/