

Keeping positive

I have been teaching with Tolley for 12 years and I sat and passed both the ATT and CTA exams. I know what it is like to be a student. I remember. I am even doing some further qualifications myself!

One thing I have learnt and always tell my students, is be positive. To pass the ATT, CTA or ADIT exams you need 3 things:

Know the basic rules really well. I don't mean every specific rule and nuance to a particular tax. I mean know and really understand the main rules. Could you explain it to someone else?

Good exam technique. Timing is essential. Layout is key. Structure your written answers well. They must make sense. Use proper layouts for computations and all workings are labelled and crystal clear. This is not a treasure hunt for the examiner's. Don't make them look for the answers. Present them on a plate. A pretty plate.

Be positive. If you don't believe you can pass, how can anyone else? You are your greatest support. You are your greatest resource. You put in all the work to get here. You are doing all the question practice. You are going to sit this exam. You are going to pass.

Easy for me to say? I completely believe in what I say. I believe in the power of positive. I see the difference being positive makes. I see positive pass the exams.

So how can you be more positive? Like studying for the exams, it takes practice. Here are my top being positive tips...

Be kind to yourself. If you keep saying "I can't do it", you are listening to yourself. All you are hearing is you can't do it. That's not encouraging, that is not going to help you get any better. How about "I can do it", "I worked hard today", "I did well on that question", "I learnt something new".

Breathe. When things get too much, breathe. When you get stressed, breathe. When you get stuck on a question, breathe. If you are frustrated with yourself, breathe. Celebrate, you passed!! And breathe. Breathing grounds you, it calms the body when the body is panicked into fight or flight mode, it gives you space.

Try this...

Breathe in. Big breath in through your nose. Let your chest, your stomach, inflate with air. Breathe in for the count of four. Hold it for the count of four. Now breathe out through your mouth, slowly for four. Push the air out of your stomach, out of your lungs, feel your chest fall.

Repeat, and repeat, and repeat. Now breathe in for four, hold for five, breathe out for six. Repeat. Breathe in for four, hold for six, breathe out for eight. Repeat.

Feeling better?

Visualise the end. See a picture of yourself. You have passed. When your mind spirals down with thoughts of failing, the implications, perhaps even re-sitting, don't. Don't waste your precious study time and your valuable mind space with negative thoughts. Negative "what if's". They may not happen. You've passed exams before, you know what that feels like. Visualise a big pair of hands pushing those unhelpful thoughts out of your mind and replace it with you, passing.

Blow your own trumpet. You got this!