

# Positive thinking does work

**CYNICS** may dismiss it as the kind of cliched notion that appears in upbeat American self-help manuals.

But thinking positively about something really can make it happen, psychologists say.

The effects are far more powerful than we realise - and can change our behaviour and even how things turn out.

Just anticipating a specific outcome can gear our thoughts and actions towards turning it into reality, their research in the journal *Psychological Science* suggests.

For example, if someone shy expects a glass of wine will help them loosen up at a party, they will probably approach more people and get involved in more conversations over the course of the evening. Although they

may give credit to the wine, their expectations of how the wine would make them feel played a major role, the experts say.

Psychologists Maryanne Garry and Robert Michael of Victoria University in New Zealand and Irving Kirsch of Harvard, pooled their research into the effects of psychological suggestion. Many studies show it can influence how people perform in tasks, which products they prefer and even how they respond to medicines.

The authors said: 'Once we anticipate a specific outcome will occur, our subsequent thoughts and behaviours will actually help to bring that outcome to fruition.'

Dr Garry added: 'If we can harness the power of suggestion, we can improve people's lives.'