



ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

Outlook refers to how we approach the world and our lives. In other words, it is our general attitude. Outlook affects how we perceive the world, what we think of ourselves, of the people around us, our jobs, our homes, our friends — everything. Our outlook impacts everything we think about and do. Some people tend to be optimistic, a definite asset; others tend to be pessimistic, which can lead to difficulties.

In *Learned Optimism*, Dr. Martin Seligman reported on an Attributional Style Questionnaire he developed that ranks individuals on an Optimism-Pessimism scale. He did a longitudinal study on school children, which is a study that is done over a pre-specified period of time. What this study found was that those who scored the highest for optimism stayed non-depressed or, if they did get depressed, they recovered rapidly. In contrast, the pessimists were most likely to get and stay depressed.

Seligman also found through his research that high scores for optimism are predictive of excellence in many areas of life — from sports performance to life insurance sales performance. This finding saved Metropolitan Life millions of dollars in personnel selection. He also found that college freshman who rose to the challenges of their first year and who did better than expected were optimists when they entered college. Those who did much worse than expected (the expectations in both groups were based on measures such as GPA, SAT and other achievement tests) entered their freshman year as pessimists.

“We don’t see things as they are; we see things as we are.” – Old Jewish Proverb

Dr. Seligman summarizes his many studies on optimism and pessimism by stating, “over and above their talent-test scores, we repeatedly find that pessimists drop below their potential and optimists exceed it. I have come to think that the notion of potential, without the notion of optimism, has very little meaning.”

Overall, optimists tend to have feelings of control over their lives. Seligman states in his book that “becoming an optimist consists not of learning to be more selfish and self-assertive, or presenting yourself to others in overbearing ways, but simply of learning a set of skills about how to talk to yourself when you suffer a personal defeat.” As you learn to be more optimistic, you will be learning to speak to yourself about your setbacks from a more encouraging viewpoint.

OPTIMISM CAN BE LEARNED AND HAS A WONDERFUL IMPACT ON EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE.

1. **Optimism will help you harness the power of CHOICE.** It will help you think of and act on good, healthy choices. When you are optimistic, you understand that your choices really make a difference.
2. **Optimism will help you REST easier;** a positive view of your future will allow you to relax today and help you sleep well at night.
3. **Optimism will help you seek an ENVIRONMENT that is healing and restorative.** When you are optimistic, you will be open to believing that you can make changes in your space such as cleaning a closet, getting organized and keeping it that way.
4. **Optimism will help you establish and maintain drive when it comes to regular mental and physical ACTIVITY.** Optimism will help you believe that you have what it takes to be more mentally and physically active on a regular basis. When you do have set backs or “road blocks,” your optimistic outlook will help you get back on track and pick up where you left off.
5. **Optimism will help you TRUST IN GOD and believe that He has your best interest in mind.** Optimism will help you trust others too; it will assist in building relationships, having peace of mind and lowering your stress.
6. **Optimism will help you have a positive, cheery outlook, which will improve your INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS** because others will be drawn to you. When we have a positive outlook, we will look for the positive in others and will encourage them. We will also stick with others through challenging times because we believe in them and that everything will work out for the good.
7. **Optimism will help you think positively about your NUTRITION choices.** If you have had challenges with diet in the past and you feel like you have never been able to eat the way you want, try having an optimistic outlook as it will help you succeed. It will help you realize that you do have the power to influence your health by choosing the best possible food for your body.