

Name:

Date:

Optimism



Optimism is the foundation of courage. –Nicholas Murray

What does it mean to be optimistic/pessimistic?

An optimist is someone who “finds opportunity in every difficulty” whilst a pessimist is someone who “finds difficulty in every opportunity.” Another way to look at optimism is in terms of how you explain your experiences, successes, and failures. Looking at how you explain certain events, or the reason behind athletes success or failure, we can see if they are optimistic or not. We can also use how you explain things to predict future outcomes because of your expectations of success or failure.

How do people explain their experiences?

People tend to explain their experiences as either positive or negative. Within that, we can dig deeper to determine exactly how one might interpret an event.

Positive events: internal (within a persons control), stable (this reason will always be there), and global causes (effects everything) causes. For example, we won the game because I am talented.

Negative events: external (out of a person’s control), unstable (the reason is only temporary), and specific factors (only effects that certain situation). For example, we lost the game because the other team scored a lucky goal.

What are the benefits to being optimistic and the disadvantages of being pessimistic?

Numerous books, studies, people, etc. have shown that there are a lot of benefits to being optimistic, as well as disadvantages to being pessimistic. For example:

Optimistic

- More likely to perform better while being consistent.
- More likely to overcome obstacles, while being motivated and persistent.
- More likely to win.
- Less likely to burn out.

Pessimistic

- More likely to feel down when things go wrong.
- More likely to underachieve.
- More likely to feel helpless in a stressful situation.
- More likely to underperform in sport.

How do you start becoming more optimistic?

By increasing and building optimism, we are less likely to have our self esteem hurt when we are faced with negative events, and our self esteem will continue to grow when we are faced with positive events. We can do this by using different activities geared towards promoting understanding about how we explain our experience as well as building on strengths and positive aspects of character.

Optimism Exercise

Think about real life experiences, some do you well in and what areas in which you need improvement. With that in mind, write 8 optimistic statements.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____
