

Opt for Optimism

How Positive Attitudes Defuse Stress

Research has shown that most illnesses, including headaches, backaches and heart disease, can be caused or influenced by your feelings and stress levels. When you experience life changes—positive or negative—your body needs time to recover. Having an optimistic attitude can help speed recovery and may even keep you healthier than someone with negative attitudes. By learning to “look on the bright side,” you can help counteract the negative effects of stress and improve your overall health.

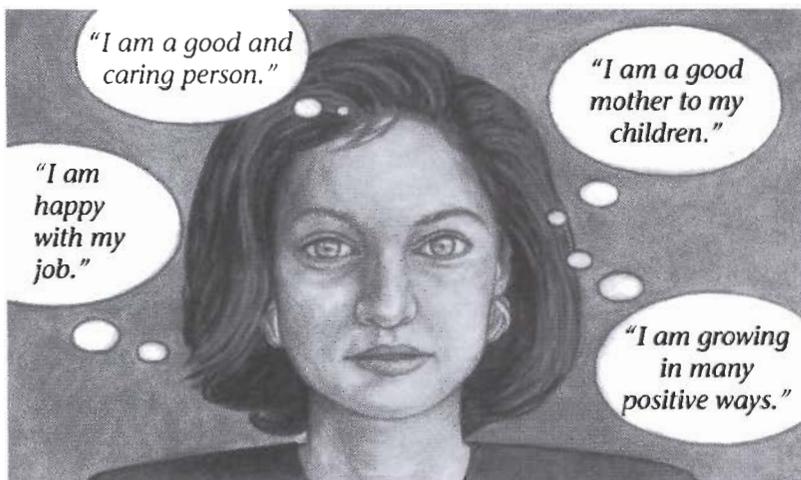
Looking on the Bright Side

The classic definition of an optimist is a person who sees a glass as half full, while a pessimist sees it as half empty. Optimists *choose* to feel hopeful about how they see a situation. Optimists are positive thinkers who practice positive “self-talk.” They tell themselves “I can.” Optimism, or positive thinking, can help accomplish a surprising number of personal and work goals.

Become an Optimist

1. Find a role model. Find someone who seems to make the best of any given situation. Find out how that person maintains that attitude and copy the behavior. Chances are, optimism helps your role model get through difficult times with fewer negative effects.

2. Practice positive self-talk. Tell yourself positive things every day for a month (“I can do the job,” “I like myself,” etc.). Practice positive self-talk for at least one month before judging how it has affected your attitude.



3. Practice affirmations. Affirmations are positive, motivating statements. Use short “I am” statements: “I am happy with my job.” Say the affirmation out loud several times, then imagine it happening.

Accentuate the Positive

No one is optimistic all the time. But anyone can learn how to adopt a more positive, healthier attitude. When you practice being an optimist, you’ll be on your way to a happier, healthier body and mind.