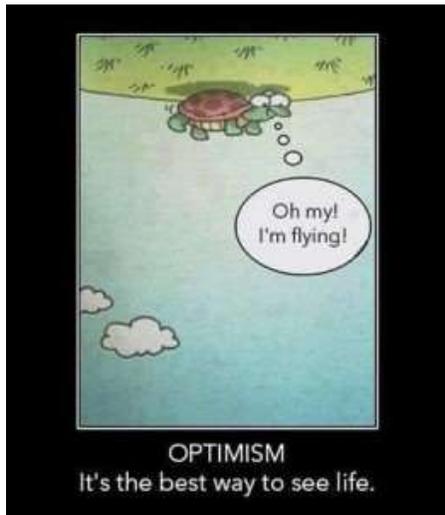
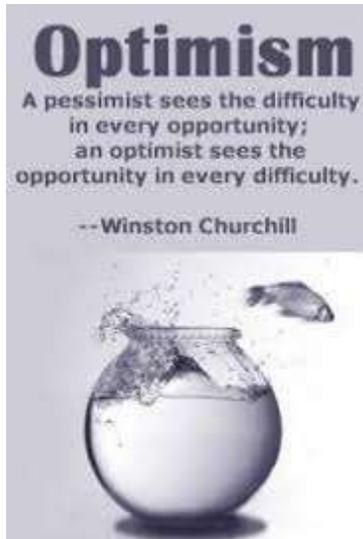


## Optimism versus Pessimism



### Optimism

Definition of optimism: hopefulness and confidence about the future or the successful outcome of something. A tendency to expect the best possible outcome or dwell on the most hopeful aspects of a situation. A general disposition to expect the best in all things; the *optimistic* feeling that all is going to turn out well.



### Stress Management

Optimism can help with stress management and even improve your health. A [Mayo Clinic article](#) on the health benefits of positive thinking asserts that how you answer the age-old question "Is your glass half empty or half full?" may affect your health. The article states that some studies show personality traits like optimism and pessimism can affect many areas of your health and well-being.

The positive thinking that typically comes with optimism is a key part of effective stress management, which is associated with several health benefits. If you tend to be pessimistic, all is not lost. You can learn positive thinking skills.

"mindset" {noun}

*a set of beliefs or a way of thinking that determines one's behavior, outlook and mental attitude.*

### **Mindset Makes a Difference**

Having a positive mindset doesn't mean that you ignore unpleasant situations, or pretend they don't exist. A positive mindset means you approach difficulties believing the best is going to happen, and you speak and act accordingly.

The great thing about a mindset is that it can change. If the majority of the thoughts you think are negative, you are most likely a pessimist. The good news is, you can decide to change that. No one can control what someone else thinks; we all make that individual decision. I can decide to change the thoughts I think. That's called free will.

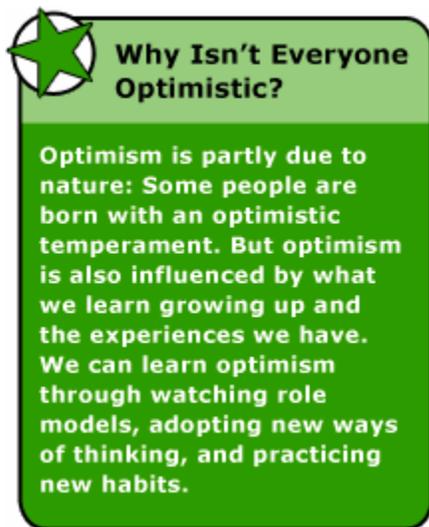


### **What Do You Think?**

If you tend toward negative thoughts and want to make a change, take heart! It can be done. It may take a little time and practice, but you too can become an optimist!

Start by taking inventory of your thoughts; think about what you're thinking about. Do a periodic "check up from the neck up" during the day. If you find yourself focusing on the negative aspects of a situation, stop and make a deliberate effort to find something positive and focus on that.

Perhaps you hit every red light on your way to work; it's just possible you avoided an accident by sitting an extra minute or two at an intersection. Were all the donuts in the breakroom gone by the time you got to work? Great! You have the opportunity to make a healthier choice for breakfast.



### **Choose Your Friends Wisely**

If you're trying to make a change from pessimism to optimism, make sure the people around you are positive. Negative people may hinder your efforts to change your thinking. Ever hear the saying "Misery loves company"? This is not company you want to keep when you're trying to make a shift from pessimism to optimism.

If you notice those around you are not thrilled with the changes you are making, it may be a good time to expand your circle of friends. Just as it is a good idea to play with someone who is better than you when trying to improve your game, it's a good idea to associate with positive people, who can inspire you to make positive changes.

Who knows? You just may find that a newly-acquired positive friend was a former pessimist, too! Hang out with people who help you raise your game, and you may find that you are the one able to inspire someone else.

Optimism is essential to achievement  
and it is also the foundation of  
courage and true progress.

-- Nicholas Murray Butler

## **Be Good to Yourself**

In addition to helping your fellow man, being an inspiration does wonders for your self-esteem. The experts are split on the origins of optimism. It may be that some of us are predisposed to tend toward positive thoughts, but optimism can be learned.

Don't expect an overnight miracle if you are new to optimism; give it some time and practice. Take it easy on yourself. Stick with it, and before you know it your thought patterns will change with practice.

There's a great big, beautiful world out there to discover and enjoy. Why not start today on the road to optimism? What have you got to lose besides negativity?