

LEARNED OPTIMISM

Try these 6 proven strategies to be more optimistic:

1. 'Try On' a Positive Lens

Yes, shifting your perspective is as easy as consciously thinking happy thoughts.

People who are pessimistic, habitually view things as negative. Challenge yourself to always consider that there may be another way of looking at things. Experts refer to the tactic as "positive reframing."

For example, if you think the entire day was ruined because it was dark or rainy outside, focus on what may have been gained during that time. Maybe you were spending time indoors relaxing, reading or cuddling up to somebody you love. Instead of looking at events in the most negative possible light, make an active effort to 'try on' positive lenses as much as possible. After a while, this will become effortless, a more automatic and optimistic frame of mind.

2. Take Note of the Company You Keep

We all have those friends who are chronic complainers or gossipers. After spending a few hours with them we become as negative as them. It's clear: Negativity is contagious.

Luckily, positive emotions can be contagious, too. Having a happy spouse, friend or neighbor who lives within a mile of you increases the probability that you will be happy as well.

Which means it's time to add some optimists to your network.

Start noticing who you spend time with on a daily basis. If you start connecting to people who are optimistic and grounded in life, you will start to be affected by their positive energy. "The same goes for the time you spend with pessimistic people. The more you spend time with negativity, the more negative you are bound to feel.

3. Turn Off the News

Five minutes of the morning news is enough to send anyone's mood in a downward spiral.

"The news and current state of media and politics can make it very hard for people to be optimistic. The reality is that the moment you turn on the news or read the paper, you are likely to be barraged with negativity and a bleak outlook on the world. This, however, is an imbalanced view on the world, so you should try to limit your consumption of the news. Instead spend time doing activities that help maintain your health and a positive outlook. If you feel a need to process the current state of political or world affairs, you may want to consider having a healthy discussion about it with a friend or family member; this still allows you to absorb the information but can also offer you a good level of discourse and balanced views on the news.

4. Write in a Journal for a Few Minutes Each Day

Researchers define [gratitude](#) as the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself, or a general state of thankfulness — no doubt a mental state that fosters an optimistic outlook. But it can be easier said than done to remain grateful throughout day-to-day stressors .

A smart way to ease into it is by journaling, a popular technique for cultivating gratitude that takes just minutes each day.

At the end of each day, will write down one or two things that you experienced or witnessed during the day that filled you with gratitude. It is important to note that this could be anything — a cup of [coffee](#) that filled you with joy, a random act of kindness by a stranger or even breathing in some fresh air on your morning walk. This will allow you to focus on the positives of your day and cultivate an optimistic mindset, a perfect note on which to end your day.

While you have your journal open, jot down some of your accomplishments as well. Start acknowledging your personal and professional achievements. Doing so creates a sense of self-esteem and healthy self-esteem builds confidence. When you feel confident, you feel much more optimistic about life.

5. Acknowledge What You Can — and Cannot — Control

“While some people may be unable to deal with uncertainty, positive individuals are able to adapt and thrive. Accept what you can and cannot control in the situation. “For example, if you lose your job you cannot control the fact that you were fired or laid off. You can control whether you take steps to find a new job as well as whether you take care of yourself with proper nutrition and sleep.

Practicing mindfulness is a great way to help combat the tendency to ruminate over daily stressors, which is a breeding ground for negativity.

We often ruminate endlessly without really focusing on the task at hand. If you can learn to be in the present space (while allowing other thoughts to enter your brain but then pushing them gently away) without judgement or thought about past or future, you will find that there’s less room for pessimism.

6. Don't Forget to Acknowledge the Negative

It's important to remember that making an effort to be more optimistic doesn't mean walking around wearing rose-colored glasses. While it's good for our mental health to see the positive in situations, not acknowledging the negative can hinder you in the long run.

Optimism can be detrimental if it keeps you locked into fantasy and you are in denial about your current reality. You may be optimistic about finding a more lucrative job or loving relationship, but if you do not address the issues that are keeping you from those goals, you will not be able to create what you want. A combination of optimism and realistic thinking help people navigate through life. Realistic thinking does not mean never seeing the bright side of life; not at all. It is simply a way of supporting your optimism with the action steps so that you can create a positive future as opposed to being stuck in fantasy.