

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Optimism."

THE OPTIMISM STRATEGY

By Ben Cairns, M.A.

Getting a haircut in the small mountain town where I live is always an interesting experience. The local barbershop is old-fashioned and a little dusty. The décor includes old chrome and split vinyl waiting chairs (duct taped), dog-eared hunting magazines, coverless National Geographics, and well-worn Koken barber chairs with the flipping padded footrest and ashtray in the arm. Everything is always the same except the conversation. You just never know who will wander in or what they will say. As I waited last week, I had an experience that left me thinking about how attitude determines what kind of conversation you create.

Tony, a fifty-ish man with crow's feet next to his eyes, piped up first, "The Gas Company wants to put a high pressure pumping station in behind the soccer fields." There were six of us sitting there, and it seemed that he was addressing anyone who wanted to respond, so I opened my mouth.

Before I could get a word out, a skinny guy with his sleeves rolled up spat out "Why?"

"Well, I was thinking about talking to them about it," Tony responded.

The skinny guy's voice was very loud and angry. "Talking to them is not a good move."

"Yeah, maybe not," Tony said as he picked



up one of the hunting magazines and started reading. As luck would have it, the skinny guy was up next and soon enough he was gone.

Tony introduced himself to me and started talking again. "At City Hall we're putting together an action committee to make sure that we have a chance to be heard before this project gets approved somewhere up in Washington. Are you interested?"

"You bet I am, what is your plan?" I asked. Tony's response to me was completely different than to the skinny man. I had the sense that even if the skinny man would have changed his tone of voice that it would have been too late to open up Tony.

I heard someone refer to being positive as "the optimism strategy." The point is that starting

a conversation in a positive frame of mind (especially if you feel negative or disagree) allows you to have a more open and productive conversation. It's easier to keep a conversation positive or neutral if you can avoid being negative. Solutions come easier to cooler heads, whereas hot emotions decrease flexibility. Once the other person sees negativity, it is hard for them to open up and relax again. So, stay positive and use "the optimism strategy" to open up your possibilities!

What Our Clients Are Saying

"I look forward to (TLC's) coaching. My supervisor said he has noticed a positive difference in my communication style. I am walking with more confidence."

Natalie Cothran, Chattanooga TN

"I was very pleased to find your site containing a free newsletter in the field of education. It is a great help for me as an educator in our community development work here in the Southern Philippines in the Island of Palawan, Puerto Princesa City. I know that this site will be very valuable to me in the fields of education, training and communication systems. Thank you very much!"

*Community Development Worker, Center for Renewable Resources and Energy Efficiency
Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, Philippines*



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LOOKING AHEAD:

- ♦ The topic of the June issue of *The Exchange* is Gender.

LOOKING BACK:

- ♦ For previous editions of *The Exchange*, go to our [back issues](#).
- ♦ Re-read the 10/2001 edition: Goal Achievement.

An optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity; a pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity.

Anonymous



I don't know where I'm going but I'm on my way.

Carl Sandburg

Quick Tips:

- Begin each day with a list of things you are looking forward to.
- End each day reviewing the positive highlights of your day.



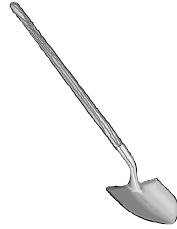
To learn more about it, click here!

LOVE THE OPPORTUNITY

By Jim Rohn

Somebody said you have to love what you do, but that's not necessarily true. What is true is that you have to love the opportunity. The opportunity to build life, future, health, success and fortune. Knocking on someone's door may not be something you love to do, but you love the opportunity of what might be behind that door.

For example, a guy says, "I'm digging ditches. Should I love digging ditches?" The answer is, "No, you don't have to love digging ditches, but if it is your first entry onto the ladder of success, you say, 'I'm glad somebody gave me the opportunity to dig ditches and I'm going to do it so well, I won't be here long.'"



You can be inspired by having found something even though you are making mistakes in the beginning and even though it is a little distasteful taking on a new discipline that you haven't learned before. You don't have to love it, you just have to learn to appreciate America, appreciate opportunity and appreciate the person who brought you the good news; that found you.

Appreciate the person who believed in you before you believed in yourself, appreciate the person who said, "Hey, if I can do it, you can do it."

If you will embrace the disciplines associated with the new opportunity you will soon find that your self-confidence starts to grow, that you go from being a skeptic to being a believer. And soon when you go out person to person, talking to people, you will find it to be the most thrilling opportunity in the world. Every person you meet - what could it be? Unlimited! Maybe a friend for life. The next person could be an open door to retiring. The next person could be a colleague for years to come. It's big time stuff. And sometimes in the beginning when we are just getting started we don't always see how big it is.

So, before you are tempted to give up or get discouraged, remember all success is based on long term commitment, faith, discipline, attitude and a few stepping stones along the way. You might not like the stone

you are on right now, but it's sure to be one of the stones that lead to great opportunities in the future.

To Your Success,
Jim Rohn

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YOU ARE WHAT YOU THINK!

Remember the expression, "You are what you eat"? This saying refers to eating healthy foods in order to keep your body healthy. Well, what about feeding the mind?



Our minds are awesome in their ability to produce the most amazing results. This is especially true of our emotional side. The same way you wake up sweating from a scary dream, your mental power can also be channeled to produce positive results. This technique is called visualizing.

Visualizing has been used for centuries worldwide. The most popular form is meditation. Instead of thinking about what you are afraid might happen, think more about what you want to happen. Place yourself in a mental movie and see yourself in a favorable outcome. Incorporate all of your senses: touch, sight, smell, taste, and hearing. See, feel, and experience things going your way.

This is challenging for some because the tendency is to focus on the negatives. Negative people justify their pessimism by saying things like, "Well, I'm only being realistic." Although you can focus on the negative that could happen, you can also focus on the positive that could happen!

Optimism is a choice. Think positively about your skills and the outcomes you desire. Remember, whatever you think about yourself, you are right. We are what we think!

SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH ROSE-COLORED GLASSES

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

There are several commonly used phrases relating to optimism. Some examples include "every cloud has a silver lining," "the sun will come out tomorrow," and "keep your chin up." A popular idiom about



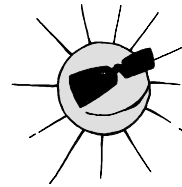
optimism is "seeing the world through rose-colored glasses." The exact origin of this idiom is still mysterious because of its colorful interpretations from various cultures spanning over 200 years. For fun, do a web search on "rose colored glasses" and see how many sources you get.

The oldest information I found dates back to the 1750's. Map drawers during this time period, much like today, had to be extremely meticulous when it came to condensing a lot of complex information into a small space. Although the glasses worn would probably be considered antiquated by modern standards, they were very useful back then, especially when precision was required. Sometimes a tiny dot represented a major area. When the glasses became dirty, spots on the lenses could inadvertently result in a map error.

Harsh cloth could not be used to clean the lenses because they would leave scratches that could lead to more errors. Convenient and handy, a rose petal was used to clean the glasses. Because of its silky texture, the petal cleaned remarkably well. It became common practice to use rose petals to wipe lenses. This enabled map drawers to see and work more clearly.

As this saying is used today, "seeing the world through rose-colored glasses" means to see things from an optimistic, positive, or clearer outlook. Although your daily challenges may not be as intricate and tedious as a map drawer's, we can all benefit from the idiom's meaning. The next time a situation has you down, take a step back, and look at it from a clear and optimistic perspective. You might be surprised at what you see. Even if your eyesight is less than perfect, you can benefit by seeing the world through rose-colored glasses!

YOU KNOW YOU ARE OPTIMISTIC IF YOU...



- Go to the airport without identification because you know security will let you board based on your honest face.
- Go to dinner at the most crowded restaurant in town without making a reservation because you know there will be someone in front of you who will cancel his/her reservation.
- Figure "What's the rush?" and avoid leaving early because there will be no traffic and every light will be green.
- Quit your job, then go buy one lottery ticket.
- Don't wear a watch because you know you will get there just in time.
- Already have your, "Wow! This is such a surprise!" speech for when Publishers Clearing House knocks on your door.
- Only swing at the third pitch when you play baseball.
- Drive 20 m.p.h. over the speed limit because you figure the police officer will understand that you are in a hurry.
- Arrive at a job interview with a box full of the things you will use to decorate your new office.
- Go ring shopping the day after a great first date.

ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

I have a person on my team who is so optimistic that she is unable to see reality. When I challenge her, I come out looking like the bad guy. Any realistic advice?
Real Person

Dear Real,

When your optimistic teammate insists that everything will be okay, ask open questions that begin with "how" or "what" in order to get information from her. Ask, "What information led you to this opinion?" Give information rather than your opinion. And while you're doing this, keep your body language relaxed and your voice low.



An optimist is a man who starts a crossword puzzle with a fountain pen.

Anonymous

Remember to...

- Use your missile to keep negative thoughts from destroying your day.
- Use PowerWords to replace negative words. When you're feeling defeated, tell yourself, "Succeed! Succeed! Succeed!"

To believe a thing impossible is to make it so.

Anonymous

Use your imagination not to scare yourself to death, but to inspire yourself to life.

Adele Brookman



The enemy is in front of us, behind us, to the left of us, and to the right of us. They can't escape this time.

Marine Lieutenant Lewis B. (Chesty) Puller

Happiness is not achieved by the conscious pursuit of happiness, it is generally the by-product of other activities.

Aldous Huxley

TLC, Talk Listen Communicate, LLC

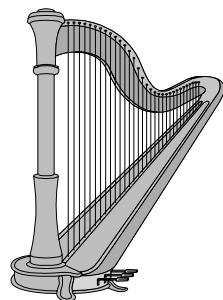
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CEO CORNER: THE DOWN SIDE OF BEING UP

By Beverly Inman-Ebel



I meet many people who tell me they don't want to be too optimistic because then they will be disappointed when things don't work out like they had hoped. Instead they choose to not get their hopes up, or worse, they choose to worry.

Their choice makes me sad because they are missing out on today's joy for fear of tomorrow's disappointment.

As a true optimist, I admit there is a down side to being up. A few months ago, I applied for a national harp scholarship. I practiced daily and pushed myself beyond my current skill level. I spent hours completing the application and demo tape. I eagerly awaited notification that I had won. I announced my intentions to my family and friends. I did not win. Funny thing, no one asked me about the results. I guess they heard my talents with a more realistic ear. Was I disappointed? You bet. Would I change my approach next time? Not a chance. Even though I did not win, I got better through the process.

Maybe you think I should have quietly entered the contest so that no one would know unless I won. I believe it is important to let people you care about know your aspirations. It is okay to not win. It is not okay not to try. I refuse to be a closet striver. I want people to know I am trying to improve, even if I fall short of total success.

In the interim between applying and receiving notification, I played my harp with more zeal. I envisioned being able to tell

my friends of how my hard work paid off. In other words, I enjoyed my hobby even more than before. I figure I had three months of happy preparation, and two months of joyful anticipation, versus only one day of disappointment. I would have been disappointed regardless of my choice of being optimistic or pessimistic.

So while there is a down side to being up, there is more of a down side to being down. What do you want to accomplish? You will never get there if you don't try. You'll have more fun if you imagine the positive possibilities. There is no such thing as failure from striving. There is only failure from being afraid of trying.

I encourage you to dream today. Imagine the results and throw yourself into the joy of the dream. The people who don't want to be optimistic before they win are usually miserable downplaying their success. Imagine the possibilities.... live your dreams!

FEATURED SERVICE: A TON OF FUN!!

If your team would benefit from some laughter, mild exercise, and time to reflect and share, then have TLC bring a day of Fun Team Building to your group! We can do a half to two-day team building session that will have your people talking about it for months to come. As with all our training, we study your group and take the time to understand what your team needs to move forward. We can provide this in a large conference room, or we can take you off-site and take advantage of a more relaxing atmosphere. You'll love it!! Call for specific quotes. 1-888-232-2873.

TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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