

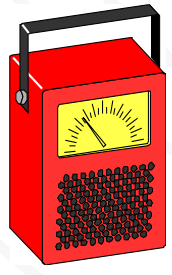


For Permanent & Positive Change

The Exchange

FEATURED TOPIC: OPTIMISM

How to Increase Your Optimistic Meter



In the United States, approximately 28% of the population is naturally optimistic. Lucky people. They see the glass half full. Even the dark clouds have silver linings. (See the article on this idiom.) Are they insane?

No. They see the positive possibilities before others can grasp the concept. Optimistic people are flexible and nimble. This allows them to handle change well and adapt to new ideas and programs.

If you are within the other 72%, what can you do to increase your level of optimism? Give the following some thought:

- » When bad things happen, look for the learning. When you lose, don't lose the lesson. When you can do this, you are able to see the positive result of an otherwise negative situation.
- » Start your day expecting some joy. When you have to get up before dawn during the winter months, plan to take a few moments to watch the sun rise and expect it to be glorious and colorful.
- » Smile. Don't wait for a reason to smile, just smile. It is catching and you are sure to get one back.
- » Check your routine and change it. Get accustomed to doing things differently. Move your trashcan. Wear your watch on the other wrist. These simple activities can remind you to adapt. And by the way, tell yourself that you have to laugh as you pick up the trash laying on the floor where your trash can used to be.
- » Surround yourself with optimistic people. Seek friends and relatives who bloom where they are planted.
- » Read uplifting books and quotes. Cut back on the news that is usually depressing.
- » Watch comedies. Laughter clears the vision and makes our troubles seem lighter.
- » Stop running the negative movies through your head. When a worrisome thought comes to your

head, send it packing by replacing it with a positive thought.

- » Reach out to someone in need. Being helpful makes us feel good about ourselves.
- » Dare to dream.
- » Get passionate about something—anything. Passion gets your creative juices flowing.

Being optimistic is often a problem with discipline. Make the decision to think positively. You just may be surprised how your thoughts feed your actions, your actions feed your results, and your results feed your thoughts. It is a circular process. Don't be left out. ❖

In The News



TLC was glad to assist WUTC Radio station in Chattanooga in supporting its programming during a recent challenge. WUTC received \$1,906.00 as a direct result of TLC's contribution. Our two winners were:

1. Leasa McKay of Ringgold, GA, who won a seat for the November Season Tickets seminar "Meetings That Matter." (A \$333.00 value.)
2. Dr. Michael Lainey of Cleveland, TN, won a free night's lodging at Spring Creek Retreat. (A \$245.00 value.)

Congratulations to these winners and a huge "thanks" to WUTC/NPR 88 Radio. You can visit them at www.wutc.org.

In other news, Vincent Phipps was selected for the 2005-2006 Edition of "40 Under 40." This annual recognition program of the Chattanooga Times/Free Press Newspaper reviews the professional accomplishments of Chattanooga professionals under the age of 40. Hundreds of prestigious profiles are reviewed with only the top 40 individuals being selected. Vincent is the only Interpersonal Communication Coach/Consultant and Professional Speaker of those selected this year! ❖

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Looking Forward

Our next issue will focus on Remembering What's Important.

Looking Back

You might also be interested in our April 2004 edition: [The Power of Laughter](#) or read other [previous issues of The Exchange](#).

For Permanent & Positive Change

The Brighter Side of a Broken Neck

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

This year I have much to be optimistic about; a New Year, a new outlook, and a new neck. A few months ago, I was in a near fatal car accident that resulted in a broken neck. I was going to write, “a severely broken neck,” but is there a mild way to break your neck?

Fortunately, I will fully recover in a year and have already returned to work. There was a time that I lied on my back for several weeks with limited mobility, enduring excruciating pain, and having to be totally dependent on my nine-year-old daughter, best friends, and parents for my most basic needs. One of the worlds’ biggest optimists was hit with his greatest physical and mental challenge. I pondered, “What is the positive side of this?”

Here is the list I came up with (I had plenty of time to think about it!):

- » I learned just how many wonderful people are affected by my simple life. Thank you all for your cards, phone calls, emails, meals, flowers, and drop-ins. It was like attending my funeral but being able to enjoy it!
- » I now know new types of music, have new favorite authors, and am pondering over some new ideas. My parents have told me since I was a child, “Boy, you better slow down one day before you break your neck!” As usual, they were right!
- » Life is a blessing! Whether on your back on a beach or in a hospital bed, life itself is a good gift.

My optimism was put to the challenge. At first, I failed. I had pity parties, “why me’s”, “this is not fair”, blah – blah – blah. Thanks to the help of some very special people, (un-welcomed help at first), instead of an attitude adjustment, I was given an attitude overhaul!

It took weeks to see the optimistic side of my accident:

- » The pain is now a pleasant reminder that I am not paralyzed.
- » The lost time is a great indicator of how short life can be.
- » The new financial obligations to the hospital, surgeons, emergency technicians, etc. are continual reminders of how many people worked hard to keep me here.

My optimism is now as zealous as ever, maybe even more! In short, I could go on and be negative about what I lost in this accident, but instead, it is a lot more productive to focus on what I still have and what I’ve gained! ❖

Just What Is Optimism?

Flossie was a senior citizen living in an assisted living community. This establishment had more female residents than males due to the life term differences. You can imagine the excitement when a handsome elderly gentleman was escorted into the residential dining room and introduced as a new resident. He was seated at Flossie’s table that she shared with two other women.

The man struck up a conversation with the women, but Flossie was unable to contribute. She appeared to be in a trance. She sat with her elbow propped on the table and her head held in her hand while she gazed longingly at the new resident. Finally, he spoke to her directly, “Excuse me, Madam, but I think you are staring at me and it is making me uncomfortable.”

Flossie replied, “I am staring. I can’t help myself. You look just like him. Everything you do. The way you raise your eyebrows when you are excited, your gestures you make with your hands, the way you dab your napkin to your mouth – everything reminds me of him!”

“Who, Madam?”

“Why, my third husband, of course!”

“Good gracious, woman! How many times have you been married?”

Flossie batted her eyelids, still clinging to his gaze, and replied, “Twice.”

Now that is a great demonstration of optimism. It is the anticipation or expectation of a positive outcome. In this New Year, anticipate good results! ❖

Welcome New Team Member!

TLC welcomes Therese Padgett as our new Director of Client Relations. Therese comes to us after many years in sales and customer service. She is a graduate of Emory University. For fun, she works out three times a week and enjoys hanging out with her cat, Manasseh. Therese can be reached at 423-622-8255, Extension 805, or tap@talklisten.com. ❖

Helpful Hints

- ✓ Focus on what you want instead of what you fear.
- ✓ Look for options or alternatives.
- ✓ Smile at mistakes.

“A pessimist is one who makes difficulties of his opportunities and an optimist is one who makes opportunities of his difficulties.”

Harry Truman

For Permanent & Positive Change

Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining

When it comes to optimism, one of the most common expressions is, “every cloud has a silver lining.” Science tells us that 3 out of every 10 people will be a natural optimist. But, what do clouds having a silver lining (or any lining at all) have to do with positive thinking?



This saying, originally a meteorological term, dates back to the beginning of the last century. The primary indicator of an approaching storm was the visual graying or darkening of the sky. The darker or grayer the clouds, the worse the storm was predicted. Many feared these dark storms due to the damage they could cause. The “silver lining” was the hint of light peaking out of even the darkest cloud. Since the sun was always out, but not always seen, it was optimistic to say, “every cloud has a silver lining” no matter how dark or gloomy the sky may appear.

This expression evolved to mean that no matter how bleak a situation may appear, there is always a positive factor. Remember, you cannot always change your situation, but you can always change yourself! ❖

Featured Service: Individual Coaching

TLC provides executive coaching to individuals who want to receive a complete evaluation with measurable goals that are established and reached! No two individuals are the same, so this service allows complete focus on what your needs are. When organizations request coaching for an individual, the first step is for the coach to talk with the manager of the individual to determine expectations and background. The coach will periodically contact the manager to give progress reports and to gather input. The conversations that occur during the coaching sessions are confidential.

What are our clients saying about this service? “It is so helpful. I only wish I’d discovered it a week earlier before I had to pay the high price of a misunderstanding.” (Noreen Dagliano, Hagerstown, Maryland).

Two of TLC’s Governing Values are important to mention here:

- » Confidentiality. We respect clients’ privacy by obtaining permission before disclosing information.
- » Exceed client satisfaction. We work with clients through and beyond challenges.

Start now. It is a new year. Make the most of it by signing up for individual coaching. Call 1-888-BECAUSE or 423-622-TALK (8255). ❖

What Our Clients Are Saying

“What I liked most about the day was learning how to productively plan to reach a goal.”

Kim Walker, Chattanooga, TN

Ask The Experts

Dear TLC,

I am in sales. Lately, I have questioned my ability because of my lack of closure on some business deals. My supervisor and department have all been supportive but I know better results are expected. My pessimist feeling, “They’re not gonna buy it,” permeates my attitude and is now affecting me on even the sure deals. What can I do in my job to be more optimistic about the outcome before I go into my next sales call?

Glass Half Empty

Dear Glass,

Your confidence problem is common, especially in a results-oriented profession like sales. Instead of changing your job, change yourself. Prevent negative, self-diminishing thoughts (such as calling yourself “Glass Half Empty”). Focus less on what you fear and more on what you can gain. Pull from an old memory of when you were at your best. Chances are, your self-confidence played a role in your success. Make a list of where you are strong and an action plan for your weaknesses. Give yourself talks to boost your esteem and place your energy toward successful outcomes. You may have to do this repeatedly, but we are what we think. See it in your mind, and then let your mind be seen by others!

Remember To

- ✓ Have a back-up plan to handle unforeseen problems.
- ✓ Prepare a solution for the question, “What’s the worst that could happen?”
- ✓ Laugh out loud! If it will be funny later, laugh now!

“The average pencil is seven inches long, with just a half-inch eraser - in case you thought optimism was dead.”

Robert Brault

“The happiest people don’t necessarily have the best of everything. They just make the best of everything.”

For Permanent & Positive Change

CEO CORNER: "Trust Me"

By Beverly Inman-Ebel, MA CCC-SLP

Last November, I applied for a contest for small business owners to increase their revenue to \$1,000,000.00. The carrot offered was free mentoring for an entire year from very successful and powerful business leaders. Of the applicants all across the country, only ten would be selected to compete and half of those would win the prize. Did I mention that the event was being held in The Big Apple?

None of these facts dissuaded me from entering. I was confident and optimistic that I would be selected. I could see it being placed in this newsletter in our section titled, "In the News". I even purchased a plane ticket to New York in anticipation of the show down. I was so optimistic that during the month of November I announced that I was applying for this during a keynote speech. I told a room full of total strangers to motivate them to take a risk and build their confidence.

I received a voice mail upon my return from the Thanksgiving break thanking me for applying, but informing me that unfortunately I was not selected as one of the ten contenders. I was surprised, truly not expecting such an outcome. I had a private pity party for about thirty minutes. During that time, it occurred to me how many people I had told about my big plans. Would I have told them if I thought I would lose? No, probably not.

Slowly, the reality of losing dawned upon me. Instead of being embarrassed that I had blabbed before confirmation, I realized I was so optimistic because I firmly believed I could do it. What was the "it" I thought I could do? Win a contest or increase my business to a million dollars? Building the business was the ideal treasure (it) for me.

So what if others did not see what I saw? Gradually, my optimism returned along with a tremendous amount of energy put towards building a more solid plan. I still need help. The Chairman of our board will be there for me. I am looking for mentors with financial

background, marketing, public relations, and strategic planning. Maybe someone who reads this article will help. We are going to be reaching out to current and former clients to find out what you think we do best and to get better at all that we do. My goal is to reach \$1,000,000.00 gross by December 31, 2008.

Here I go again telling everyone. I'm scared some days. I doubt my ability and even my desire. Those are tough days. I am getting stronger. If it was easy, everyone would be doing it. Being scared and having tough days are good for me. Optimism: expecting a positive outcome. Even though I did not win the contest, a positive outcome is still on the horizon. And because of that, I still believe.

What about you? What goals do you have? What risks are you willing to take? How optimistic are you? Imagine. Plan. Be optimistic. Live your dreams! ❖



Happy Birthday!

A very happy birthday to our clients whose birthdays are in January:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Johnny Danley | Boyce Williams |
| Donna A. Suter | Rick Perry |
| Lee Gill | Ed Roddy |
| Algia Mays | Erik Droutman |
| Todd Wiedman | Anne McAfee |
| Rick Hatfield | Kathy A. Cline-Doten |
| Wayne Lockhart | Rosanne Gambill |
| Greg Johnson | Sharon Petry |
| Joyce King-Lavinder | |

"An optimist stays up until midnight to see the New Year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves."

Bill Vaughan

"In the long run the pessimist may be proved right, but the optimist has a better time on the trip."

Daniel L. Reardon

"When it is darkest, the stars come out."

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 e-mail 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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