

## Lesson 1 Optimists vs. Pessimists

If you were to live your life to the fullest, what would you first have to do to make this happen? In other words, what areas of your life need the most work? What is it about your life you love and what do you hate? I have a simple way of answering these questions. Let's start with how you perceive your world so you can identify where your weaknesses are.

### **Definition of Optimism vs. Pessimism**

Are you generally an optimist or a pessimist?

Optimists believe that the world is a positive place, that setbacks are temporary, that problems are challenges to overcome, and that each individual plays an active part in what happens in his/her life. Optimistic people have fewer infectious diseases, stronger immune systems, overall better health habits, and live longer.

Pessimists believe that things are generally bad and that they can become even worse. They feel that when bad things happen it's permanent and that it will always persist and affect their life.

The core of a pessimist's attitude is helplessness and that nothing they do will make a difference, so why even try.

Most of us are caught somewhere in between, but if you find yourself gravitating towards the negative more often, you may need to look at your overall perspective.

## Be an Inner Grinner

Optimists feel happy inside. Pessimists generally don't. That may seem overly simplistic, but what that means is that optimists just feel good about things. Pessimists like to complain, feel sorry for themselves and get others to feel sorry for them, as well. However, they can be taught to be optimists by learning a new set of cognitive skills (beliefs, attitudes, habits of thinking). Walter Winchell once said, "An optimist is a man who gets treed by a lion, but enjoys the scenery." You can learn to internalize this perspective into your life, by being aware of how you're reacting to what's going on around you.

The following shows the difference between how optimists and pessimists think

Optimists are winners.	Pessimists are losers
"I can do it"	"I can't do it"
"Things could be worse"	"Things could be better"
Falls, but gets up again	Falls, and stays down
Learns from mistakes	Repeats same mistakes
Open to new experiences	Closed and fearful
Appreciates the process	Impatient – looks for immediate results
Makes commitments	Makes promises
Success based on ability	Success based on luck
Perseveres	Gives up
Flexible	Rigid
"Sees the donut"	"Sees the holes"
Takes responsibility	Blames others

Henry Ford said, "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you are right." The bottom line is this: When you think something and believe it, your brain automatically filters all information from your world and searches for ways to confirm your belief, regardless of what it is. Therefore, if you perceive your world as a harsh, unfair place, it's necessary for you to train your mind to think differently.