

COACHING

Reaping the Rewards of Optimism and A Good Attitude

by Carol Hartman, M.B.A.

Have you ever wondered why some people always view the glass as half empty while others see it as half full? According to University of Pennsylvania Psychology Professor Martin Seligman, “Life inflicts the same setbacks and tragedies on the optimist as on the pessimist, but the optimist weathers them better. How we view adversity is a learned behavior influenced by ingrained beliefs we may not even be aware of.”

Seligman suggests that we periodically stop and take a good look at how we deal with the routine problems in our lives. If we find ourselves leaning toward pessimism, we can actively take steps to reprogram our old “gloom-and-doom” thought patterns with what he calls “learned optimism.” The good news is that an optimistic attitude is easy to maintain once we get into the habit.

Wally Amos, founder of the Famous Amos Cookie Company has been promoting good cheer through his business for the past 20 years. His formula for bouncing back from adversity includes the following:

- Don't become part of the problem. Focus on answers and solutions.
- Concentrate on the worthwhile things in life. Don't waste time obsessing about the negatives.
- Allow every experience to open us up to what we need to learn. Realize that every situation is an education.
- Consciously practice living in the present. The past cannot be changed nor the future predicted. It is present that counts.
- Engage in acts of selflessness. They not only provide emotional and spiritual support, but also establish us as valuable members in the community.
- Practice responsibility, honesty, and integrity at all times. What we express comes back to us. It's the Law of Cause and Effect.

Philosopher William James once said, “Believe, and your belief will in time create the fact.” W. Clement Stone says that the ultimate secret to success is to keep our mind on the things we want, and off the things that we don't want.

Just remember that in all situations, whether we have a positive or a negative attitude is a matter of choice. Why not pick a positive one? The end result for us? A healthier, happier, more rewarding life, enjoyed to the fullest, one day at a time.



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