



Choose Optimism

Lesson Content

So which one are you? A pessimist or an optimist? Or are you one of those people who think it doesn't really matter? Well let's define each one first. Pessimists tend to believe the bad things that happen affect everything in life and are due to being dumb or unlucky; in other words, it's a permanent condition and it's who they are.

Optimists tend to believe the bad things that happen are temporary blips on the screen-of-life and are due to the mistakes they make, but it's NOT who they are. They know that circumstances can be changed next time around and they're determined to make an adjustment in the future.

Experiments show that pessimists tend to give up more quickly, and optimists tend to do better in school and in sports.

Pessimists explain things that happen like this:

"I'm so dumb." "I always make mistakes like that."

Optimists are more likely to say:

"I wasn't thinking on that one." "I'm having an off day."

The big news is that pessimists can learn to be optimists using a simple skill: Learn to argue with yourself! When you hear your brain say something like "I'm so bad at tests", immediately argue back by reminding yourself of the times you've done well. If your brain says, "I always blow it in games", learn to stand up for yourself by pointing out a fact that proves it's not true. "I made a great play last week!"

Correct the brain about the lies it tells. When you learn the skills of non-negative thinking you'll be more optimistic and the benefits are huge!

Research shows that optimistic people not only win more often, but they are noticeably better under pressure, AND better when they have to overcome obstacles.

Remember, this kind of thinking is a choice we make. Choose to be an optimistic thinker when bad things happen. Use your brain as a powerful friend, not a devious opponent.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:
Student will identify optimistic and pessimistic responses and learn how to benefit from optimistic choices.

INSTRUCTIONS:
Distribute page two of the handout to students after viewing the video.

CONSIDER THESE TRUTHS:

- Some thoughts come from our brain without our permission.
- We can choose to immediately correct or replace a thought.
- Your brain is a tool you've been given to control.
- You are not the mistakes you make.
- Optimistic people have learned to view mistakes as temporary circumstances.



Choose Optimism Worksheet

Record your pessimistic and optimistic thoughts below.

1

Pessimistic explanations
of mistakes often sound
like this:

Answers to share with class

Sometimes I choose to say...

Optimistic explanations
of mistakes often sound
like this:

Sometimes I choose to say...

2

A specific argument I need
to have with myself is
about

_____:
(choose an area of your life in which
you are often pessimistic)

When my pessimistic self says...

My optimistic self could say...