

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Can You be an Optimistic Realist?

By Susan Dunn

Can You be an Optimistic Realist? by Susan Dunn, MA, Life & EQ Coach

One question you might have when you read this title is, "Why I want to be an optimist?" Or, even, "How could I be optimistic with life the way it is?" or "Who could be an optimist in today's world?"

And "today's world" may mean to you that office you work in that's so hopelessly understaffed and disorganized, or your inept boss, or terrorism, starvation and violence in the world, your personal inadequacies for facing your personal challenges, the lack of help around the house, your hyper 2 year old twin boys, spending your days reeling among the emotional states of your teenagers, your midlife-crisis spouse, and your aging mother, or any of the above.

I was reminded of this dilemma when I was cornered the other morning by a young woman who needed to get in my face about the fact that her husband had gotten in her face that morning about the "idiocy" of watching the Prince Charles thing when there were more important things going on in the world.

By the end of his tirade he had listed terrorism, cancer, the national budget crisis, and the legal system as things more worthy of our attention that were, at the same time, hopelessly screwed up. By the end of his tirade, her husband's "pessimistic attitude" had been added to the list, as having "ruined" her day. And, had I allowed it, I could've added to the list that her retelling of the war story had "ruined" mine.

Let's face it: it's easier to be cynical. It's also more realistic to be cynical.

If you're the kind of person who has a need to be right, betting that the work project will be screwed up, that the marriage will never last, and that Bush will make another decision that will fail to make the world perfect are surer bets than the opposite.

And so, if you're negative and pessimistic, you'll more often be right. But look at what else you'll get: you'll attract to yourself people who feel the same way and will join you in a negative downward spiral; you'll be quick to blame anything but yourself, leaving yourself feeling hopeless and helpless as well as

Can You be an Optimistic Realist?

angry; you'll waste a lot of time belaboring the obvious; and you'll also stress yourself and your immune system.

Negative thinking leads to negative emotions which bring on physiological reactions which can damage your health in the short-term and in the long-term.

Being optimistic doesn't mean not being realistic.

It means making choices that influence outcomes, because they can also be self-fulfilling. If you're sure your secretary is going to fail you again, she will. We are all influenced by the energy around us, and who can function when someone is hovering around them who thinks she or he is "an idiot"? Also, if you're determined she will fail you, you must make that happen to defend your ego, and so what else can you think when it's over? She failed you.

Realism would say - if you truly hired the wrong person, don't be a victim. Take care of the problem.

If you hired a person who, like everyone else, has good days and bad, works in an imperfect system, has to try and read your mind and accommodate to your admittedly difficult disposition at times, and is over-worked, don't play the victim - look at the system and see what you can do to make things work better, assuming (optimistically) that this is possible, i.e., things will never be perfect, but they can generally be improved upon, and YOU are the one to do it.

You could start, in that instance, with your own attitude and expectations.

In fact, if you want to make the world a better place, start with your secretary's "world." Get it?

Pragmatically speaking - that is, if you want to function in the real world - an optimistic view works better. It gives you the energy to make things happen, because it gives you positive emotional energy.

Functionally-speaking, it is wiser to be optimistic. Optimism is a tool, therefore. If you can still that voice in your head that says everything stinks, you can begin to see what you can do about things as they are, some of which, yes, "stink," but not all.

If you're plagued by the suffering of terrorism and tsunamis, for instance, set aside a time to figure out what YOU can do about them. You will quickly realize the dilemma of world leaders who actually have to do this on a grand scale; but you will also find small things you can do in your own world to address these ills. Call your local Red Cross. They've been waiting for your call.

IN THE MEANTIME, keep your own life going in a positive direction, with optimism. If you're determined that you can't be happy until all the ills of the world have been addressed, you'll be a long time waiting. You will also fail to address what you can address, because of lamenting over larger things which basically are beyond your control.

If you want to turn around your attitude, turn your face in another direction. To focus on what's right about things doesn't mean you don't KNOW what things are wrong, or how wrong they are. It means you're making a choice about your own portion of the world, your responsibility in it, and your outlook.

Can You be an Optimistic Realist?

Does it help "the world" if you go on a tirade first thing in the morning and dump all your frustration on your spouse? Of course not. Remember you and your spouse are also a part of "the world."

From an objective position, the young man mentioned above has a good job, a nice home, plenty of food, clothing and necessities, and a lovely wife who was cheerful, lovely, and dressed to go to her job for the day. That's a scene half the people in this will never have.

Optimism means, in the words of Faulkner, not "slaying the real for the unreal." The moment this young man had was real, and it was good. Then he got into his own head and dragged up all the reasons he could think of to be unhappy; reasons which exist and are available to all of us, but so is the contentment of the immediate reality.

It's almost like he takes pride in being able to figure out there are ills in the world, as if he were only one who knew this and were concerned about it.

For an example of what your self-talk does to you, consider this scenario. Let's say Fred is feeling low.

He thinks his life is impossible; it contains the usual array of hard work, too much stress, arguments with his wife and kids, a puppy that won't get house-broken, and a home plumbing system that keeps backing up.

However, his job, wife and kids are all within "the normal range." He walks outside and has a chat with his neighbor. The neighbor has a 23 year old son who is schizophrenic and lives with him and his wife. They are retired, living on a limited income, and suffering health problems. Most of us would say, "There but for the grace of God go I," and go back inside with a prayer for the neighbor, but a sense of gratitude for our own set of problems, which is much smaller and somehow seems, now, more manageable.

Fred, the pessimist, however, goes back inside feeling lower than ever, having decided that if the world is that awful, why try at all.

Pessimism has its roots in our beliefs, which feed into our expectations. If a perfect world is one of your beliefs, or the feeling that you can't be happy until you live in a perfect world, why not take it out and have another look. Write down your core beliefs and then go over them with optimism and pessimism in mind.

Now, in Spanish there are two "to be" verbs. One, *ser*, means a permanent state, such as, I am a woman. *Soy mujer*. The other is for temporary states, such as, I am furious. *Estoy enojada*. English doesn't make this distinction by means of different verbs, but I will close this using "be" in the `state' sense, not `trait' sense: You can be pessimistic [trait] and still survive. We all know people who are and do. But it may be necessary to be optimistic [state] if you want to thrive.

Learn about optimism and have it available. Be able to change your self-talk and attitude. This flexibility will develop your emotional intelligence, and in the long run, the happiness you save may be your own.

Can You be an Optimistic Realist?

©Susan Dunn, MA, Life & EQ Coach, <http://www.susandunn.cc> . Offering coaching, Internet courses and ebooks for your personal and professional development. I train and certify EQ coaches. Mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc for FREE ezine.

One Step at a Time in the Job Search

By Marilyn Tellez

What is the first step to take in a job search?

Let's start with "Who Am I?" If the job seeker can answer that question easily, then the rest of what to do, comes easily.

It is often the hardest thing to do in a job quest, or anything else in life.

Answering this question cannot be answered by a recitation of job roles. Job roles are what a person did in a job; the tasks performed.

The "Who Am I?" question has to be answered by an analysis from the job seeker, of just who the person is. Is the job searcher riddled by anxiety? Then, it is wise to admit that being anxious is a part of the personality makeup. We are to assume that it does not interfere with performing a job. Is the job seeker optimistic? Then that part of the personality can be emphasized in the job seeker and let that QUALITY be a part of the what the job seeker offers in a job.

Any personality trait, from pessimistic or optimistic, cannot be hidden away for long. So, answering the "Who Am I?" question is to be dealt with honestly and PRECISELY. Without knowing oneself well, the rest of the job search is just an empty exercise.

Employers look for whole people who often have quirks, possess good qualities, and able to do the tasks the job entails. Whole job seekers have a less stressful time looking for a job! They are always impressive!

Marilyn J. Tellez, M.A.
Certified Job & Career Transition Coach
Web:

www.doitnowcareers.info

Email:

doitnow@nwinform.net

Can You be an Optimistic Realist?



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!