



Be optimistic ... they're watching.

Optimists believe that things will work out okay in the future, that others are on their side and that setbacks are only temporary. Pessimists, by contrast, hold the view that their efforts in life will fail and that misfortune is to be expected. No doubt you know people that fall into one camp or the other, but do you know that optimism can be learned and you can teach it to the people you care about?

Optimism isn't positive thinking! It's hopeful expectation...

Winton Churchill said, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Pessimists tend to interpret things in **generalised ways** and make it **mean something about them**. If a recipe fails, a pessimist may interpret this to mean, "I'm a terrible cook. I never make anything worth eating." An optimist would think, "That's strange, I wonder if there was something wrong with that **recipe** or if an **ingredient was missing?**" Because they don't interpret the poor outcome to be about them (The recipe not turning out means **I can't cook!**), the optimist doesn't interpret the setback as failure or rejection and they're not afraid to try again and expect a better outcome. Same scenario but a very different experience.

Optimism buffers in difficult experiences

Teaching children to have an optimistic outlook is like immunising against depression, protecting them from patterns associated with low self worth and feelings of hopelessness. Those little eyes are constantly watching to see how you react when things go wrong and the **meanings you attach** to the day-to-day experience of life. Being more aware of unhelpful reactions will help you identify if someone in the family is often pessimistic. One sign might be that they struggle to stick with things. If you have a tendency to be pessimistic, try asking questions like, "How else could I look at this?" or "Is this really a complete disaster or just a temporary setback?" Look for evidence for how you're feeling and if you struggle to gain a useful perspective in a situation, don't be afraid to ask for help. Be sure to ask an optimist so they can help you see that things will work out okay in the end!

Bare Hands is run by allied health professionals committed to helping women embrace positive change by providing access to practical education. To find out more give us a call, email us or visit www.barehands.com.au.

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- ✓ Protect your family against depression with an optimistic outlook
- ✓ Optimists enjoy better overall health
- ✓ Practice and perseverance are the key to learning

"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."

Helen Keller

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