

LEARNING

DEVELOPMENT & SUCCESS

OPTIMISTIC MINDSET WORKSHEET

Why do some people give up when they encounter difficulty while others persevere and grow? One answer is their interpretation of why they failed. How you view your successes and failures makes all the difference on your self-confidence and ability to bounce back from adversity. Successful people are optimistic, do not ruminate on their failures, and tend to see problems as things to be solved and an opportunity to hone their skills.

Instructions:

Think of a recent time when you personally experienced 1) a negative event and 2) a positive event and write these down. Then, go through each of the six questions below and circle choice a. or b. to see if you view your success or failure more as an optimist or pessimist. If you find that you react more as a pessimist, work on changing your mindset to see things in a more optimistic way.

Negative Event you experienced (e.g., loss, setback, failure, poor performance):

How do you explain this NEGATIVE event?

1. Was the negative event:
 - a. caused by you and your inadequacies (e.g., lack of ability) (**Pessimist**) OR
 - b. due to factors outside of your control (e.g., adverse conditions, tough opponent) or to factors that are within your control that you have the power to change in the future (e.g., things about yourself that you can improve) (**Optimist**)

2. Because of this one negative event:
 - a. negative events are now inevitable or more likely to happen in other parts of your life (**Pessimist**) OR
 - b. this negative event is specific to this one situation and has nothing to do with other areas of your life (**Optimist**)

3. Does this negative event mean:
 - a. more negative events (e.g., failure, losses) will come (**Pessimist**) OR
 - b. this event was a fluke, a temporary setback; what caused my failure today will not continue to affect me in the future (**Optimist**)

LEARNING

DEVELOPMENT & SUCCESS

Positive Event you experienced (e.g., success, good performance):

How do you explain this POSITIVE event?

4. Did the positive event:
 - a. happen because of you (e.g., your ability, your effort) (**Optimist**) OR
 - b. happen because of things that are out of your control (e.g., luck, poor competitor)? (**Pessimist**)

5. Is this positive event evidence that:
 - a. more positive things will happen in other areas of your life (**Optimist**) OR
 - b. is it a fluke that is isolated to this one event? (**Pessimist**)

6. Is this positive event evidence that:
 - a. more success is to come and more positive things will happen in your future; you will have future success (**Optimist**) OR
 - b. it won't last; it was luck; it was random; positive things (success) probably won't happen again? (**Pessimist**)

Three ways I can practice a more optimistic mindset are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Adapted with permission of Winona State University: www.winona.edu/resilience