

An aerial view of a large outdoor market at night, filled with numerous colorful tents in various colors like red, blue, yellow, green, and purple. The tents are arranged in a grid-like pattern, creating a vibrant and busy scene. The word "OPTIMISM" is overlaid in large, yellow, serif font across the center of the image.

OPTIMISM

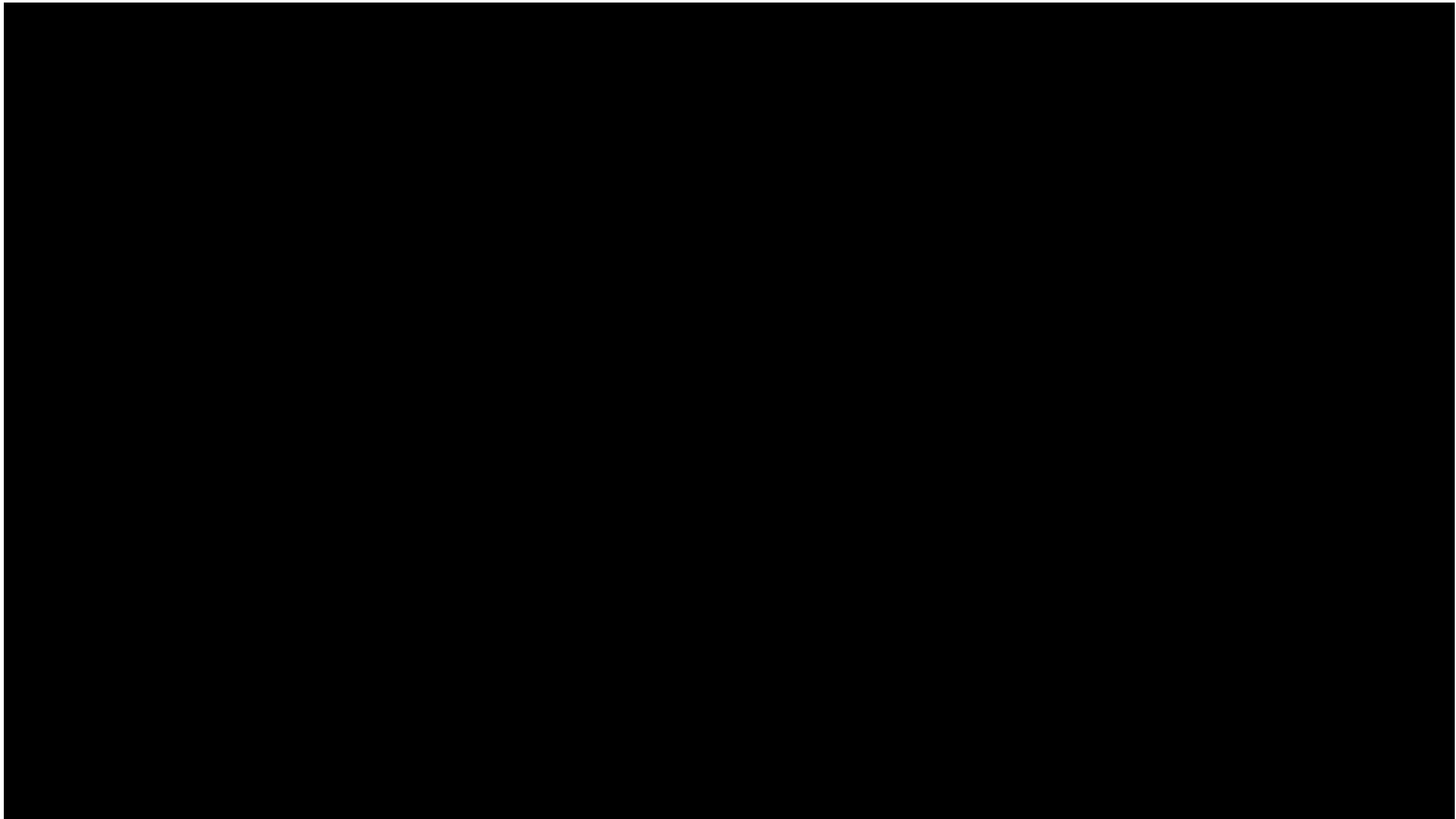
**EXTENT TO WHICH PEOPLE HOLD
GENERALIZED FAVORABLE
EXPECTANCIES FOR THEIR FUTURE.**

Dispositional Optimism

- **Optimism** is the faith that leads to achievement...no pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit'. Helen Keller (1880 – 1968)
- Tendency to expect **positive outcomes** even in the face of **obstacles**.
- Optimists are individuals who **expect good things** to happen to them
- Pessimists are those who **expect bad things** to happen to them
- **Dispositional optimism** is a global expectation that **more good (desirable) things than bad (undesirable)** will happen in the future

Optimism

- Increases capacity to *positively reappraise situations* that initially appear negative
- Reframing allows hardship to be seen as a challenge to find opportunity embedded in adversity
- *Realistic optimism* - 'tendency to maintain a positive outlook within the constraints of the available measurable phenomena situated in the physical and social world'.
- Realism: relationship between available knowledge and understanding at any given moment, possible choices and chosen actions.
- Realistic optimism – *do not deny the difficulty* being faced, but tend to look for the silver lining



Downside of Optimism

- **Optimism bias:** knowledge evaluation skewed in predictable, positive and *self-serving* ways. More weight is given to information if it favors the self, or it supports a desired conclusion
- Optimist's relative inattention to detail, failure to seek new information and *selective inattention* to unpromising data lead to poorly informed decisions
- Optimism bias is a cause of a chronic inability to accurately anticipate costs of big projects
- Extreme optimists have much shorter-term financial horizons, save less, work shorter hours, exhibit *less financial self control* and are less likely to pay off credit card balances
- *Rationalizing beliefs* leading to harmful risks such as smoking and believing risk of cancer is remote
- High general optimism of boys, is a contributory factor to *accidental injury* which is the leading cause of death in childhood

Benefits of Optimism

- Less psychological distress
 - Less Depression
 - Better health outcomes
- Deal with stressors more actively and more adaptively
 - More academic and professional success
 - More successful social relationships
 - **Better functioning due to:**
 - problem-focused coping strategies &
 - more effective ways of emotional regulation
 - **Enhanced career success due to:**
 - greater comfort with their educational and career related plans,
 - engage in activities that enhance their career insight
 - Greater career planning and exploration,
 - More decided about career & more career goals



Decision-Making Styles

- Decision-making style is tendency to deal with choices according to personal tendencies.
- Process of **choosing between different alternatives** while pursuing one's goal.
- **Doubtfulness:**
 - emotional interference such as worry and anxiety regarding choices
 - negative emotionality, uncertainty.
- **Delegation:**
 - tendency to attribute to others (significant or not) the responsibility of choice
 - dependent style and avoidance
 - external locus of control.
- **Procrastination:**
 - to avoid or delay beginning or advancing through the career decision-making process.
- **No problem:**
 - rational style , logic, and vigilance
 - ability to define objectives, to plan actions, to seek information, and to evaluate alternatives carefully.

Optimism – Cultivate positive thoughts

- Learned optimism is a concept that says we can change our attitude and behaviors by recognizing and *challenging negative self-talk*
- Opposite of *learned helplessness*: person believes they are incapable of changing their circumstances after repeatedly experiencing a stressful event
- Train ourselves to think or *insert positive thoughts* and avoid dwelling on negative ones
- Savoring and holding the positive thought in the forefront of our attention for 10 or 20 seconds
- Cultivate friendship with positive people
- Optimism (or pessimism) can be contagious

Why Optimism or Pessimism?

- ***Attention & information processing***
- How we process information & selective attention
- Glass is either ***half full*** or ***half empty*** depends on your focus
- If thirsty, you pay more attention to its presence than its absence, filtering out the cues that don't correspond with your positive outlook.
- Pessimists spending more time looking at unpleasant cues

Why Optimism or Pessimism?

- **Locus of control**

- Confidence that we can change or control elements of our lives.

- ***Internal locus of control:***

- belief that you can take an active role in controlling things like exam results, work performance, and your environment.

- ***External locus of control:***

- Belief that outside factors control their outcomes. Tend to feel helpless about changing their relationships, lives.

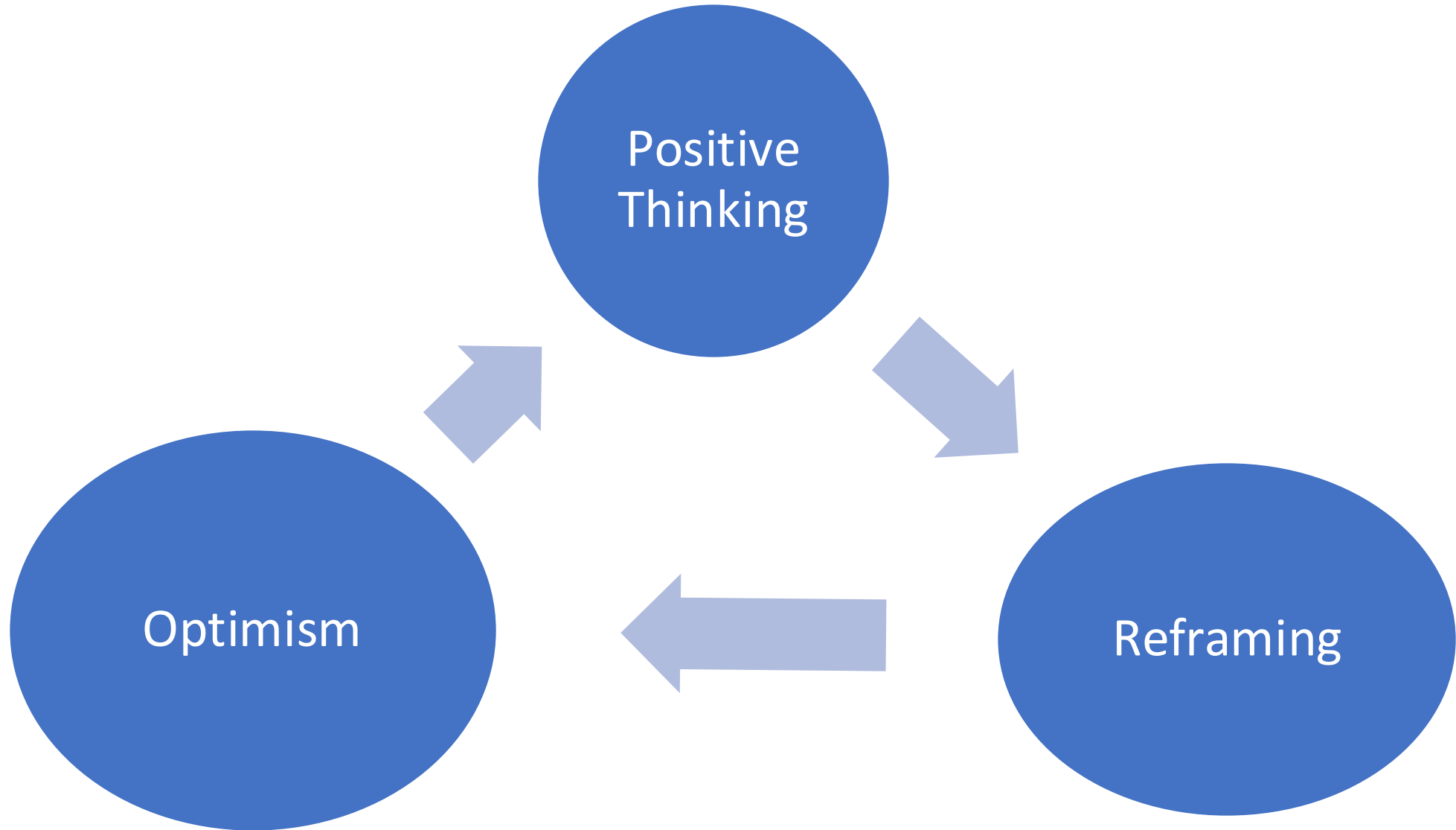
Why Optimism or Pessimism?

- **Attributional style**
- **Negative outcomes:**
 - Explain or attribute failure to ***internal, fixed, personal factors***, we see them as uncontrollable. A failed relationship, for example, becomes “I’m not lovable” – ***pessimistic*** outlook.
 - Attribute failure to ***external, localized, and transient circumstances***, we can feel hopeful for better results next time. “I didn’t beat my personal best because I was sick, but I’ll run faster when I’m well.” – ***optimistic*** outlook.
- **Positive outcomes**, but the other way around.
- Viewing good results as due to ***internal, fixed, personal factors***, is optimistic. “I aced that because I’m a great student.”
- Attributing them to ***temporary and uncontrollable*** causes is pessimistic. “Wow, that was a one-off. It’s downhill from here.” is pessimistic

Cognitive distortions – The 3 Ps

- Personalization, Pervasiveness, Permanence
- **Personalization**: an internal vs. external attribution style. If something bad happens, a pessimist will attribute it to internal factors. They'll see that failure or setback as something that's their fault, personalizing the outcome. Optimists externalize instead; they aren't to blame, and next time may be better.
- **Pervasiveness** is global or specific element of adversity or a negative event. A global or pervasive attribution is pessimistic = catastrophizing. "I did a terrible job; I'll never be hired again – EVER." more inclined to believe that it will impact other aspects of their lives, too. "It means I'm a bad student, too, and unlovable (again)." Optimists see positive events as pervasive, it can be argued, rather than negative ones.
- **Permanence** is whether we view a negative situation as fleeting or lasting and unchangeable. A pessimistic style : "I'll always be a terrible test taker. It's just who I am." A positive one sounds more like: "I probably didn't do so well on the test because I did not study enough, but I'll be back on top soon." The key takeaway here is that the situation or circumstances are not fixed or unchangeable.

Positive Thinking / Reframing



Positive Thinking / Reframing

Reframing

Learning to
correctly
identify
negative
thinking

Answer the
negative
thinking
back

Refute the
negative
thinking

Reframing
the
negative by
focusing on
the positive

Challenge pessimistic selves to become positive thinkers.

A – Adversity or paying attention to any adverse incidents, thoughts, and feelings.

B – Beliefs and how they get impacted by pessimistic thoughts.

C – Consequences of negative thoughts and feelings.

D – Dispute or confronting the negative thoughts and attempting to change them.

E – Energizing the self to be more optimistic in the future.

Positive Thinking / Reframing

Reframing allows you to accept things

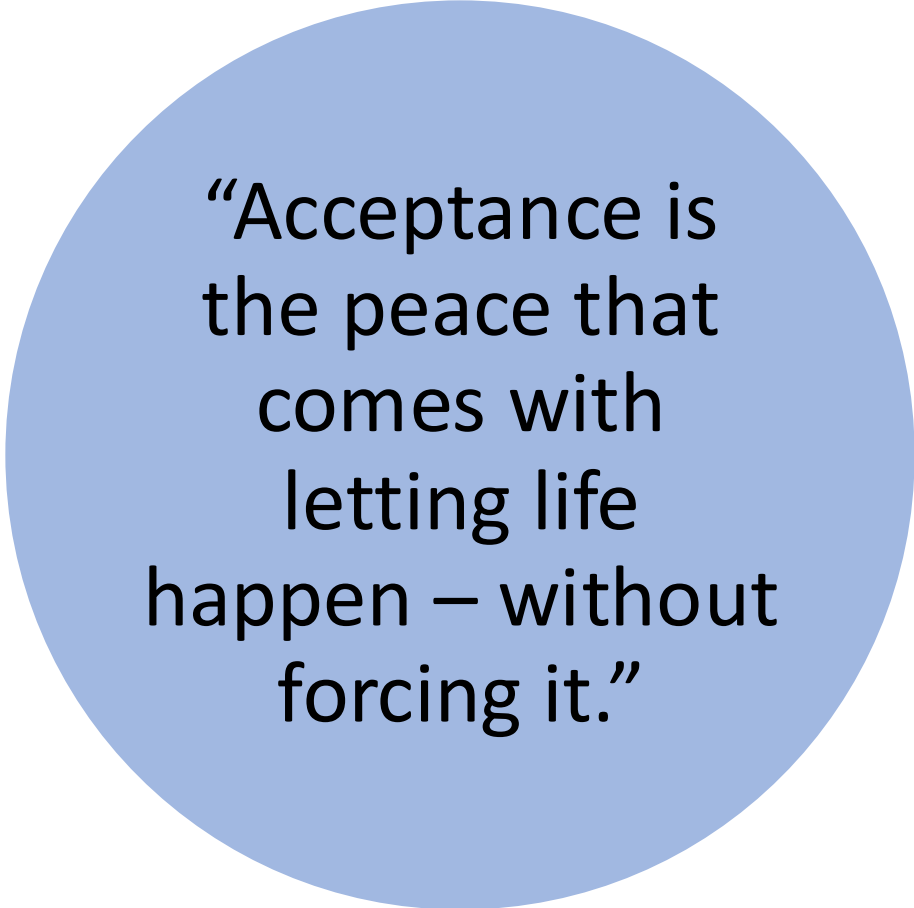
Acceptance enhances resilience

Acceptance allows you to tolerate highly stressful situations

Acceptance is not the same as resignation and does not involve giving up or quitting

Acceptance is based on realistic appraisal and active decision making

Positive Thinking / Reframing



“Acceptance is
the peace that
comes with
letting life
happen – without
forcing it.”

God

grant me the

Serenity

to accept the things
I cannot change, the

Courage

to change the things
I can, and the

Wisdom

to know the
difference.

12 Ways to Accept the Things You Cannot Change

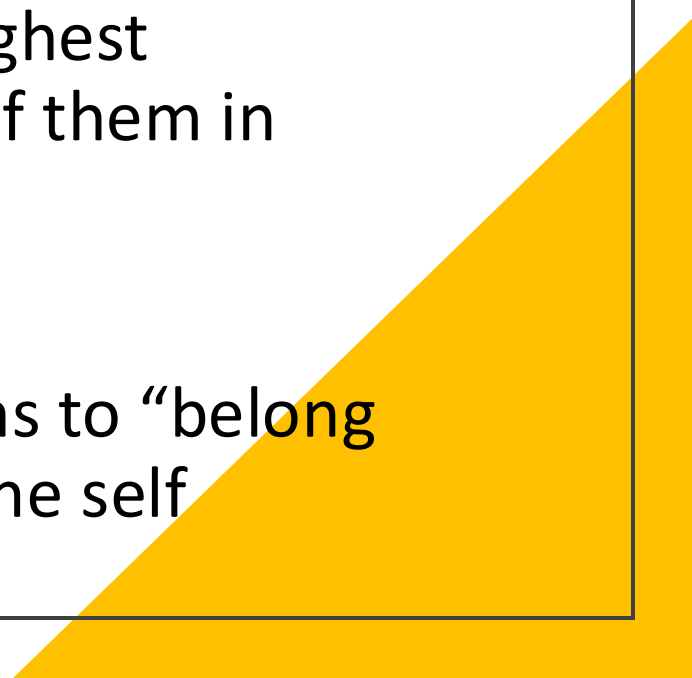
1. Control the Controllable. Start to focus on the things you can control. ...
2. Don't Sweat the Small Stuff. ...
3. Let Go of the Past. ...
4. Practice Mindfulness. ...
5. Find a Support Group. ...
6. Seek Professional Help..

1. Don't Resist Change. ...
2. Focus on the Positive.
3. Accept that you cannot change everything
4. Don't take things personally
5. Be willing to compromise
6. Practice Patience

Optimism – Interpret events positively

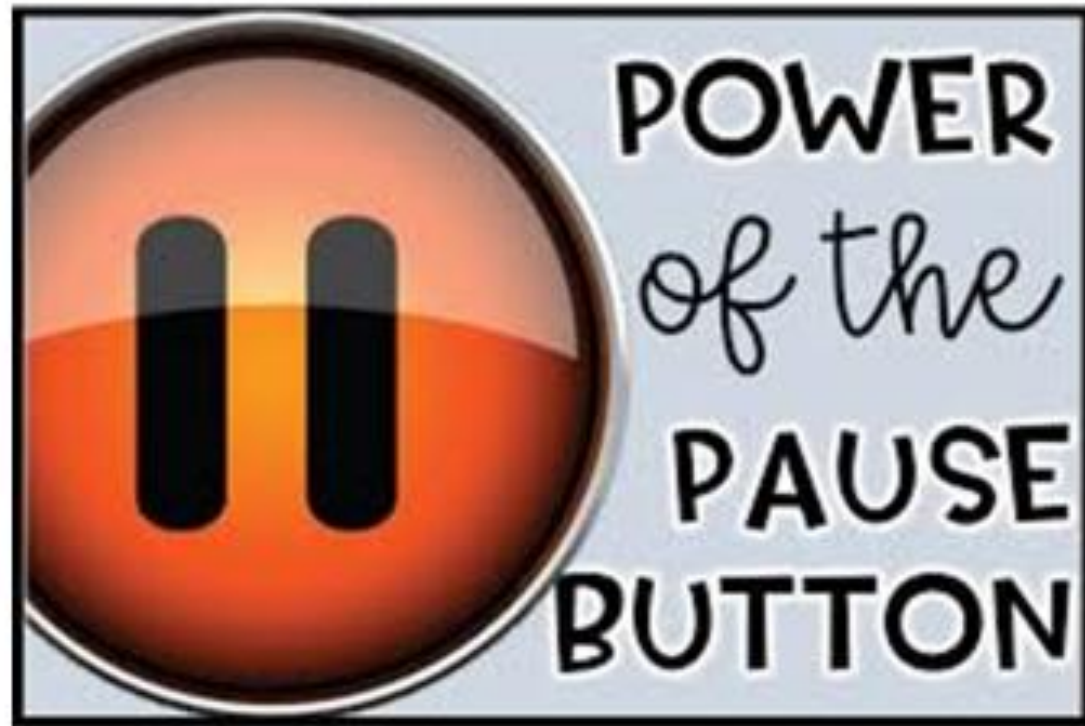
- When something bad happens
- It won't last forever; it will get better
- Keep the adverse event within its limits; don't let it pervade other areas of your life
- Think of strengths and resources that can help you deal with the problem
- Notice what is good

Living to the fullest

- The pleasant life is about amplifying positive emotion and acquiring the skills to do this.
 - The engaged life is one where you discover your highest strengths and reshape your life to make the most of them in relationships, leisure, and work.
 - The meaningful life involves utilizing those strengths to “belong to and serve something you believe is larger than the self”
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- A large yellow triangle is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, pointing towards the top right. It is partially cut off by the right edge of the slide.

Activity

- The Best Possible Self
- Research has shown that visualizing and writing about your Best Possible Self can have positive outcomes.
- The Best Possible Self exercise requires people to envision themselves in an imaginary future in which everything has turned out optimally. Writing about and imagining a Best Possible Self has been found to boost people's wellbeing and mood.
- This exercise invites you to envision your life the way you always hoped it would be, having accomplished everything you wanted to do and fulfilled your potential. Write as much as you like before working through the guided reflection, which asks you questions such as:
 - How does this exercise affect your current self-image?
 - Did this exercise motivate or inspire you?
 - How did this exercise open you to possibilities?



Developing Optimism

The background of the slide features a stack of several books on a wooden surface. In the foreground, an open book is visible, with its pages slightly curved. To the right of the books, there is a white ceramic mug. In the background, a small potted plant with green leaves and white flowers sits on the table. The scene is lit with soft, natural light, suggesting a window nearby.

- Read good books
- Smile more
- Spend time with optimistic people
- Do good deeds for those around you,
- Listen to good news (there are plenty!)
- Bring good news to others.



Group Activity Creating an Optimistic Mindset Worksheet

- *Part 1 – Think of a negative incident that recently happened to you and answer the following questions.*
- Was the incident the result of :
 1. Your inability (Pessimist)
 2. External factors (Optimist)
- How did the incident make you feel?
 1. More negative things will happen to me (Pessimist)
 2. This is a one-time occurrence (Optimist)
- What does this negative incident mean?
 1. More bad things are coming to me in other areas of life (Pessimist)
 2. This is a temporary setback (Optimist)

Group Activity Creating an Optimistic Mindset Worksheet

- *Part 2 – Think of a positive experience that recently happened to you and answer the following questions.*
- Why did the event happen?
 1. Because of my abilities (Optimist)
 2. Due to external factors (Pessimist)
- What does it imply?
 1. More positive things can happen in life (Optimist)
 2. This is a one-time fluke (Pessimist)
- This incident proves that:
 1. More success awaits in the future (Optimist)
 2. This happened by chance and would never happen again (Pessimist)

References

- <https://positivepsychology.com/learned-optimism/>
- <http://www.optimi.org/test/testopen.htm>
- <https://tools.positivepsychology.com/17-emotional-intelligence-tools>
- (buy)
- King, 2001; Peters, Flink, Boersma, & Linton, 2010; Meevissen et al., 2011