

Character Community



E-News



A Town of Richmond Hill initiative.

A Town of Richmond Hill Character Community monthly e-letter

January is Optimism

I will maintain a positive attitude, look on the brighter side of situations and seek opportunities in the face of adversity.

January 2007

Town of Richmond Hill Character Community Organizations

Arts Richmond Hill Inc.

The Curtain Club

Girl Guides of Canada York South Division

Helpmate Community Information

Hills House Hospice

Ja'fari Islamic Housing

Learning Disabilities Association of York Region

Lions Club of Richmond Hill

Music For Young Children

Music to Care for Your Life

My Canada! Integration Settlement Services

Optimist Club of Richmond Hill

Richmond Hill Aquatic Club

Richmond Hill Canoe Club

Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce

Richmond Hill Community Food Bank

Richmond Hill Rams Hockey Club

Richmond Hill Social & Bocce Club

Richmond Hill Training Centre

Richmond Hill Winter Carnival

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #375

Spiritual Assembly of the Bahai's of Richmond Hill

St. Matthew's United Church Health Cabinet

Stroke Recovery Network
The Amici Centre

Wilderness Lifeskills of Youth Inc.

The Optimist

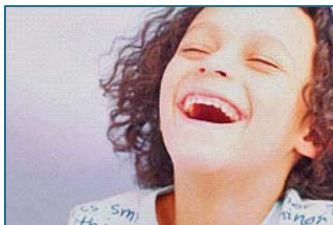
By: Author Unknown

There is a story of identical twins. One was a hope-filled optimist. "Everything is coming up roses!" he would say. The other twin was a sad and hopeless pessimist. He thought that Murphy, as in Murphy's Law, was an optimist. The worried parents of the boys brought them to the local psychologist.

He suggested to the parents a plan to balance the twins' personalities. "On their next birthday, put them in separate rooms to open their gifts. Give the pessimist the best toys you can afford, and give the optimist a box of manure." The parents followed these instructions and carefully observed the results.

When they peeked in on the pessimist, they heard him audibly complaining, "I don't like the color of this computer. I'll bet this calculator will break . . . I don't like the game . . . I know someone who's got a bigger toy car than this . . ."

Tiptoeing across the corridor, the parents peeked in and saw their little optimist gleefully throwing the manure up in the air. He was giggling. "You can't fool me! Where there's this much manure, there's gotta be a pony!"



Source: www.inspirationalstories.com/1/172.html

Enjoy the Benefits of Optimism

By: Adrian H. Cline

If you think you can, you can! You can have better health, successful relationships, and a better future. You might think of optimists as unrealistic people who ignore the world's blemishes. But positive thinkers do not blind themselves to reality, say psychologists at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Rather, they see the world just as clearly as pessimists do. The difference is that, to them, a setback is simply a condition to overcome, not a defeat.

Studies suggest that only about 25 percent of the tendency toward optimism is carried in the genes, the rest is developed by the individual.

In his book, *Learned Optimism*, Dr. Martin Seligman says the way to become an optimist is to think like one. When something goes wrong, an optimist blames it on external, temporary forces. A pessimist may blame trouble on personal character or faults. Because optimists expect the best outcome, they are more

motivated to bring it about. Here are a few ways to begin your path to increased optimism.

- Be friendly. Greet co-workers and others with a smile and a few cheery words. Being cheerful and friendly leads to more positive interactions and positive feelings.
- Give yourself a break. If you greet someone, and your friendliness is not returned, think, "He is having a bad day," rather than, "He does not like me." Never blame yourself for other people's conditions.
- Be a problem solver. If a plan doesn't work out, make changes in the plan. Do not give up.
- Distract yourself. When your boss is less than kind, or you embarrass yourself in a social situation, do something you enjoy to get your mind off of the situation.
- An enjoyable activity breaks the trend toward negativity. Go out to lunch, play golf, or work in your yard. Better solutions will come.



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The Benefits of Optimism

By: Karen Millard



1. Optimism convinces us our actions matter. We matter. Optimists believe that what we do can make a difference. We become more motivated to make changes that affect our world for the better.
2. Optimists feel like the captains of their own ships. Instead of being tossed about in the rudderless boat of life, they are confident they can navigate the stormiest seas. Their confidence leads to perseverance.
3. Optimists persevere. In her book, *Half Empty, Half Full*, Susan C. Vaughan explains that by persevering, even in the face of adversity, optimists increase the chances of their success, thereby creating yet more optimism. Since others respond positively to them, optimists enjoy further advantages in work, love and play.
4. Optimists are patient. They are able to work steadily towards a goal, confident they are inching closer with every step they take. As a young, recently divorced mom, our own Cheryl Dougan made a pact with herself to one day be in a position to contribute to the United Way. She now donates a significant amount of money to that organization every single month.
5. Optimists look for a more meaningful explanation. My daughter once described a series of math problems as "hard" and was about to give up. In fact, the problems were tedious and time consuming, but well within her capabilities. When I explained the difference, she put her nose to the grindstone and tackled them successfully.
6. Optimism is healthier.
7. Optimists are more resilient. They experience many of the problems and tragedies everyone experiences, but they're never afraid they'll get trapped in a state of unhappiness. They may suffer the death of a loved one, but instead of focusing solely on the loss, they're able to see the spirit of that loved one all around them, and to celebrate his or her life.

8. Optimists are proactive. They make choices about the way they feel and the actions they take. They see problems as opportunities for positive change, and take steps to effect that change. Ann Kramer, an educator and counsellor and the author of *Life Puzzle - Putting The Pieces Together*, explains that optimists are aware of their inner state, whether physical, emotional, rational, sexual or spiritual. "As a result," she says, "their "self" is able to make proactive, conscious choices in managing their inner states."
9. Optimists can move mountains - or at least build them! Rent a copy of "The Englishman Who Went Up A Hill and Came Down A Mountain" to see a semi-fictional tale of optimism in action.
10. Optimism feels better! You enjoy life more. You spend more time feeling involved with the world around you, more time laughing, more time enjoying yourself. Even if your pleasures are simple, they seem to have greater richness, depth and meaning.

Source: <http://www.feedyouroptimism.com/benefits.html>

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- Laugh. It is good for the body and soul. Laughter helps people get through hard times that might undo them if they didn't have a sense of humor.
- Practice looking on the bright side, even if you do not really feel optimistic. Fake it if you must. Each time you count on success and achieve it, your confidence will build.
- Remember the words of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale: "Have faith in yourself! Have faith in your abilities! Without a humble but reasonable confidence in your own powers you cannot be successful or happy."

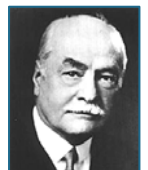
Source: www.desotoschools.com/Cline.07.15.03.htm

Optimism "Quotes"



"Both optimists and pessimists contribute to our society. The optimist invents the airplane and the pessimist the parachute."

-Gil Stern



"Optimism is the foundation of courage."

-Nicholas Murray Butler



"An optimist is the human personification of spring."

-Susan J. Bissonette

Next Month's Attribute:
February is Initiative



Members of the Town of Richmond Hill Character Community Committee and Council took part in the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's *Ride For Diabetes Research* back on October 4, 2006. The event raised \$250,000.

Character Community E-News is a monthly e-mail newsletter to share information about upcoming events within our organization and beyond. If you would like to contribute upcoming Character Community event information, story ideas or photos, please forward it to the Editor, Michelle Lipkus, at mllpkus@richmondhill.ca.