

How to Become More Optimistic

Abridged from Seligman's ABCDE model to help foster a more optimistic attitude

Notice the Good Things

Consider keeping a gratitude journal where you make a note of the good things that happen during each day. Practicing gratitude can improve mental well-being and help you feel more optimistic about your life.¹⁵

Use Affirmations and Positive Self-Talk

Affirmations and positive self-talk can be great ways to start developing learned optimism. Start making positive statements about things you expect to happen or what you can do to make good things happen. Telling yourself that you'll do well if you practice regularly, for example, is more helpful and optimism-promoting than thinking that you'll never measure up.

Forgive Yourself

Instead of ruminating over your mistakes, focus on forgiving yourself and taking steps to improve in the future. For example, instead of blaming and berating yourself for a mistake at work, remind yourself that you can make improvements and do better next time. Think about what you learned from the experience and how that will help you going forward.

What This Means For You

Perhaps the most encouraging thing about optimism is that it involves skills that can be learned and put into practice. Ultimately, learned optimism is about more than just improving your well-being or warding off psychological ailments such as depression or low self-esteem.

Developing a more optimistic attitude can also be a route to finding your purpose in life. Believing that there is hope for the future means you are more likely to put your efforts toward things that will give meaning to your life.