

POWERFUL WORDS



CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

THE ULTIMATE CHARACTER
DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

**BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE
ONE STUDENT AT A TIME!!!**

OPTIMISM

**Optimism means I look on the
bright side!**

**Optimism means believing and
expecting that everything will
work out for the best.**

OPTIMISM

Young students: I look on the bright side!

Older students/teens/adults: Believing and expecting that everything will work out for the best.

WEEK 1 Optimism defined: What is Optimism vs Pessimism?

WEEK 2 Dealing with challenges: How do we change how we think?

WEEK 3 Blame and Accountability: How do optimists vs pessimists cope?

WEEK 4 Inner talk and believing in oneself: How can we be more optimistic?

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CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Dear Family,

This month we will focus on the character concept, “optimism.” Optimism is all about looking at the bright side-- seeing a challenge and knowing everything is going to turn out exactly as it should.

Our students will get a real sense of what pessimism vs optimism means and how it relates to how people see and deal with challenges in their lives. Pessimists tend to see bad things that happen as permanent, pervasive, and personal. They see one bad thing happening as an indication that more bad things are on their way. Optimists, in contrast, see negative incidents as temporary and external-- having no bearing on what's to come in the future.

Optimism isn't just great for attitude and outlook. It has

many other benefits. On the flip side, pessimism can have many negative consequences.

Martin Seligman, a researcher in the field of optimism and happiness put it this way; “If you are a pessimist in the sense that when bad things happen you think they are going to last forever and undermine everything you do, then you are about eight times as likely to get depressed, you are less likely to succeed at work, your personal relationships are more likely to break up, and you are likely to have a shorter and more illness-filled life. That's the main discovery I associate with my lifetime.”

Thankfully, there is such thing as “learned optimism” which necessitates us to recognize the catastrophic things that we say to ourselves when things go wrong. If we are aware, we can become more optimistic by

making optimism a habit!

Talk to your children about how you keep an optimistic attitude when it comes to unexpected challenges in your life. Discuss with them what they are learning in class and how they can create positive self talk and take positive accountability to stay in control of their attitude. Most of all, help them to reword negative pessimistic statements into positive, optimistic ones.

We thank you for your support. You are pivotal in helping to make our school one of the best personal development centers in the world.

Best Regards,
—*Your Motivated and
Dedicated Instructors*

UPCOMING POWERFUL WORDS

JUNE Integrity

JULY Perseverance

AUGUST Teamwork

OPTIMISM

Young students: I look on the bright side!

Older students/teens/adults: Believing and expecting that everything will work out for the best.

Dear Dr. Robyn,

One of our children is a “glass half full” kind of a person-- always looking on the sunny side of every situation. But our other child, unfortunately, always seems to have a rain cloud over his head-- he’s just so negative! How can I help him to see things more positively?

—Gideon & Ruth G, London UK

Dear Gideon & Ruth,

As we know from years of research, optimism has enormous benefits for attitude and health. Fortunately, optimism can be taught and instilled in children.

Here are some tips you can start using right away:

Help them remember that failure is temporary: When a project or activity goes wrong, help your children stay clear of absolutes like “I never get things right” or “This always happens.” Validate their feelings and help them to decipher what went wrong but also remind them that they’ve had many successes in their lives and they will have many more.

Nix the labels: Stay clear of labeling your children “our negative child” or things of that nature. Labels can leave a child boxed in and can interfere with their self concept. Especially when labels carry a negative connotation, they

can inadvertently encourage the behavior you are trying to extinguish. Children tend to live up to the expectations we set- so be careful not to create a self-fulfilling prophesy!

Highlight the “silver lining”: Many frustrating situations can be seen in a positive light if you look for it. For example, when a child is upset that he won’t know anyone at a new school, this could be an opportunity to make new friends. A rainy day may mean that your children can’t go outside to play but it can be a chance to bake with Dad or watch a movie that everybody has been waiting to see. Train your child to try and find the sunny side of a problem.

Refrain from over-praising: Everything our children do is not “fantastic!” When we over-praise, we rob our children of genuine, well-deserved praise that comes when effort and results align. Real praise has real meaning. Undeserved praise feels empty-- and can make children untrusting

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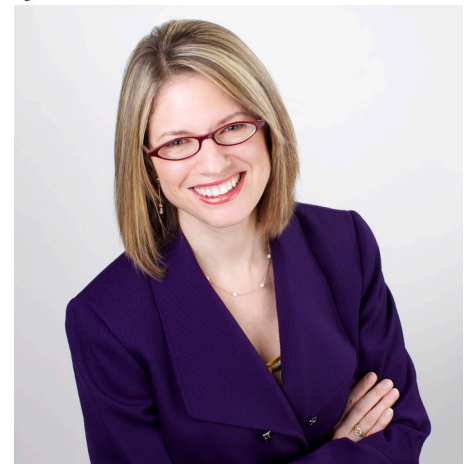
<< Paraphrased from an email; with permission

of all praise, when given.

Give credit when credit is due: When your child has done something well, sincerely recognize and praise what helped them to get there. Was it their commitment? Character? Persistence? Let them know you noticed and are impressed!

Keep using these tips-- it takes time to create a habit of optimism!

Here’s to your success!



POWERFUL PROJECT

AGES 4-7

MAY
2011

OPTIMISM

FIRST & LAST NAME: _____

When we want to look on the bright side of things, it can help to think about all the great people, places, and things in our lives that make us feel happy inside. Either draw a picture or write your answers below to the question: What makes you feel happy inside?

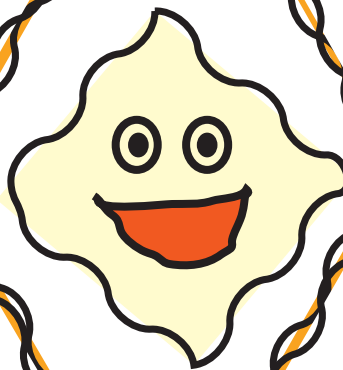
At Home

What makes you feel
happy inside...

At School

In our Class

All the time!



POWERFUL PROJECT

AGES 7 & UP

MAY
2011

OPTIMISM

FIRST & LAST NAME: _____

Putting up an “optimism board” can help us see all the things in our lives that make us feel joy and happiness. What makes you laugh? What’s something you like about yourself? Who believes in you? Think of many of the things that make you feel happy and full of joy-- you will create an optimism board!

Optimism Board

What’s 1 thing that makes you laugh?

What’s 1 thing you know you can do well?

What’s 1 thing that you love to do?

What’s 1 goal that you’ve reached recently?

What’s 1 thing that makes you a good friend?

What’s 1 compliment you’ve received recently?

What are 3 things that make you feel grateful?

What are 3 fun things you’ve done recently?

What’s 1 thing you like about yourself?

Who is 1 person who believes in you?

What’s 1 way that you are POWERFUL? _____

OPTIMISM

In order to harness more optimism, it can be helpful to think through people, places, things, and experiences that make us feel happy, grateful, and positive. You can even take these questions and create a visual optimism board that helps you to keep your focus on the positive parts of your life rather than ruminating about the negative (as so many do). It is similar in method to creating a vision board as we might at the beginning of the year but, of course, the focus is different. Keeping the positive in the forefront of our minds can help us as well as those we teach, mentor, lead, and motivate.

Who are you with and what are you doing when you feel the most “at peace” and hopeful for the future?

What are you most grateful for at this time?

What goal are you most proud of fulfilling and why?

If you think of something tough you've gone through, what was the silver lining?

What is one thing that you've done that really made a difference to someone else? In what way?

What experience in your life has the most meaningful to you?

When you are having a tough day, what or who helps you snap out of it?

First & Last Name: _____