

## **Optimism**

### **Exercise**

“Optimism is the ability to look at the brighter side of life and to maintain a positive attitude even in the face of adversity” (ED Edge, Stein and Book, 208).

The following are behaviors that demonstrate optimism:

- Sticking with something until you solve it or get better at it.
- Engaging in self-talk such as, “I can do this” or “things will improve.”
- “Framing” (viewing a situation) in terms of what is possible or what benefit exists, even if things look bad.
- Believing that your effort or skill can make a difference in the situation

Of course, opposite responses would indicate a need for more optimism.

Two exercises that can help:

1. **Framing.** Mentioned above, framing is simply seeing a benefit in the personal setback you are encountering. Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb, literally developed thousands of prototypes before finding one that would work. When asked what it felt like to fail 10,000 times he replied, “I didn’t fail; I just discovered 10,000 ways it won’t work.” What is a benefit you are realizing as a result of the setback? Personally, my primary role model and every hero of mine endured setbacks, difficulties and abandonment. Yet, they each overcame. The character it produced in their lives probably would not have developed apart from the setbacks. So, when faced with setbacks, I remember my role models and embrace the setback as a way God will develop in me the same character I admire so much in them.
2. **Gratitude.** In a recent Harvard Business Review Management tip, the author noted a recent study on the effects of gratitude. When faced with difficulty, learning to identify things in life to which they could be thankful allowed them to show more patience with present difficulties as well as maintain a better outlook for the future. So, when faced with difficulties, turn your eyes to things you can be thankful for, and it will help you patiently deal with your present difficulty as well as give you a more optimistic outlook on the future.

For further resources on EQ and optimism exercises, consult the [EQ Edge](#) by Stein and Book.