

Learned Optimism: Positive Psychology with Martin Seligman

The optimists and the pessimists: Seligman has been studying them for the past twenty-five years. The defining characteristic of pessimists is that they tend to believe bad events will last a long time, will undermine everything they do, and are their own fault.

The optimists, who are confronted with the same hard knocks of this world, think about misfortune in the opposite way. They tend to believe defeat is just a temporary setback, that its causes are confined to this one case. The optimists believe defeat is not their fault: Circumstances, bad luck, or other people brought it about. Such people are unfazed by defeat. Confronted by a bad situation, they perceive it as a challenge and try harder.

Three Areas of how Optimist think

1. **Temporary vs permanent:** This too will end, we will get through this just like in every other crisis.
2. **Specific vs pervasive:** This is a specific change we have to deal with versus everything being negative.
3. **Appropriate responsibility:** Not being over responsible – all my fault or under responsible – not me