

Having a positive attitude about your life will help the social dimension of your life. You will build better relationships if you are enthusiastic and optimistic. No one likes being around someone who complains a lot and is always pessimistic.

Having a positive attitude about your life will help the physical dimension of your health. Studies have shown that optimistic people get sick only half as often as pessimistic people. Of course, being well impacts your vocational health. Feeling well in other dimensions of health allows you to achieve your vocational goals.



### **How Optimistic Are You?** by Susan K. Perry

***Do you see the chocolate chip cookie as half-eaten or half still to be enjoyed?***

***If you're an optimist, you notice the sun peeking through the darkest clouds.***

***If you're a pessimist, you can find a down side to anything.***

**Take this quiz to learn your type.**

1. Your 6 p.m. date doesn't show up by 6:15. You think:
  - A. I've never been very good at attracting dates.
  - B. I must not have been clear about the time.
  - C. Probably got delayed in traffic or something.
2. You've just entered an essay contest. After dropping off your entry, you think:
  - A. I don't stand a chance. My ideas are always pretty dumb.
  - B. I hope I don't ruffle the contest judge's feathers with the topic I chose.
  - C. I'm a good writer with original ideas. I have an excellent chance to win.

3. You interviewed for a summer job at the local fast-food hang-out. The whole next week, you think:
- A. They're not calling because they don't want me. I never make good first impressions.
  - B. I forgot to thank the interviewer. I probably blew it.
  - C. They'd be lucky to get me. If they don't call, it's because they've had dozens of applicants.
4. A group report you worked on in summer school with three buddies got a B+. You think:
- A. The teacher must have been in a good mood when she read our report.
  - B. I know if I had worked a little harder, we would've gotten an A.
  - C. I'm glad I was on this team. I think I contributed a lot!
5. You haven't weighed yourself in months, and suddenly you discover you've put on three pounds. This is what goes through your mind:
- A. I'm doomed to be fat forever.
  - B. I'd better cut out every single snack and start exercising so I can get back to my regular weight.
  - C. It's probably just water weight from the salty foods I've been eating lately. I'll weigh myself again next week.
6. Your parents are always talking about the rotten state of the economy. You think:
- A. I'll never get a job better than flipping burgers.
  - B. I'd better do well in school, or I'll end up in bad shape.
  - C. When I'm through with school, the economy will be in better shape. Even if it's not, I'm a good worker and won't have any trouble getting a job I like.
7. Your best friend has joined an environmental group. Your brother bugs you if you forget to recycle a can. You keep hearing dire warnings about the ozone layer. You think:
- A. It's no use. The air will be unbreathable in another 20 years.
  - B. I'd better find out what I can do to help out.
  - C. It's a good thing everyone's finally becoming aware of the environment. With this much effort, we're sure to save the planet.

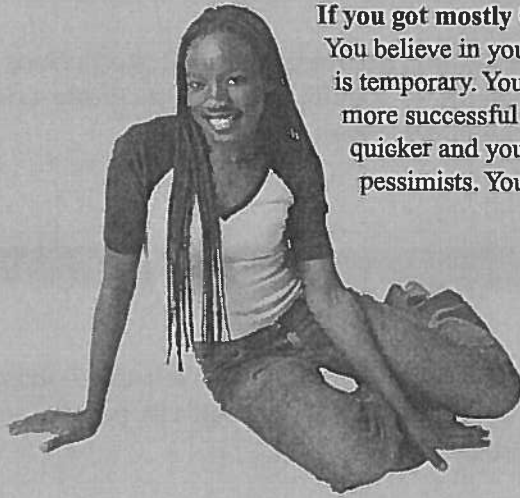
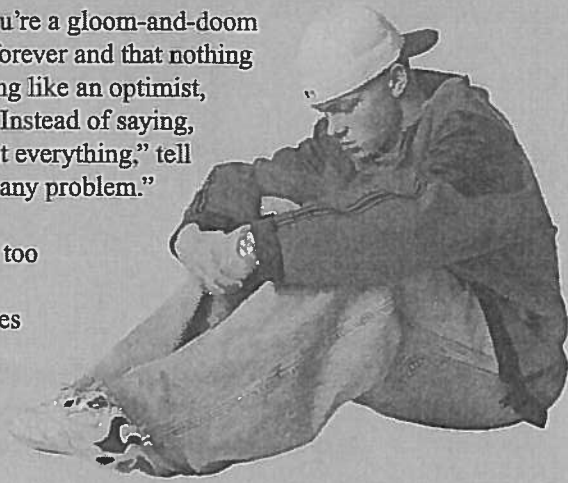
## Scoring

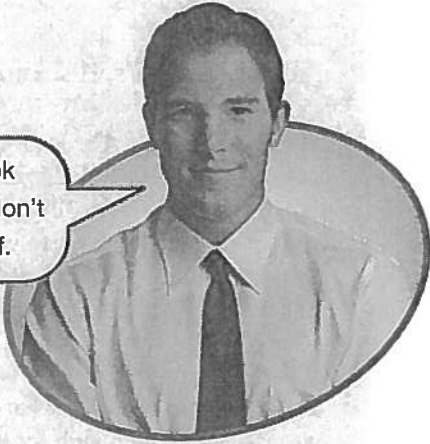
Add up your A's, B's, and C's.

**If you got mostly A's:** Looks like you're a gloom-and-doom pessimist. You think bad breaks are forever and that nothing will go right for long. To start thinking like an optimist, change the way you talk to yourself. Instead of saying, "I'm always messing up," or "I forget everything," tell yourself, "I can work my way out of any problem."

**If you got mostly B's:** You take way too much responsibility for what goes wrong—and not enough for what goes right. Learn to give yourself credit where credit is due. And remember that bad stuff is going to happen—even to good people like you who work hard and try their best. See if you can stop giving yourself negative messages.

**If you got mostly C's:** Congrats, you're an optimist! You believe in yourself, and you know that bad luck is temporary. You hold up well under pressure, you're more successful in school and work, you bounce back quicker and you may even be in better health than the pessimists. You're more fun to hang out with too!





Having a positive outlook on life isn't easy if you don't feel good about yourself.

People with low self-esteem often put themselves down. They are their own worst critics. They are often pessimistic about the future; they expect things to go wrong. They attribute their successes to luck and their failures to their own inadequacies.

People with high self-esteem accept their strengths and weaknesses. They believe they can do what they set out to do if they try hard enough. They are proud of their successes and take failure in stride.



3. Discuss this question with a partner or a small group: Does a positive attitude create high self-esteem, or does high self-esteem create a positive attitude? Support your opinion with reasons.

**Compare your answer with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.**

*self-talk: the inner dialogue you have with yourself*

Your attitude about yourself is reflected in your self-talk—those things you say inwardly to yourself about yourself. Is your self-talk positive and optimistic or is it negative and pessimistic?

4. Think about an occasion when you said negative things like the following to yourself: “I just can’t do this! I’m so stupid. I’ll never learn. I might as well give up.” How did those pessimistic comments affect your feelings and actions?
5. Think about an occasion when you said positive things like the following to yourself: “Okay, I made a mistake, but mistakes are a part of learning. I’m a smart person. I know I can do better next time.” How did those optimistic comments affect your feelings and actions?

**Compare your answers with the Suggested Responses at the end of the lesson.**