



## THE OPTIMISM EQUATION

The Optimism equation is based upon a cognitive behavior exercise introduced by the psychologist Albert Ellis and then modified by subsequent researchers. The heart of this equation is simple; optimism can be learned. These six letters (ABCDDE) are simply placeholders for concepts that will help us achieve more optimism.

### ABC = Learn

The first three letters of the optimism equation help us understand how our inner dialogue operates so we can begin noticing when our explanatory styles become pessimistic.

**A**ctivating Agent - any experience that triggers emotion and starts a negative train of thought.

**B**elief - our beliefs interpret our experiences and trigger the emotions we feel.

**C**onsequence - the emotions we feel are a consequence of the beliefs we relied on when labeling the event.

### DDE = Practice

The second half of the optimism equation helps us practice new techniques for achieving optimism. Whether we are learning to swim or run a marathon, we cannot improve our skills without practice. The same is true with breaking thought patterns.

**D**istract - knowing how to distract our brain can help us interrupt vicious cycles of thought (i.e. meditate, shift attention, write thoughts, etc.)

**D**ispute - plays an important role in confronting our critical inner dialogue.

**E**ffect - notice the effect of changing a negative statement to a positive one. Take note of how your feelings shift when you dispute a pessimistic thought.

### Let's put the Optimism Equation to practice:

**A** = I don't have time to workout, and therefore do not go to the gym consistently.

**B** = I'm a failure for not prioritizing my health.

**C** = I feel tired all the time, lack confidence and am a poor role model.

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**D** = I've been really stressed out about this so I took time to start a gratitude journal to achieve a more positive mindset.

**D** = If I focus my energy on something positive I can build a solution on how to schedule working out in my daily routine.

**E** = I feel more confident that I've been able to make a commitment to better my health. I now have more energy and am proud to role model not only a healthy body but a healthy mind as well.



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