



AWARENESS

GET YOURSELF ROSE-TINTED SPECTACLES

If only it was as simple as keeping your chin up, turning a frown upside down or finding the cloud's silver lining.

If it was always that easy to be positive and optimistic then none of us would probably ever choose to have down in the dumps and pessimistic days. However, striving to be positive and optimistic whenever possible, is worth the effort and has been proven to have many health benefits, according to experts.

Psychotherapist Amy Morin says you can be optimistic if you choose, even if those around you are pessimistic. "If you think you're a natural-born pessimist and there's no way you can turn your mindset around, think again," says Morin, adding "you can take measures to think positively and spread that optimistic outlook to those around you."

The highlights of looking on the bright side

Some of the benefits associated with optimism and a positive outlook, according to Harvard Health, include:

- Optimists are half as likely to be hospitalised for heart conditions compared with pessimists.
- People with a "sunny disposition" generally have better blood pressure. In comparison, negative people were three times more likely to develop hypertension.
- In a study involving 447 patients over 30 years, the optimists were found to enjoy noticeably better overall physical and mental health than the other participants.

According to the researchers, "it is possible that optimists enjoy better health and longer lives than pessimists because they lead healthier lifestyles, build stronger social support networks, and get better medical care."

How to find a better perspective

Clinical Psychologist and author, Jeffrey Bernstein recommends the following two practical ways to work towards being more optimistic and 'drinking from the glass that is half full':

Hope for and expect good things to happen –

"Expecting good things to happen (generating positive thoughts) will influence you to feel and behave in ways that'll help you achieve better outcomes when you face challenges", says Bernstein. He suggests asking yourself why you have been convinced things won't go well, and to consider what it might take to ensure that things do go well?

Visualize your ideal future situation –

Bernstein suggests that focusing on a positive future can help lift your mood and may help you feel less stressed and negative in the moment.

"You've worked to overcome your challenges and are making progress", what does that feel like? Can you make it happen?

Perhaps hope and being able to clearly imagine a better future for yourself will make it feel more familiar and therefore more likely to happen? Your heart and blood pressure may thank you for it.