



Try Being an OPTIMIST

by Joseph Newton

Would you like to attract more good things to yourself and your family? There's a simple and effective way to do it. I know; I've tried it and it works.

All you have to do is be an optimist—or at least work in that direction. The better you get at *expecting* good, the more of it you'll find showing up in your personal experience.

Take this recession Americans are coping with today, for example. This is the best-publicized gathering of gloom in the history of the United States. Recession has been sold to Americans as effectively as tooth paste or a second car in the garage. The only reason we aren't in it right up to our ears is that a great many Americans refuse to buy the gloom. They have remained optimists in a climate where there is plenty of reason for optimism.

When we shake off these economic jitters and get back in straight-and-level flight, the optimists are the ones you can thank for keeping us out of a fatal tailspin.

The other day, a friend of mine who is in the advertising business sent me an ugly, down-at-the-mouth stuffed doll. He suggested that whenever I get depressed over the recession, I stick pins in the doll and then get back to working and spending and thinking positively.

To back up his own convictions, he spent a lot of money to manufacture these "depression dolls" and mail them to more than 500 business acquaintances. The reaction was immediate and positive. A lot of gloom-ridden executives took a good look at themselves and realized the fallacy of their fatalistic thinking.

Today's recession is the best example in many years of the fact that the inevitable result of pessimism is to aid and abet whatever the pessimist is dreading will happen. It also illustrates that instead of drawing our conclusions from a careful weighing of the evidence, we often start out with the conclusions and carefully seek out evidence to support our predetermined point of view. This is true of both the optimist and the pessimist—and a good case can therefore be made for either side from the same set of statistics.

In view of this, it seems foolish to take the pessimistic viewpoint, since there is nothing to be gained by adding to the prevailing gloom. But there is a great deal to be gained from a note of encouragement and optimism. Enough such notes can add up to a crescendo of confidence, renewed spending, and a resurgence of business activity. This is both an optimistic and a realistic approach to the problem of a business recession.

"PESSIMISM" and "realism" somehow have become synonymous in America today. As a result, we're the greatest and most consistent prophets of gloom in the world.

Whenever a writer, speaker, or just a living-room philosopher tells in grim detail some seamy sidelight of life or predicts impending disaster for mankind, he is dubbed a "realist" and his words are pondered. But when a so-called optimist comes along, sizes up the preponderance of good in the world, and decides that maybe things are going to turn out pretty well after all—this man is labeled a dreamer who is afraid to face up to facts.

Yet, in reality, it isn't the optimist

but the pessimist who refuses to face facts. If you don't believe this, try a little test with yourself. For one hour, observe closely everything that goes on around you. Normally, when things go right and smoothly, you scarcely notice them because this is the way things *should* be. It's only the difficulties that come forcibly to your attention.

But for this test hour, notice everything. Be aware of every act of kind-

ness—every door that is held open, every smile, every pleasant word, every act of compassion, encouragement, or helpfulness, every device that has been created to make life easier, more pleasant, more comfortable for you, and every accident that *could* happen—but *doesn't*.

Now, balance these positive things against the unpleasant elements you noted during that same period. If you've been truthful with yourself,

