

Why be a prophet of gloom
when there's so much reason
for optimism all around you?

you'll find that the good outweighs the bad by such a tremendous ratio that the unpleasant things become almost insignificant. Yet we consider the pessimist a realist.

Optimism isn't a deluded state of mind, a roseate dream world in which you escape reality. Quite the opposite. Optimism is a truthful, perceptive outlook based solidly and logically on the facts of life. A great deal more good is happening than evil, and if you get anything close to your fair share, you are justified in being eternally optimistic.

CAN OPTIMISM, in itself, attract good to you? Certainly. Many medical authorities will back up this assertion. Optimists are less accident-prone because they don't expect to become involved in an accident. Optimists are looking up, not down; forward, not backward. They see the pitfalls ahead and avoid them. They cultivate the promise of the future.

If illness strikes an optimist, he doesn't expect it to be fatal and seek symptoms to back up this gloomy appraisal. Rather, he expects to shake the sickness off quickly and get back to work—and this attitude helps him do it. The burgeoning schools of psychosomatic medicine and emotion-

ally induced illness accentuate the positive and seek to eliminate negative thinking among patients.

In his best-selling book, "How to Live 365 Days a Year," Dr. John Schindler said: "Good emotions are the greatest power for good health that we know anything about. There is one way you have of achieving optimal hormone balance. That is to provide your body with the stimulus of the pleasant and cheerful group of emotions. The physiologic effect of the good emotions is just as great in the right direction as the effects of the bad emotions are in the wrong direction. Their medicinal value cannot be overestimated."

Being an optimist isn't easy these days. We are bombarded on all sides by fear, scare propaganda, and invitations to greed and dissatisfaction.

Pessimism becomes a state of mind that slips up on most people and captures them before they realize they've been attacked. Many confirmed pessimists would deny that they are anything of the kind, however.

How about you? Ask yourself these questions:

1 When you think about your children, do you brood about the problems in raising them—or the immense pleasure they will bring?



2 When you cut your finger, do you speculate about the possibilities of blood poisoning—or do you give it a shot of iodine, bandage it, and forget it?



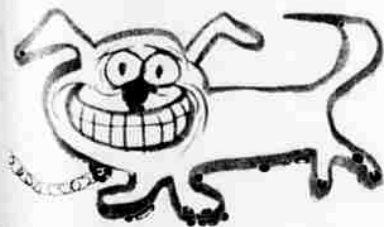
3 When you're looking forward to seeing a ball game or attending a picnic, do you expect it to rain—or do you see a beautiful, sunny day in prospect?



4 When you go out for the evening, do you expect to be bored—or do you anticipate that you'll have a pleasant time?

5 Do you dwell on the shortcomings of your business associates—or on their good points?

6 When you fly in bad weather, do you contemplate the results of a mid-air collision in the fog—or expect a routine flight?



Now, let's discard all cynicism and be absolutely truthful about the answers. Your associates' good points probably outnumber their shortcomings by a large margin; the pleasure of raising children far overshadows the problems; if you use any judgment at all in making social engagements, you usually have a pleasant time; relatively few ball games or picnics are called off by bad weather in proportion to those that enjoy sunny skies; cut fingers seldom lead to anything but a momentary inconvenience; and airplanes have an incredibly low ratio of accidents to miles flown.

Therefore, the pessimistic view on any of these questions is completely illogical. All it does is destroy the pleasure of anticipation and sometimes actually help bring about what you have pessimistically expected.

I USED TO WALK to the railroad station every morning with a man who never failed to greet me with: "We're late. We'd better hustle. We'll probably miss the train." In all the years this went on, I don't think we ever missed that train. Yet this man got off to a miserable start five times a week while he worried about getting to the station late. And this in spite of the fact that all the evidence gave him every right to expect to make his train, not miss it.

A most attractive girl I knew in school went out with the firm conviction ahead of time that every new escort was going to be a first-class dud. Approached with this attitude, they all were. So was she. Yet, most of these men could have given her a very pleasant evening if she had only expected it from them. She's still single and still dating with the expectation of being bored. And inevitably, that's what happens.

When I was an aviation cadet during World War II, I almost washed out of flight training because a check pilot overheard me tell another cadet: "I'll never pass this check ride!"

We went out on the check ride wrapped in a grim silence which he broke only long enough to tell me what he wanted done. My work was uninspired in execution and borderline in technique. It was the sort of test that might go either way, but the check pilot failed me on it because he didn't like my attitude.

He also told me I was capable of doing the work if I began to think I could. And he was right—as I found out after I was granted more instruction time and another check ride.

So try the optimistic point of view for awhile—and stick by your guns. You're likely to find it more rewarding than you ever dreamed possible.