

“How Does an Optimistic Mindset Change My Tomorrow?”

The word optimism means to be hopeful and confident about the future. To be optimistic means you have to be positive and “Trust the Process.” There will be times when you want to give up or think that nothing you do is going to work. But everything happens for a reason and depending on if you have a pessimistic mindset or an optimistic mindset, it could lead to a better or worse outcome than what you are hoping for.

For example: I had a serious knee injury the summer going into 8th grade two weeks before football started. I was diagnosed with Trochlea Osteochondritis Dissecans. That means I tore cartilage off the distal head of my femur, meaning I would be out for 9-12 months. I was out for both football and basketball that season and I was devastated. I had two surgeries; during the first surgery, the surgeon took the torn cartilage out of my knee, sent it to a lab in Massachusetts and regrew it. In the second surgery, the surgeon put the regrown cartilage back into my knee. Two weeks after my second surgery I started my journey of recovery. It wasn't what I expected.

The first few days of Physical therapy I started to get mobility in my knee and kept gradually improving over the weeks of therapy until I finally was off crutches in late December. For the next few weeks, I worked on regaining the muscle in my left leg back and not carrying my leg as much. Now that I was gaining strength back in my leg and my travel basketball team was in midseason; I was ready to get back on the floor.

It was about four months into my recovery and I thought I was fully ready to go. I wanted my therapists to do a test to see if I was strong enough to go back. After the test, the therapist said, "You aren't even close to returning." After that news I was devastated and questioned my therapists and my effort. I kept going to therapy three days a week, but I wasn't going nearly as hard as before I heard the news. I had a very pessimistic mindset. On a Saturday afternoon, my mom told me "Let's go for a walk." I gladly accepted her invitation and it ended up being a walk and talk that I needed.

On our walk, we talked about how therapy was going and I told her, "I don't even know if I want to play anymore." After that, she told me "Cooper, they're professionals; they know what they're talking about. You need to "TRUST THE PROCESS." I had to decide to not care or stop feeling sorry for myself and getting back to work. I chose to stop feeling bad for myself and get back to work. After that, my mindset completely went from pessimistic to optimistic.

The next few months, I gained my confidence back and started taking everything a lot more seriously. I started working even harder, ate healthier, and did all the stretches and workouts they told me to do at home. My optimistic mindset got me healthier, stronger and bettered me in the long run. The plan was to be back in June, but I returned to the court in May. Time and dedication lead to success.

This shows an optimistic mindset can change your tomorrow. I had a choice to be pessimistic and not care when I would be back. Instead, I chose the optimistic way to be more patient and do what the professionals told me to do; I got healthier and stronger and now I really never have pain in my knee. This is just an example of how life throws curveballs and how you respond to the curveballs is the result of making you a

stronger person or a weaker person. If we think optimistically, we will stay positive, beat the challenge and overcome the problem. If we stay optimistic, the positive will come. We have to understand that if there is a problem, you need to stay optimistic to make the problem easier to fix. A tough outcome can lead to a great future if you always find the positives. Humans frequently go at the negatives when something goes wrong, but sometimes we need to TRUST THE PROCESS and find the positive in the bad times so we can be successful and reach our goal. Staying optimistic is hard sometimes, but if you can stay optimistic it will better your tomorrow and the next day which leads to reaching goals and being the person you want to be. Optimism is the key; when something is hard, just TRUST THE PROCESS and things will get better.