

When All the World's Problems are Solved, is Optimism Still Necessary?

Winston Churchill once wrote, "An Optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty, a Pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity". I believe Optimism is still necessary when all the world's problems are solved because Optimism is what makes the world go round. Giving up on Optimism when the world's problems are solved could be compared to striving towards a small goal and giving up after the goal is achieved. What if this goal leads to a bigger plan? You'll never know how much you can achieve if you stop after the first accomplishment. Optimism gives you that extra reach to keep moving to strive for more. Optimism doesn't necessarily mean being happy go-lucky all the time; life is tough. Being able to achieve future goals is hard work. I believe a real Optimist not only sees the brighter side of situations, but also works hard to get things done.

I have been on my high school cross country team for 3 years. The hardest part of this sport is to hold a positive attitude all throughout each race. Even though it is hard, I feel as if runners have no choice but to be an Optimist. A huge part of running is not the physical endurance, but the mental endurance. If you run a race with a bad mindset, your time will probably reflect that. On the other hand, if you run a race with a positive mindset, it allows you mental clarity so you can focus on your race and push your limits. My best times I've ever ran have been on days where I have had not only a positive mindset, but also a clear mind. Also, each season I set goals to train hard; such as running every day, keeping my diet clean, and making sure to be in bed by a certain time. If I were to train all summer long and gain success in speed and endurance, I wouldn't want to stop training because I already achieved success, I

would want to continue training to reach towards my future goals for this sport. If I stopped then, my performance would plateau and I wouldn't be able to continue to grow as a runner throughout the season. It wouldn't be possible for me to stop training and to still have a successful season. Optimism is lifelong and ongoing; one small thing will lead into another like a long chain of reactions. When you start to see the positive side of things, it gets easier to strive towards what you want; practice builds confidence.

A common lesson that is taught today is the expression that states, "Is the glass half empty or half full?" There is so much more to this expression than what appears on the surface. Our perspective on a situation changes everything; whether you see the glass as half full or empty- that's exactly what it is. If you perceive it as half full, that is the optimism in you. Others will look at it and proclaim that is it half empty. Both groups are correct but this psychological test will tell you the difference between an optimist and a pessimist. Optimists who see the glass as half full will take any obstacles that are in the way and make them opportunities.

A world without optimism is a world set up for failure. When I think of a world contained of pessimism, it reminds me of a sad, lonely place with no opportunities. It also reminds me of the boy who played the role of a pessimist in *The Giving Tree*, by Shel Silverstein. Throughout the book, the boy was always negative and never satisfied and he used the tree's resources for temporary happiness. The tree had given the boy a part of herself, which he transformed into material items, such as money (from her apples), a house (from her branches), and a boat (from her trunk). Towards the end of the book, the tree was nothing but a small stump. The pessimist (the boy), was never satisfied but the optimist (the tree), was still happy. The tree gave and gave and had nothing left, but her optimism.

When all the world's problems are solved, I believe optimism is still necessary. When I think of optimism, it brings a smile to my face and makes me feel good inside. It creates a feeling within that gives you a positive attitude towards your daily life and others. This spirit is contagious. Optimism is about seeing a potential for change. It's about taking a step forward and pushing through. We all face obstacles; however, how we respond to those obstacles can make all the difference in the world. I believe people need optimism to achieve their goals and to live a happy life.