

## “How Optimism Has Paved My Road to Success”

In a world where negativity often makes headlines, it is vital to emphasize the power of positivity and how it can impact our lives. Negativity will never make anything easier, but having an optimistic attitude can not only help you reach your goals but may also help reduce stress. In my experience, I’ve allowed pessimistic energy to creep into my life, affecting my athletics, academics, and social skills. However, I’ve learned that when I put my best foot forward and maintain a positive outlook, I am able to achieve more than I ever thought possible.

First things first, I truly believe that most people do not fully understand what optimism means. Optimism is not just having a peppy attitude or always being happy, and it is definitely not a magical cure for life’s problems either. Optimism is respecting yourself enough to acknowledge your problems and finding a solution to each one, despite the obstacles, in the sole effort of accomplishing something worthwhile to you, like your goals. In my view, there are two parts to optimism: hard work and self-respect, which will ultimately lead to your success. I believe neither of these can be achieved without one core principle: a positive attitude.

I have always been one to keep up with grades, and once I applied an optimistic mindset, I was really able to excel in the advanced classes that my high school offers. Going hand in hand with optimism, the support I’ve received from my high school teachers and faculty has been another crucial reason for my future success. The most important key to success is believing in yourself, but having others around you believing in you gave me the confidence boost I needed. With the support of my school and the surrounding community and the confidence I’ve found within myself; I am now on the path to achieving my goal of becoming an Actuary by continuing my education in a college with a five-year program.

When thinking about my road to success, I know I couldn’t have done it without my experience at a regional tanning salon. Since getting a job there two years ago, I would never have thought I would be where I am today. Going into your first job can be scary, especially when you're

just a teenager – I was very quiet and timid. Now, I am the assistant manager and one of the top sellers in the company, all because I learned to be confident. I’ve also learned valuable lessons and skills that changed my doubtful thought process into a positive and successful work environment. Being able to manage challenges with an optimistic outlook creates a more positive environment and leads to greater success for both myself and my associates. Without developing an optimistic outlook and respect for myself, I have no idea where I’d be today and in the future.

One tip I’ve learned and will continue to use as I move forward into my next chapter in life is to set ambitious goals that I can “trick” myself into achieving more than I would if I were to be filled with doubts of failure. This process helps me eliminate those thoughts of failure. Let’s use my high school experience as an example. Without striving for an A in a class, I would likely be an average student. But since I continue to push myself in a positive way, I know I am growing and achieving more. It’s all about realizing the potential you have, not expecting to already have it. Life is hard, and staying optimistic is hard, but knowing you can push through it is the true joy. Optimism isn’t about ignoring the challenges; it’s about finding the strength to face them head-on, knowing they will lead you to growth. Staying positive through the tough moments strengthens you in ways you can’t always see in the moment. It helps you build resilience for future challenges.

Who knows, I might not be able to pursue all of my goals, or maybe my goals will change, but this will not change my positive mindset. Just remember – I know I will succeed. Without optimism, success may continue to be an arm's length away from you.