

OPTIMISM

It's not the events that happen to us that define our happiness and success, but how we interpret them. Optimism teaches us to accept 'it is what it is', and stop worrying about the things we can't control. It teaches us to **SHIFT** our thinking, to focus on what we want.

In 1985 Dr Martin Seligman was studying insurance sales people in the Met Life company. He found those people who scored above average for optimism sold 37% more insurance. Optimism is a really crucial driver of our success, because in life and work – we get knocked back a lot.

Sometimes bad things happen. What really benefits us is not taking those knock-backs too seriously. If we're overly focused on a problem or stress we don't help ourselves and move forward... we just feel crappy. If we can just say 'okay that happened, what's next', and not overly worry about the things that are in the past or we can't control – we perform better and feel happier.

This works because of one simple, psychological truth – What you focus on you get.

Ever just come out of a long relationship and all of a sudden every song on the radio is about love? Our brain does not see the rational truth of what is happening around us. It processes the world based on where we put our attention – and we don't even realise its happening.

There is a part of the brain called the reticular activating cortex that filters all the stuff that comes in through our senses. Only 0.001% percent of all the things our subconscious mind is aware of get alerted to our conscious mind.

What this tells us is how crucially important it is to learn to tame our mind. To have the skill of choosing what we focus on. That's what drives the way we see the world and how we experience life.

HOW IT HELPS

Optimism is a massive driver of performance. When we're in a positive state our brains are flooded with dopamine, a chemical which lights up the learning centers of our brain. We have wider access to our subconscious mind, which we need to have ideas and invent solutions. And we are energized, connecting with and influencing other people.

Optimists are 31% more productive, 3 times more creative and 10 times more engaged at work. Optimistic doctors diagnose patients 20% faster, Optimistic toddlers 4 put blocks together 50% faster and (my favorite stat of all): optimists live 20% longer than pessimists.

▶ SHIFT

The mindset skill to accept things happen – then shift our thinking to focus on what we want rather than the problem.

Mindset drives 80% our success and determines how we experience our life. The Shift tool is about managing mindset. Helping us to avoid getting sucked in to unnecessary worry, whinging and negativity. And enabling us to focus our mind in the most constructive and empowering way.

The Shift tool teaches 2, key mind-sets:

ACCEPT

"It is what it is"

Firstly, the ability to accept 'it is what it is'; to understand there's nothing we can do about things we can't control or to change events of the past, and that worrying or getting frustrated about them will simply make us less effective.

SHIFT

"What do you want?"

And secondly, the ability to manage the stories in our heads. To shift our thinking about these events. To stop worrying and focus on what we want, on outcomes and solutions rather than problems, blame or negativity. When we do, we start to take constructive actions (no matter how small) with the belief our actions will make a difference.



ACCEPT

Can you say 'it is what it is'?
Yes, No, Maybe

Consider the situation: Is it out of your control?
Can you do something about? Would you feel better?

SHIFT

What do you want? ... to think, feel, achieve and do

Think - What mindset, stories or way of looking at this would be most helpful?

Feel - How do you want to feel? What emotional state would be most useful?

Achieve - What would be a great goal to focus on achieving in this situation?

Do - What action can you take no matter how small towards what you want?

*If you SHIFT your thinking from focusing on the problem to focusing on to what you want
(within your control): What will the result be? What might happen?*