



BP – Optimism

(Back Page links all will be active by Oct 5)

***“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.” Helen Keller***

**The Benefits of Optimism** - Researchers like [Martin Seligman](#) have been studying optimists and pessimists for years, and they have found that an optimistic **worldview** has significant benefits:

### **Health**

[In a study](#) of 99 Harvard University students, those who were optimists at age 25 were significantly healthier at ages 45 and 60 than those who were pessimists.

[Other studies](#) have linked a pessimistic explanatory style with higher rates of infectious disease, poor health, and earlier mortality.

### **Achievement**

Seligman analyzed the explanatory styles of sports teams and found that the more optimistic teams created more positive synergy and performed better than the [pessimistic ones](#). [Another study](#) showed that pessimistic swimmers who were led to believe they'd done worse than they had were prone to future poor performance. Optimistic swimmers didn't have this vulnerability.

Research like this has led some companies to go out of their way to hire optimists -- a practice that seems to pay off.

### **Persistence**

Optimists don't give up as easily as pessimists, and they are more likely to achieve success because of it. Some optimistic businessmen, like Donald Trump have been bankrupt (even multiple times), but have been able to persist and turn their failures into millions.

### **Longevity**

In a retrospective study of 34 healthy Hall of Fame baseball players who played between 1900 and 1950, optimists lived significantly longer. [Other studies](#) have shown that



optimistic breast cancer patients had better health outcomes than pessimistic and hopeless patients.

### Less Stress

Optimists also tend to experience less stress than pessimists or realists. Because they believe in themselves and their abilities, they expect good things to happen. They see negative events as minor setbacks to be easily overcome, and view positive events as evidence of further good things to come. Believing in themselves, they also take more risks and create more positive events in their lives. Additionally, research shows that optimists are more proactive with stress management, favoring approaches that reduce or eliminate stressors and their emotional consequences. Optimists work harder at stress management, so they're less stressed."

### Sources:

Peterson, Christopher; Seligman, Martin E.; Vaillant, George E.; Pessimistic explanatory style is a risk factor for physical illness: A thirty-five-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 55(1), Jul, 1988. pp. 23-27.

Peterson, C. (2000). The future of optimism. *American Psychologist*, 55, 44-55.

Solberg Nes, L. S., & Segerstrom, S. C. (2006). Dispositional optimism and coping: A meta-analytic review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10, 235-251.

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[http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/raising\\_happiness/post/the\\_benefits\\_of\\_optimism/](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/raising_happiness/post/the_benefits_of_optimism/)

Christine Carter, Ph.D., is a mother of two and the executive director of the *Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley*.

*"Just as despair can come to one another only from other human beings, hope, too, can be given to one only by other human beings. — Elie Wiesel...optimism is a teachable skill. Hope, faith and optimism are all positive emotions about the future, and so are essential parts of a happy childhood. That is enough for me, but if a happy childhood isn't your first priority for your kids, think about these other benefits reaped by optimistic children. Compared to pessimistic people, optimists are:*



# CONTINUUM CENTER

- More **successful** in school, at work, and in athletics
- They are **healthier** and they live longer
- They are more **satisfied** with their marriages
- They are **less likely to suffer** from depression”

## It Pays to Be Optimistic - Gallup Business Journal

[businessjournal.gallup.com/content/28303/pays-optimistic.aspx](http://businessjournal.gallup.com/content/28303/pays-optimistic.aspx) Aug, '09, 2007 Jennifer Robison

***“...the office cynics are thought to be more realistic, rational, and strategic...Recent research, however, suggests that pessimistic managers may not only plan for the worst, but invite it.***

***Margaret Greenberg and Dana Arakawa, graduates of the Master of Applied Positive Psychology program at UPenn, studied the effects of optimistic managers and found that optimists may do a better job helping employees reach goals and be more productive.***

*When Greenberg and Arakawa looked at retrospective performance results they found that though a manager’s optimism didn’t directly influence the **engagement level of his or her employees**, that manager’s sense of optimism correlated significantly with his or her own level of engagement. In other words, the more optimistic the manager, the more engaged he or she is on the job.*

*Performance results showed that managers’ engagement level had a significant correlation with project performance, also between employee engagement and project performance. ..*

***What’s more says Greenberg, “Researchers have found that optimistic people are more successful, healthier and happier” – attributes that can also contribute to organizational productivity/profitability. Unlike many personality traits and talents, optimism is one of the few emotions that people can acquire.”***

[PDF]

## Optimism is Good for Your Health - USGS

[www.usgs.gov/humancapital/pb/documents/HealthyExchange-Fall2013.pdf](http://www.usgs.gov/humancapital/pb/documents/HealthyExchange-Fall2013.pdf)

***“According to the latest research, optimistic people are healthier and live longer than pessimists: In 2010, researchers studied the results of 83 scientific studies measuring the impact of optimism on physical health. Whether an individual study looked at overall***



# IMAGINE CONTINUUM CENTER

***longevity, survival from a disease, heart health, immunity, cancer outcomes, pregnancy outcomes, pain tolerance, or another health topic, those who had a more optimistic outlook performed better and had a better outcome than those who were pessimistic.***

*A 2006 study looked at nearly 7,000 students who had taken a psychological test when they enrolled at the University of North Carolina in the 1960's. Among the most pessimistic third of the subjects, the death rate over the next 40 years was 42% higher when compared to the most optimistic third. **MORE***

***MORE:*** *In a study of 1,000 men and women aged 65 to 85, after nearly 10 years of follow up, those who described themselves as "highly optimistic" had a 55% lower risk of death from all causes, when compared to those who were termed "very pessimistic."*

*Some may believe that optimists are unrealistic people who ignore reality, but numerous studies report otherwise. Far from living life with blinders on, it is optimists who confront trouble head-on while pessimists bury their heads in denial and avoidance. In a study of women newly diagnosed with breast cancer, the women with an optimistic disposition were more likely to acknowledge the seriousness of the disease and took more active steps to cope with it. Several studies have shown that optimistic breast cancer patients have better health outcomes than pessimistic and hopeless patients.*

*Researchers say several factors may explain the link between optimism, better health and longer life.*

- *Optimism is associated with living healthier – more physical activity, less smoking, moderate use of alcohol, following their doctors advice more faithfully, etc.*
- *Optimistic people tend to have more friends and a larger social network to rely on during crises.*
- *Optimists handle stress better, a risk factor associated with high blood pressure, heart disease and other risk factors that adversely affect health and longevity.*

### ***More benefits of optimism***

*By almost every measure, optimists fair better than pessimists, whether it's work, school, sports or relationships. They get depressed less often than pessimists do, make more money and have happier marriages. Optimists don't give up as easily as pessimists and they are more likely to achieve success because of it. They see negative events as minor setbacks to be overcome and view positive events as evidence of more good things to come. Believing in themselves, optimists also take more risks and create more positive events in their lives."*

**END OF MORE**

**Is Optimism Really Good for You? - The Institute for Social**



# CONTINUUM CENTER

[the-iseiblog.com/social-intelligence/is-optimism-really-good-for-you](http://the-iseiblog.com/social-intelligence/is-optimism-really-good-for-you)

*“Positive Psychology is based, above all, on science, and Chris Peterson turned his attention to the scientific study of optimism. In fact, studies of optimism preceded and helped usher in the field of Positive Psychology, which is why we will start here.*

*An enormous amount of empirical research over the decades (Peterson’s and others) has demonstrated that **optimism is good for us**. Among the benefits, optimism can lead to:*

- *Better health, bolstered immunity*
- *More satisfying relationships (both friendships and intimate relationships)*
- *Greater success in work, school and sports*
- *Less stress*
- *Lower cholesterol, lower blood pressure*
- *Increased longevity (longer life)*

- *Greater happiness*
- *Enhanced resilience and coping skills*
- *Greater productivity and motivation*
- *More patience*
- *Enhanced physiological and psychological well-being*
- *More effective problem-solving*
- *Greater self-confidence and positive self-regard*
- *Improved social life and bonding between individuals*
- *Greater focus*
- *Improved communication and self-expression*
- *Enhanced mental flexibility and creativity*

*Optimism and other [positive emotions](#) have a positive impact on virtually every bodily function and organ in the human body, including the brain, the heart, the vascular and immune systems, the hormonal system and on detoxification.”*

**WE ARE WIRED FOR OPTIMISM: IT OPTIMIZES US.**

**But of course with optimism, as with all things, we need balance.**

**[Optimism, but Not Too Much, Can Be Good For You - NYTimes.com](#)**



[www.nytimes.com/.../optimism-but-not-too-much-can-be-good-for-you.html](http://www.nytimes.com/.../optimism-but-not-too-much-can-be-good-for-you.html) SEPT. 23, 2011,  
[ALINA TUGEND](#)

*"I HAVE trouble with optimism. I would like to be a more optimistic person, and sometimes I can be. But there's a long tradition of pessimism in my family; our attitude is that looking on the bright side, or expecting the best, is naïve at best and folly at worst.*

*"...is it good to see through rose-tinted glasses? As economists, neuroscientists and [psychologists](#) look at what we mean by optimism and how it affects everything from our jobs and our [investments](#) to our marriages, they are finding that there is such a thing as too much.*

*First, many of us may have the wrong idea about optimism. It isn't solely — or largely — about repeating "boosterish phrases to ourselves like, 'Every day in every way, I'm getting better and better'". [Martin Seligman](#), director of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote in his book "The Optimistic Child" (Houghton Mifflin,*

*1995). Rather, "**the basis of optimism does not lie in positive phrases or images of victory but in the way you think about causes.**" MORE:*

**This gets back to the central role of MEANING, and how crucial our meaning-assigning capacities are for well-being and quality of life. We have to realize we ALWAYS have a choice what meaning (or causes) to assign any situation – even the most dire.**

*Some concentration camp survivors have taught us that very lesson, like retired pediatrician Robert Fisch, who wrote the book, *Light from the Yellow Star: A Lesson of Love from the Holocaust*.*

**MORE:** *"But when good things happen, pessimists and optimists flip. "When children who believe their successes have permanent causes do well, they will try even harder next time," Professor Seligman wrote. "Children who see temporary reasons for good events may give up even when they succeed, believing their success was a fluke."*



# IMAGINE CONTINUUM CENTER

*As with most traits, the way we see our lives — optimistically or pessimistically or somewhere in between — is a combination of the temperament we're born with and the environment we grow up in. How much we can change that is always a subject of debate, but, Professor Seligman wrote, he believes optimism can be taught.*

*We may not want to go overboard, though. [Manju Puri](#), professor of finance, and [David T. Robinson](#), professor of business administration, both at the Duke University Fuqua School of Business, have determined that while moderate optimism is good, extreme optimism is not.*

***Studies show that good lawyers tend toward the pessimistic side of things, Professor Robinson said, perhaps because they have to always be thinking about what could go wrong.***

***But optimism serves those with business degrees better, he said. He co-wrote another study of graduate business students at Duke that found that those who were more optimistic — although they didn't necessarily get better grades — tended to have an easier time in the job search, land jobs earlier and were more likely to be promoted two years after starting their jobs.***

*"In corporate America, it pays well to play well with others," Professor Robinson said.*

*...In contrast, depression is linked to a more pessimistic outlook, which, Professor Phelps said, "is sometimes a more accurate assessment of the probability of future events."*

*The experts are trying to discover if there are biological ways to increase or decrease optimism. In the meantime, we pessimists will have to learn to lighten up (but not too much) and rely on the old-fashioned ways to feel better about life — rich chocolate and good wine."*

**END OF MORE**

**So, yes there can be too much of a good thing, including optimism. We are not talking about excessive optimism here.** Of course what is needed is optimism balanced by a mindful weighing of the odds and all other key considerations.



# CONTINUUM CENTER

But it is very clear that human beings are wired for optimism and it is a state of consciousness in which we flourish. It makes no sense that humans would have the R hem capacity for transcendent perception, be wired to seek meaning and to thrive with optimism, in a universe that – according to the conventional scientific paradigm – is random, accidental, machine-like and meaning-less. And oh by the way cold, indifferent and terrifying.

If the goal of life is survival, prioritization was all that's required...not Meaning with a capital M. It would be counter-adaptive and make no evolutionary sense to have the drive and capacity to seek transcendent meaning in a meaning-less universe. There is no other example of such a maladaptive trait (unless the trait itself is misunderstood) – especially when you get to the pinnacle of brain development. Such a mis-match makes no sense...though it makes a lot of cents for the big industries of pharmaceuticals, prisons, and war.

## **We need to rethink some long-standing assumptions.**

*“Science is complex and chilling. The mathematical language of science is understood by very few. The vistas it presents are scary—an enormous universe ruled by chance and impersonal rules, empty and uncaring, ungraspable and vertiginous.” — Isaac Asimov*

**In the 80's Candace Pert** (former Chief of Brain Biochemistry at NIMH, peptide discoverer and author *Molecules of Emotion*) boldly spoke of her findings and conclusion that mind is not just in the brain but in every cell of the body.

**Beliefs and outlook reached down to every cell of your body.**

Roger Jones, retired physics professor and author, *Physics as Metaphor*: ***“If a society set out to design a creation myth to scare the living daylights out of everyone, you couldn't have done a better job than modern western science.”***

And for the record, there is not one shred of evidence of what happened right before the Big Bang, or that it happened for no cause. **There is neither evidentiary substantiation nor coherent, internally consistent logic for the conventional materialist, mechanistic, Newtonian assumption of a no-cause, “accidental” universe however it is taken as fact and**





**foregone conclusion. And it rails against optimism by casting us as cogs in the wheels of cold, random, indifferent machinery...which affects our psyche and every cell of our body.**

## **[The Accidental Universe | Harper's Magazine](#)**

[harpers.org/archive/2011/12/the-accidental-universe](http://harpers.org/archive/2011/12/the-accidental-universe) [Alan Lightman](#)

*“Dramatic developments in cosmological findings and thought have led some of the world’s premier physicists to propose that our universe is only one of an enormous number of universes with wildly varying properties, and that some of the most basic features of our particular universe are indeed mere accidents—a random throw of the cosmic dice. In which case, there is no hope of ever explaining our universe’s features in terms of fundamental causes and principles...A vast number of universes may exist, with many different values of the amount of dark energy. Our particular universe is one of the universes with a small value, permitting the emergence of life. We are here, so our universe must be such a universe. We are an accident. From the cosmic lottery hat containing zillions of universes, we happened to draw a universe that allowed life. But then again, if we had not drawn such a ticket, we would not be here to ponder the odds.”*

**Other “of the world’s premier physicists” come to a new conclusion, akin to what [Max Planck](#), the founder of quantum mechanics, discovered: “Mind is the matrix of all matter.”**

**There is no evidence or logic that precludes pre-existing order or underlying intelligence and design – which is a different concept from a personified Designer. But that is generally not an offered option.**

If someone has trouble conceptualizing [Intelligence](#) separate from an omniscient Intelligent Being, it could well be a failure on the part of one’s conceptualizing capacity and not a failure of the concept. It’s about an underlying Principle, not Personified Entity...though the former does not necessarily preclude the latter.

There is a scientific paradigm – [the quantum paradigm](#) – that proposes this underlying intelligence or information principle or consciousness. It is the paradigm of possibility which can move us beyond the focus on probability, and of expanding us from calculation into compassion.



*“Not everything that counts can be counted.”* Sign on Einstein’s office door

Many **legendary scientists (from different disciplines)** have been proposing it for many decades. It threatens the fundamental assumptions of the current mechanistic paradigm and has been ignored in favor of the dangerous world theory...which won’t get us to optimism and instead will lead to depression. Look around.

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10943-009-9247-9#> (2010)

*“The authors advocate the application of ETAS Theory in research on religion and mental health because it explains how religious **and other beliefs related to the dangerousness of the world** can directly affect psychiatric symptoms through their effects on specific brain structures”.*

The Newtonian mechanistic paradigm casts the universe as a big machine with parts we aim to predict and manipulate or control. Everything is made up of physical parts and processes. Including emotions, thoughts and consciousness in general...all are assumed to be material and physical in origin...products of brain chemicals, or genes.

Optimism theories might leave out very important considerations, or confuse optimism with wishful thinking. We want to state that as with all things, balance is important and for our purposes optimism is a positive outlook that motivates and is reinforced by proactive behavior. It is not idle positivity. That’s an important distinction to make.

## [The Problem With Positive Thinking - NYTimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com/.../the-problem-with-positive-thi...)

[www.nytimes.com/.../the-problem-with-positive-thi...](http://www.nytimes.com/.../the-problem-with-positive-thi...) OCT. 24, 2014 By GABRIELE OETTINGEN: [Gabriele Oettingen](#), a professor of psychology at New York University and the University of Hamburg, is the author of “Rethinking Positive Thinking: Inside the New Science of Motivation.”

*“MANY people think that the key to success is to cultivate and doggedly maintain an optimistic outlook. This belief in the power of positive thinking, expressed with varying degrees of sophistication, informs everything from affirmative pop anthems like Katy Perry’s “Roar” to the Mayo Clinic’s suggestion that you may be able to improve your health by eliminating “negative self-talk.”*



# IMAGINE CONTINUUM CENTER

*But the truth is that positive thinking often hinders us. More than two decades ago, I conducted [a study](#) in which I presented women enrolled in a weight-reduction program with several short, open-ended scenarios about future events — and asked them to imagine how they would fare in each one. Some of these scenarios asked the women to imagine that they had successfully completed the program; others asked them to imagine situations in which they were tempted to cheat on their diets. I then asked the women to rate how positive or negative their resulting thoughts and images were.*

*A year later, I checked in on these women. The results were striking: The more positively women had imagined themselves in these scenarios, the fewer pounds they had lost.*

*My colleagues and I have since performed many follow-up studies, observing a range of people, including children and adults; residents of different countries (the United States and Germany); and people with various kinds of wishes — college students wanting a date, hip-replacement patients hoping to get back on their feet, graduate students looking for a job, schoolchildren wishing to get good grades. In each of these studies, the results have been clear: Fantasizing about happy outcomes — about smoothly attaining your wishes — didn't help. Indeed, it hindered people from realizing their dreams.*

***...Some critics of positive thinking have advised people to discard all happy talk and “get real” by dwelling on the challenges or obstacles. But this is too extreme a correction. Studies have shown that this strategy doesn't work any better than entertaining positive fantasies.***

***What does work better is a hybrid approach...”***

Yes, yes, we repeat, neither do we advocate a “wishful thinking” positivity or excessive optimism, which is really a form of pretend, denial, or escapism. We advocate optimism with a well-thought out strategic plan. That is a wonderful balance/integration of **R and L hemispheres**.

Just like Einstein said intuition is the sacred gift and rational thinking the servant, we think also that optimism needs to set the vision and the planning comes in to serve it. Unfortunately, our society does not honor intuition or properly develop optimism, so pessimism, anxiety and depression have steadily climbed.

The larger milieu of society, the scientific gestalt of meaning or no-meaning, which receives the academic stamp of approval, will support optimism or undermine it. Look around. The current paradigm cannot take us to optimism.



**'Slipping behind': Are we becoming a nation of pessimists?** BY TONY DOKOUPIL  
NBC NEWS

***"...most Americans now also think life is going poorly in their own backyard. The survey didn't directly ask about happiness, but when evaluating their own lives more than 85 percent of people in the center thought they were stuck, "falling backward" or "slipping behind."***

*Two out of three of these people believe that the next generation has it even worse, and that young people in general are facing vicious headwinds like nothing their parents experienced.*

*The cost of all this sour feeling is a cascading sense that the old ways of America have failed, say the pollsters. It's why most of the new American center says affirmative action has to go, and unions are a vestige of the past, and the Bible and U.S. Constitution could be jettisoned without harm as the nation searches for a way to right itself.*

*"People feel eroded," said Democratic pollster Daniel Franklin, who helped conduct the survey. "They've seen the strength of the middle class wane, and correspondingly, the country as a whole begin to falter. Now **they're looking for new ideas, new strategies to rebuild their hopes and they haven't found them yet.**"*

Explore Esquire magazine's coverage of the [exclusive survey](#). *"That's potentially good news, say Franklin and Blizzard. A more optimistic nation might be stuck in its ways, confident that the good days will roll on, hesitant to break that happy momentum. By contrast, **the new American center is eager for change.** It's still a relatively steady nation, rooted in tolerant yet traditional values, and firm in its belief that marriage and family are important institutions for the future. Yet **it's hopeful that something new — a novel policy or position, a fresh program or a galvanizing politician — can make for a turnaround yet.**"*

**The quantum paradigm is all about a new universe of possibility.**

*"Major problems cannot be solved from the same consciousness that created them." Einstein*

The conventional "Modern" mindset is a tacit set of assumptions that push hard against meaning and optimism in life. **"Realism" is too often just pessimism renamed.** We are told to just "get real" and accept that "this" (the physical dimensions and all the negativity) is what reality is ultimately about. Many [great scientists](#) see a much deeper reality.

Reality as defined by the conventional, classical, materialist paradigm is fundamentally reducible to matter and so billions are spent to find the ever-smaller parts that will explain things as yet



# CONTINUUM CENTER

unexplained by the classical models. Like how consciousness could have possibly emerged from matter. Or how organic life emerged from inorganic. Or the [placebo effect](#).

**The conventional “Modern” mindset is a tacit set of assumptions that push hard against meaning and optimism in life. The Newtonian, materialist, mechanistic, reductionist paradigm says to be “grown up” you must forget ideas of transcendent meaning and accept the cruel realities of life as the mature description of “reality.” Many great scientists see the evidence leading to a much broader view of reality. We have to get past the reductionist assumption that tries to fully explain consciousness as “what the brain does.”**

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3807005/> The Neural Basis of Optimism and Pessimism

Some might insist that one’s DNA determines their optimism or lack of it, or that the brain produces it.

However, there is conclusive evidence that [consciousness is primary and a causal reality](#), that non-material emotions and mindset can actually change the physical brain (for better or worse...see ETAS dangerous world theory above). **If consciousness can change the brain then a materialist pillar, (consciousness is a not-real by-product of the brain) no longer holds up.**

**The new interpretation elevates our capacity to choose where to put our attention and how to adjust it to a position of primary importance.**

## **Why Optimism Is Good for Your Brain - NICABM**

[www.nicabm.com/nicabmblog/why-optimism-is-good-for-your-brain](http://www.nicabm.com/nicabmblog/why-optimism-is-good-for-your-brain)

January 18, 2013 [Ruth Buczynski, PhD](#)

*“Focusing on positive experiences is a reflex for some, but it’s a skill that all of us would be wise to adopt. Because not only can it be just plain enjoyable to mentally relive good experiences, it can actually rewire your brain.*

***New findings keep showing us that everything we do affects our brain. But that is in both positive and negative ways.***

***So wherever we focus our attention, we’re making lasting change, for better or worse.***

*The more we show people that changing the brain can be both simple and enjoyable, the better equipped they’ll be to transform their lives.”*

**And we can change more than just our brains through the cultivation of optimism – in another challenge to the conventional materialist paradigm, we can change our DNA.**



[Happiness And Optimism 'Can Change Your DNA'](#)

## Optimism is Good for You | Care2 Healthy Living

[www.care2.com/greenliving/optimism-is-good-for-you.html](http://www.care2.com/greenliving/optimism-is-good-for-you.html)

Optimism May Save Your Health [Diana Vilibert](#) August 7, 2013:

*"Nothing gets a pessimist grumpier than being told to look on the bright side, but...if you're a pessimist, look on the bright side—it's good for you!"*

A recent [study](#) carried out by researchers at Concordia University found a plus side to looking on the plus side: optimists' cortisol levels stay more stable in the face of stressful moments than the cortisol levels of pessimists. "Who cares?" grumble pessimists. Well, cortisol helps with everything from your immune function to blood pressure regulation to insulin release, so keeping it stable is important. Even occasional, small increases in cortisol levels can be good for you—it's your body's "fight or flight" response to stress that can help give you a burst of increase immunity, lower your sensitivity to pain, and give you a quick burst of energy for survival (hence its "fight or flight" connection).

*But when it's too high for too long a time, like it was found to be in glass-half-empty types, you'll get the crappy effects of cortisol: increased abdominal fat, impaired cognitive performance, higher blood pressure, lowered immunity, and decreased bone tissue and muscle mass. Basically making optimists as a whole slimmer, smarter, fitter, and less likely to get sick than pessimists".* **MORE**

**MORE** "Factor in how many times those "stressful moments" the researchers looked at pop up through the average week (everything from getting stuck in traffic to a meeting at work to going to the mall on the busy day can spike cortisol) and it's easy to see how important it is to keep the glass half-full.

*The study, published in the journal Health Psychology, was small—135 people were asked about their daily stress and had their cortisol checked five times a day for 12 days over a six-year period. But the results do back up a lot of studies over previous years linking psychological well-being (including optimism) with physical health. One 2012 scientific [review](#) linked it with fewer heart attacks, strokes, and cardiovascular issues. A 2010 [study](#) found that when optimism drops, so does your immune response. And a [study](#) of over 200 centenarians found that most were optimists.*

*So are you just doomed if you're a natural-born pessimist? You'd like to think so, wouldn't you, pessimists? Actually, looking on the bright side is easier than you may think. Research has shown pessimists can become optimists..."*

**END OF MORE**

**Continuum Center programming and resources are designed to develop optimism, confidence, connectedness, self-awareness, self-regulation (of mood and physiology), and**



**personal responsibility, through a new set of operating assumptions and access to internal resources previously overlooked.**

It's important to understand that many traits mean different things to different people. We are about developing traits that increase efficacy and quality, positivity and problem-solving.

**Barbara Fredrickson, PhD – from the book, *Positivity***

***“Although you have more control over your positivity than you may have realized, creating more positivity in your life is not simply a matter of wishful thinking. Good intentions alone won't make anyone happier...***

***...you can't simply will yourself to feel a positive emotion. You must instead locate one of several specific levers to turn on your positivity. Certain forms of thought and action are these positive levers...A fundamental difference between physical pain and emotions, however, is that the levers that turn on emotions can indeed be redirections of conscious thought. This means that you can “think something” as well as “do something” to rouse positivity.***

*People constantly look outside themselves – to money and all it can buy – and coming up short. What's the active ingredient? Positivity. Heartfelt positivity.*

*A fascinating fact about people's positivity ratios is that they're subject to a tipping point. Below a certain ratio, people get pulled into a downward spiral fueled by negativity. Their behavior becomes painfully predictable – even rigid.*

***Making small changes in the ways you appreciate and frame the events of your day can turn positivity on...you have more say than you think about whether you feel positivity or negativity and when.”***

**MORE**

**MORE:** *“...time and time again, against the odds, evidence emerged that positivity broadens us. I've become convinced that it's a core truth about being human...we learned we could broaden the very scope of people's attention simply by making them feel good. Our emotions are connected to our outlook via a simple cause-and-effect relationship. As positivity flows through our heart, it simultaneously broadens our minds, allowing us to see both the forest and the trees.*

*Scientists at Brandeis University, using sophisticated eye-tracking technology, have replicated our discovery that positive emotions broaden people's attention.*



*...social play builds ties between people that are lasting and consequential. This wisdom holds outside the human family circle as well. A fascinating example comes from a certain breed of ground squirrels. Like some other mammals, when one squirrel sees a predator in the distance, it will sound an alarm call that alerts other squirrels to run for cover. It's a risky move. In crying out, the danger-spotting squirrel draws attention to itself, which may well attract the predator. Scientists used to think animals would risk their lives only for kin...New evidence suggests, however, that squirrels also sound alarm calls for former playmates not genetically related.*

*With positivity people feel closer and more connected...they see more overlap. Positivity opens our eyes and allows us to see our oneness with others. Positivity can even alter your view of people you don't know...but many of us have been coaxed into looking for our happiness in all the wrong places...My research shows that these pursuits are misguided, and that the way to pursue happiness is to pursue happiness is to pursue positivity each day, wherever we are. Moment by moment," and through it we build the happiness we truly seek."*

**END OF MORE**

**We have a materialist paradigm and why wonder is there rampant materialism? We have a physical parts and separation oriented paradigm and we wonder why there is epidemic loneliness and alienation?**

Positivity unlocked more possibilities for participants in one of Fredrickson's studies, and from others she learned **they could broaden the very scope of people's attention simply by making them feel good.** Plus, in another study, the broader the scope of their visual attention, the more creative they became on their other verbal tasks.

**Having a positive outlook is the most important predictor of resilience.**

<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/03/the-benefits-of-optimism-are-real/273306/> **EMILY ESFAHANI SMITH** MAR 1, 2013

*A positive outlook is the most important predictor of resilience. It's not just Hollywood magic.*

*"Another best picture nominee, *Life of Pi*, employs a similar device. Pi finds himself aboard a lifeboat with a ferocious Bengal tiger in the aftermath of a shipwreck that has his entire family. Lost at sea in the Pacific Ocean for 227 days -- starved, desperate, and forced into a game of survival with the tiger -- Pi pushes forward, even though he, like Pat, has lost everything. **Pi says, "You might think I lost all hope at that point. I did. And as a result I perked up and felt much better."***





# CONTINUUM CENTER

*Pi's resilience is incredible once you realize what happens on board the lifeboat and how Pi copes with the tragedy that he witnesses and endures. There's more to the story than the boy and the tiger. Though what really happened is terrible, **Pi chooses to tell a different story. His parallels what really happened, but is beautiful not bleak, transcendent not nihilistic.***

**"Which story do you prefer?" he asks at the end.**

***This question turns out to matter a great deal if you are trying to figure out who grows after trauma and who gets swallowed up by it, a question that psychologists have been grappling with for years.*** Think back to the last time you experienced a loss, setback, or hardship. Did you respond by venting, ruminating, and dwelling on the disappointment, or did you look for a faint flash of meaning through all of the darkness -- a silver lining of some sort? How quickly did you bounce back -- how resilient are you?

*The New Yorker's* Richard Brody criticized *Silver Linings Playbook* for its sentimentality and "faith-based view of mental illness and, overall, of emotional redemption." *The New York Times'* A.O. Scott made a similar, if predictable, [criticism](#) of *Life of Pi*: "The novelist and the older Pi are eager...to repress the darker implications of the story, as if the presence of cruelty and senseless death might be too much for anyone to handle...Insisting on the benevolence of the universe in the way that *Life of Pi* does can feel more like a result of delusion or deceit than of earnest devotion."

*But these criticisms miss the point. First, they fail to understand why these two strange and idiosyncratic movies, both based on novels, resonated with so many millions of people. Their themes of resilience speak to each of us -- and there is a reason for that. The key insight of each movie is, whether their creators realized it or not, grounded in a growing body of scientific research, which Brody and Scott overlook.*

*Positive emotions can, the researchers concluded, undo the effects of a stressful negative experience.*

*Far from being delusional or faith-based, having a positive outlook in difficult circumstances is not only an important predictor of resilience -- how quickly people recover from adversity -- but it is the most important predictor of it." **MORE***

If [consciousness is a causal reality](#), then internal states are primary, they matter greatly and affect matter (and circumstances) greatly. Optimism not only affects physical brain, biology and physiology, but its impact extends past the body. It's the Optimistic [Observer Effect](#).



# IMAGINE CONTINUUM CENTER

**MORE** *“People who are resilient tend to be more positive and optimistic compared to less-resilient folks; they are better able to regulate their emotions; and they are able to maintain their optimism through the most trying circumstances.*

*This is what **Dr. Dennis Charney, the dean of Mount Sinai School of Medicine, found when he examined approximately 750 Vietnam war veterans who were held as prisoners of war for six to eight years.** Tortured and kept in solitary confinement, these 750 men were remarkably resilient. Unlike many fellow veterans, they did not develop depression or posttraumatic stress disorder after their release, even though they endured extreme stress. What was their secret? **After extensive interviews and tests, Charney found ten characteristics that set them apart. The top one was optimism.** The second was altruism. Humor and having a meaning in life -- or something to live for -- were also important.”*

For optimism to take root deep in our psyche and cells in needs a conceptual framework or a worldview or paradigm that is conducive.

The quantum paradigm was born from the study of light and photons. The findings and implications – which are profoundly inspiring, empowering and optimistic - have yet to make it into the classroom or text books other than to over-simply and inaccurately state that photons are a particle that sometimes act like waves.

END OF MORE

Einstein said if he could he would spend his whole life over again studying light. Maybe that is the same light of awareness and creativity, of positivity and optimism, of love and transcendent meaning that many speak of? Like Jacques Lusseyran:

*“I could not see the light outside myself anymore, the light that illuminates objects, is associated with them and plays on them. All the world around me was convinced I’d lost it forever, but I found it again in myself and what a miracle, it was intact.*

*This was something entirely new, you understand, all the more since it contradicted everything that those who have eyes believe. **The source of light is not in the outer world. We believe that it is, only because of a common delusion. The light dwells where life also dwells: within ourselves.”** Jacques Lusseyran, blind since age 8, organized a student resistance movement during the Nazi occupation of Paris, which published an underground newspaper called le Tigre. At 17, Lusseyran was elected its chief **MORE:** because he had what his comrades called “a sense of human beings.” In 1943, this group grew to 600 members and joined the Defense de la France, one of the*



# CONTINUUM CENTER

largest resistance movements in France. Lusseyran was made part of the Executive Committee and was put in charge of the massive distribution of its clandestine paper, which became France-Soir, one of the most important daily papers in France.

Lusseyran also learned at an early age in grade school that **the “*subject for all subjects, the fact that the world is not just outside us but also within,*”** was entirely lacking in the classroom. **“To accumulate knowledge was good and beautiful, but the reason for men to acquire it would have been more meaningful, and no one spoke of that.”**