

## OPTIMISM SURVEY

*Adapted from "Learned Optimism" by Martin Seligman, Ph.D*

Answer the following questions with what you are more likely to say to yourself when the described event occurs. Of course, it will depend on the circumstances, but try to answer with the response you would anticipate in most situations. Record your responses on the scoring sheet with an X.

Example:

9. I lost my sense of balance because:

D. I slipped on ice

H. I was not paying attention

If you selected answer D (I slipped on ice), you would put an X in the D column on the scoring guide under question number 9.

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1. You are feeling run down lately. It is because:

I. I never get a chance to relax

A. I was busier this week than normal

2. You've had some bad experiences telling jokes before, where all you get is a polite laugh. This time, you tell a joke and everyone laughs. It is because:

K. It must truly be a good joke this time

E. I happened to execute it just right, using the right timing and inflection

3. You do a group exercise and perform poorly compared to others. It is because:

F. I am not as talented as the others

L. I am not well rested and could not focus

4. You host a successful party at your home. It is because:

J. I was particularly charming that evening

H. I am an excellent host

5. You save a person from choking to death. It is because:

G. I have learned the proper technique and happened to be in the right place at the right time

B. I know what to do in a crisis situation

6. You gain weight over the holidays. It is because:

I. Diets don't work in the long run

A. The diet I tried didn't work

7. You prepare a meal for your family and no one appears to like it. It is because:
  - F. I am not a very good cook
  - L. I must have missed an ingredient or rushed the meal
8. You buy a stereo system. You work on it and work on it but can't get it to work correctly. It is because:
  - D. I am no good at technical things
  - C. The owner's manual is written poorly.
9. You saw a drunk driver swerving on the road and called the police, averting a possible crime. It happened because:
  - E. I was particularly alert
  - K. I happened to see the car at the moment it swerved
10. You forgot your spouses' (girl/boyfriend) anniversary. It is because:
  - I. I am not good at remembering dates
  - A. I was too pre-occupied with other things at the moment
11. Last night you got asked to the dance floor repeatedly. It was because:
  - J. I was particularly charming that evening
  - H. I am outgoing at parties
12. You've been fighting a lot with your spouse (or boy/girlfriend). It is because:
  - D. I have been under a lot of pressure lately
  - C. He/she has been very difficult to get along with
13. Your friends compliment you on a great dinner. It is because:
  - G. I got this great recipe.
  - B. I am an excellent cook.
14. You receive a prestigious award or recognition by your agency or peers. It is because:
  - G. I solved an important problem or gave an important contribution
  - B. I was the best employee/professional
15. You have not had a sick day at work for two years. It is because:
  - K. I have good genes
  - E. I ate well and made sure I was well rested
16. You are pretty sure you know how to get to the building where the meeting will be held but you are not sure you are on the right road. You pull over and ask for directions. You end up going the wrong direction for ten minutes before getting straightened out. You got lost because:
  - D. I missed a turn
  - C. The man at the gas station did not give me clear directions

17. You made a killing on the stock market this year. It is because:  
J. My broker tried a new stock and it panned out  
H. My broker is top notch when it comes to investing
18. Your romantic partner wants to cool things off for a while. It is because:  
F. I am too self centered  
L. I did not spend enough quality time with him/her
19. Your employer asks for your advice on things. It is because:  
G. I am an expert in this/these areas  
B. I am good at giving useful, practical advice. That is why I often get asked.
20. You interviewed for a job and were “in the flow” with your answers, getting you a second interview as a finalist. It is because:  
J. I felt extremely confident in the interview  
H. I interview well
21. You win a racquetball tournament. It is because:  
G. I spent a lot of time honing my skills and practicing  
B. I do the best at everything I put my mind to
22. Your doctor tells you that you have to stop eating so much sugar. Your reaction is:  
D. I’ve got to start being more disciplined about this  
C. There is no way to avoid this. There is sugar in everything.
23. After many tries, you finally win a \$100,000 in the lottery. It is because:  
K. If I play long enough chances are I will win something someday.  
E. This time I happened to pick just the right numbers or picked the right place to buy the ticket
24. You are asked to head up an important project. It is because:  
J. I just completed an initiative that got noticed  
H. I am very good at what I do. When I try, I succeed.
25. You have been practicing for a long time to be a good golfer but you performed poorly at an employee tournament. It is because:  
L. I am not good at this sport  
F. I am not a good athlete
26. You lose your temper with a friend. It is because:  
I. He/she has a bad trait  
A. He/she was not in a good mood that day

27. You run for your national association's presidency and lose. It is because:
- D. I didn't campaign hard enough
  - C. The other candidate knew more people and was from a more populated state
28. When I'm honest with myself, the real reason the project I was in charge of succeeded was because:
- E. I kept a close watch over everyone's work and directed it
  - K. Everyone devoted a lot of time and energy to it
29. Your stocks are at an all time low. It is because:
- F. I did not pick good stocks
  - L. I do not understand business
30. You can't seem to save money no matter how hard you try. It is because:
- I. I and/or my family members are not disciplined when it comes to spending
  - A. I am in a slump at the moment

**Optimism Test Scoring Sheet**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Question	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
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29												
30												
<b>Total</b>												

5 \_\_\_\_\_

## Optimism Survey: Interpretation Guide

Total up the points in Columns I, D, and F.

This is your pessimism score when **bad events** happen.

box 1

If you scored 0-6 you are optimistic when bad things happen  
7 you are average  
8-14 you are pessimistic when bad things happen

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Total up the points in Columns H, E, and B.

This is your optimism score when **good events** happen.

box 2

If you scored 10-15 you are optimistic when good things happen  
8-9 you are average  
0-7 you are pessimistic when good things happen

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Subtract Box One from Box Two:

minus

equals

box 2

box 1

6

This is your **total optimism score**

If you scored 4 and above you are optimistic across the board  
2-3 you are average  
1 or below you are pessimistic across the board

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Total up the points in Columns F and I:

This is your **hope score** and constitutes how hopeful you are when negative events occur.

If you scored 0-4 you are hopeful  
5 you are average  
6-10 you are hopeless