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## The Power of Optimism

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*By Judi Moreo*

Have you ever been really excited about something and told someone else about it only to have them stomp all over your excitement? The negative person to whom you told your dream pointed out why you shouldn't be excited and how what you are excited about will never work. That person is a pessimist. He, she, and/or they...are the people that see a glass with something in it and say, "That glass is half empty." They complain even when there's nothing to complain about.

Many years ago, I decided to stay away from negative, pessimistic people and you should, too. Instead, surround yourself with people who are optimists. These are people who are glad to have something in the glass. They are the people who find a reason for things...even bad things that happen. They know something positive will come out of situations. And, for them, it does.

Optimists make plans and do preparation. Business owners know it requires plans to be successful and optimists know that we, as individuals, also need to make plans for our lives. To my way of thinking, this is the only life we have. This is our one chance to get it right. This is our only shot at creating the life we want. So, we need an effective and realistic way to make our dreams become reality.

Don't you want to live your life so you don't look back with regrets? If so, then start examining all the possible ways you can make things work. What steps can you take? Use a technique called Brainstorming.

Dr. Alex Osborn, the originator of the Brainstorming Technique, and co-founder of what was one of the world's largest advertising agencies in the 1960's as well as the founder of the Creative Education Foundation, described this method of thinking as "organized ideation." He believed that when you drive for new ideas, you shouldn't drive with your brakes on. His method proved to be so effective that many top companies and organizations around the world still use it today. If it's good enough for them, I certainly believe it's good enough for us. Whether you choose to use this technique by yourself or with other people, there are some rules to follow.

Write down ideas, lots of ideas, about what you think you would or could love to do,

have, or be in your life. The more ideas we have, the better our chances of finding what we want.

All ideas are welcome. No idea is too outrageous. In this step, you are looking for possibilities. It doesn't matter what you put down as long as you think you might really love to do it, become it, or have it. It's okay to be a bit "out there" in your wants and dreams.

When you have all the options you can possibly think of, ask yourself some creativity questions and write your answers on a separate piece of paper. Apply these questions to every possibility you have listed:

- What activities or goals can I combine to get a better outcome?
- How can I rearrange my schedule? Or my finances?
- Can I do more of something? Less of something?
- What can I adapt, modify, or do differently?
- What if I gave up something or added something?
- Can I do the opposite of what I've been doing?

Again, remember, don't make judgments. Just write down your ideas. Many of your ideas will be wild and crazy and maybe even things you can't use. That's okay. Somewhere in there will be a great idea that you can use.

Criticism is negative and kills ideas. Creating the idea and evaluating the idea are two different things. At this stage, you must be an optimist. You are simply creating as many ideas as possible. Don't say anything negative to yourself or to others when you are using this technique. Stop anyone who begins to evaluate, is negative, or critical. Explain you are not in the evaluation stage yet.

Once you have a lot of ideas, look them over, think about them and then you can move into the evaluation stage. Ask yourself, "Is this workable? Practical? Financially feasible? If your answers are "No," then ask, "Could it be made to be workable or practical?"

Is there a less expensive way to do it?" Now, you can eliminate any options you are absolutely positive won't work.

After you have decided which ideas you are going to keep, rewrite them on a sheet of paper. Put the new list away and think about your ideas for a couple of days.

When you take the list out again, write the positives and negatives of each idea listed. Some of your ideas will have so many negatives, they will practically eliminate themselves. What you'll have left are a couple of good ideas which have been thoroughly evaluated. You can now make a safe, sound decision as to which of these ideas to use or how to combine them to get the results you want.

If you use this technique, you will find more possibilities than you ever imagined and your ultimate decision will be much more exciting and effective than if you had just gone with your first option.

You see, the secret to getting what you want is to believe it is possible. Be an optimist! Optimists know that no matter how dreary the future looks, if you have a plan, your dreams can and will come true. I am an optimist. I know without a shadow

of a doubt that no matter how bleak things look right now, your optimism or lack of it will affect your life. Choose to be an optimist and you will never look back with regret.

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