Optimism is the ability to fully accept a situation for what it is presently and to still feel confident about the future. With Optimism, you are both realistic and hopeful.

With realism, you are grounded in the present reality. You are clear-eyed when you look at the proverbial glass and acknowledge that it’s both half-full and half-empty.

With hope (hopefulness), you are able to put your focus on the fullness of the glass, to see the good amidst the bad, and to be on the lookout for silver linings.

Optimistic people have a $77\%$ lower risk of depressive symptoms. (Journal of Affective Disorders)

Optimists have $5\times$ lower risk of burning out at work than pessimists. (Institute for Applied Positive Research)

Optimism is related to longevity and to a $50\%$-$70\%$ greater chance of living to 85 years old. (PNAS)

**TIPS**

1. **Pause frequently to reflect on the positive aspects of your life**
   Consider your relationships, health, freedom, education, senses, natural surroundings, career, or community. How would your life be different without them?

2. **Let go of expectations about how things should be**
   This means embracing setbacks as part of the process. This way you can avoid falling into apathy and disillusionment if things don’t improve as quickly as you wish. Letting go of expectations does not mean that you don’t consider potential scenarios. It means that when you are in the moment you let go of what you hoped would happen, and that you are present with what is actually happening. Then you can adjust accordingly.

3. **Engage your breath**
   When dealing with a crisis, begin with an accurate appraisal of your current situation – as hard as that may be. If you feel an uncomfortable emotion, take 3 deep breaths to ground yourself. This activates the parasympathetic nervous system and helps bring your higher-level thinking back online so you can discern the most important action to take.