

## 37. Optimism & Pessimism

How do you know if you are a pessimist or an optimist? Perhaps by the way you answer this question: If I have a glass of water, do I say it is half-empty or half-full? The answer not only indicates your character but also affects the way you live. An optimist may not think change is necessary, since things are okay now. On the other hand, he might also work hard for better conditions, in the happy belief that progress is possible and desirable. A pessimist may be discouraged from trying to make things better, or may be dissatisfied with current conditions that he helps spur action for improvement. But, an optimist is likely to please with any good development and takes pride in his role, however modest, while the pessimist, and even if the catalyst for major reforms will probably continue disparage the world's shortcomings.

### Comprehension

1. Explain the half-full or half-empty analogy.
2. Can we generalize about the roles optimists and pessimists play in social change? Why or why not?
3. What personal difference does each respective attitude make?

### Your opinion

1. Do you expect to live longer than the national average life expectancy?
2. Do you think you will be reasonably healthy until you die?
3. Do you believe you should make enough money so that after you retire you can continue to live a comfortable life?
4. Do you think a cure for cancer is within reach? Hepatitis? AIDS?
5. Is social and sexual equality a reality that can be achieved?
6. How do you describe yourself, as an optimist or a pessimist?
7. What about your spouse?
8. Are most of your friends optimists or pessimists?
9. What are the biggest advantages enjoyed by an optimist? By a pessimist?
10. What are the biggest drawbacks to being optimistic? Pessimistic?

