

# How Full is Your Glass?

*Package Lesson*

*By: Brooke Wilkinson and Amy Newlin*

**Description:** Adopting an optimistic outlook can dramatically affect heart health. In fact, a recent study has found that moderately optimistic individuals who felt that they were able to get better and return to a normal lifestyle had a 30% better chance of surviving a cardiac event than pessimistic individuals. This lesson will demonstrate the power of an optimism and teach those interested how to cultivate an optimism outlook.

## Lesson Objectives:

1. Understand attitude is an important aspect of optimism, which determines how we face our life.
2. Learn the power of optimism and ways of expressing optimism.
3. Understand the importance of gratitude and how it effects people in daily life.

## Optional Activities:

1. "Thankful" Dice Activity
2. Good Deeds BINGO Game

## Handouts:

1. BINGO game sheet

## Resources/References:

1. <http://www.clemson.edu/psapublishing/pages/FYD/FL528.PDF>
2. Strong Women, Healthy Hearts
3. <http://50gooddeeds.wordpress.com/2013/10/08/why-i-oughta-help-you-out/>
4. Archives of Internal Medicine
5. Webster's Dictionary

## Materials:

1. Handouts
2. Dice

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*A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.*

*– Winston Churchill*

Our emotions and our hearts are inextricably interwoven. A growing body of scientific evidence is beginning to confirm that stress and its associated emotions affect cardiovascular health. According to a recent study in the Archives of Internal Medicine, researchers found that moderately optimistic individuals who felt that they would be able to get better and return to a normal lifestyle had a 30% better chance of surviving than pessimistic individuals.

So, let's define optimism according to Webster's Dictionary: **a feeling or belief that good things will happen in the future**

Attitude is an important aspect of optimism. Lewis Dunning said it best by: "What life means to us is determined not so much by what life brings to us as by the attitude we bring to life: not so much by what happens to us as by our reaction to what happens."

## The Power of Optimism

There are many things in life that we cannot control. But one aspect of our life that we do have the power to control is our optimism. There are several factors that may contribute to maintaining an optimistic attitude, such as your past experiences and the experiences of those around you. But YOU control how you feel. Optimism in a person can bring about positive results that will result in happiness and contentment for everyone around you.

The universal language of a smile can communicate a positive attitude and a sense of optimism. Smiling spreads optimism and a positive attitude in your day-to-day contacts. Smiling is contagious so try to collect as many smiles and "thank-you's" as you can!

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Sometimes we think that we have to start feeling better before we can move forward; we can't do anything until we find a way out of our "rut". This can effect how positive we can be and we often find ourselves following the "fake it until you make it" motto. However, sometimes exactly the opposite is true: We must start doing something in order to begin feeling better. What are some things you can think of that will help you get out of your "rut"?

Some activities may be to turn off the television, take a walk, work on a puzzle, or talk to a friend. Another idea is to keep a "Joy Journal". This is a place where you can keep things that bring you joy. This can be a favorite quote, special pictures, cards, or a personal letter that someone special wrote to you.

Remember, we should challenge ourselves to move beyond past mistakes and commend ourselves for trying to improve and making good decisions. Another way to cultivate optimism in our lives is to get outside ourselves. We can do this by helping others and by building relationships with others.

*Ask: What are some ways you would like to help others?*

Some ideas may be:

- donating to your local food pantry
- making a quilt for someone
- opening the doors for someone
- reading to a child
- visiting a nursing home
- sending a thoughtful card

Did you know there is a link between doing random acts of kindness and your health? A study at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh has found that just by helping someone, you can reduce your blood pressure. Researchers at the university recruited over one thousand older adults with normal blood pressure. Four years later they interviewed the same participants. They found that those who had done volunteer work over the years were much less likely to have developed a blood pressure problem in those four years.

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*"The healthiest of all human emotions is gratitude" Zig Ziglar*

Gratitude will not only make you healthy and happy, it will also change your perspective in life. Grateful people are far more optimistic and see whatever circumstances that they are in as an opportunity for good. Gratitude sweetens our disposition, increases our positivity, and encourages those around us. It is also the antidote for every negative emotion in our lives.

Remember, it's all about choices. We have a choice every day to think about what might go wrong and dwell on what may happen, or we can enjoy the present and look forward to the future.

Let's do an activity now that can help each of us express some gratitude and also share some of our positive attributes with one another.

Activity: Each participant will take turns rolling the dice two or three times and complete the following statement upon each roll:

Roll a 1: I am thankful for.....

Roll a 2: Other people compliment me on my ability to.....

Roll a 3: Something I would like other people to know about me is.....

Roll a 4: I feel really good about myself when.....

Roll a 5: I am proud of my ability to.....

Roll a 6: Something nice I recently did for someone else was.....

The next activity is to play the Good Deeds BINGO game! Between this month's club meeting and the next one, try to get a BINGO. Just place an X on any activity that you do and at the next meeting share with the club if you've gotten a BINGO. Also, please share the "true prize" you have gotten by getting a BINGO: the experience of bringing happiness to others and to yourself!

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Put an **X** on the activities you have done between this meeting and the next. Please share with your group if you had a BINGO. Also, feel free to share the "true prize" you received from the activity: the experience of bringing happiness to others and yourself !

B	I	N	G	O
Read a book to someone who can't	 Meditate	Pay for a stranger's coffee or meal secretly.	Tell 10 people to "Have a nice day" And mean it 😊	 See how many people you can make SMILE
 Donate to the food pantry	Invite a friend to a Homemakers Meeting	 Love the earth RECYCLE For 1 week	Visit the local Farmers Market or buy locally	Hug a family member A kiss would be nice too.
Let someone get in front of you in line.	Open the door for someone that needs help	<b>FREE</b> Your Choice to do something special and tell about it at next month's meeting.	Take time to look at the stars & be grateful for where you came from	 Donate to the Humane Shelter or another favorite charity
Walk 15 minutes each day for a week	 Send someone a card	Volunteer to help a neighbor	 Call an old friend	Thank a public servant (Flower, gift certificate, etc.)
Share a recipe 	Compliment a stranger	Donate to your favorite passion. Time is always appreciated.	Pick up 10 pieces of trash to help beautify our city	Meditate for 5 minutes each day for one week

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