



Dr Martin Seligman suggests that optimists and pessimists tend to have a default response to stressful situations:

- Optimists apply the 3 Ps to a positive experience, but not to a negative one.
- Pessimists apply the 3 Ps to the negatives and not to the positives.
- Dr Seligman suggests that by understanding our default response we can learn to reframe our responses by challenging the three Ps.

Permanence

Optimists tend to believe that a good situation will last forever and that setbacks are temporary.

Pessimists tend to believe that a bad situation will last forever, and that success and achievements are temporary.

Personalisation

Optimists tend to take credit for the positives and choose not to blame themselves for adverse events.

Pessimists tend to blame themselves for adverse events, but attribute positive outcomes to external factors.

Pervasiveness

Optimists tend to believe that specific success and achievements are reflective of more general success and achievements and tend to assume that specific failures relate only to that situation

Pessimists tend to believe that a specific mistake is indicative of failure more broadly and that a success or achievement is discrete and situational.

Activity: Change your perspective

- Choose a scenario that you consider to be a stressful one and your default response to that scenario.
- Write out your thoughts in relation to the 3Ps: Permanent, Pervasive and Personal.
- Now, change your perspective: write out how the experience could be Impermanent, Specific and Impersonal.
- Use the example below as a template:

Permanent

I will never be successful in my job.

Pervasive

This must mean I'm a failure as a partner and a parent.

Personal

I am not good enough.

Scenario

I received some negative feedback in my 360 Feedback Report about the way I communicate with others.

Impermanent

I have confidence that I can work on this and improve.

Specific

This only applies to a specific aspect of my work and it does not necessarily apply to other areas of my life.

Impersonal

Communication is a two-way street. I am happy to work on me. This may also be to do with other people's expectations of me.

- Your scenario

Permanent

Pervasive

Personal

Scenario

Impermanent

Specific

Impersonal