

Reaching Your Dreams by Choosing Optimism

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Look around at the world around us at this moment. Everywhere we look, it seems that there is always one more thing wrong in the world: one more political conflict, one more outbreak of fires, one more store closing. In the current state of the world, many people have become pessimistically absorbed in loss and trials. However, there are the select few who take a step back from the groanings around them. These select few look at everything going on and are able to choose to be optimistic about the future; these are they who achieve their goals and shape the future into what they want it to be.

Winston Churchill, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, once stated, “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty” (Psychology Today). This phrase seems, at face value, to be nothing more than an almost dictionary definition of what pessimism and optimism are, but when you look deeply into it, it means so much more. In the first half of the quote, it opens, not only our eyes, but our minds as to what it means to be a pessimist. They are someone who sees something good, sees a chance, and chooses to turn away from it because of something in it that is negative. On the other hand, an optimist, according to Churchill, is a person who sees something wrong, something awful, and can make it beautiful. The comparison is often used that a pessimist sees the glass as half empty while the optimist sees it as half full, but that interpretation is hardly scratching the surface. A pessimist would see the glass and choose not to drink from it for the fear that they might choke. “What if it has bacteria? What if I drop it?” They ask these questions, and the doubt forces them away from the table, choosing to hide from even the possibility. The optimist,

however, recognizes how much more could come from the water. They too ask questions, “What if I make lemonade? What if I water a tree?” An optimist chooses to take the risks with the hope and faith that something greater will come from it. The true difference between an optimist and a pessimist can be boiled down simply to the questions they choose to ask. Though both ask “What if” questions, it’s the difference in the ending that decides how they act. The questions asked by an optimist are questions that are empowering, enabling, and uplifting, giving them courage to fight for what they want, what they dream for.

But what are dreams? Are dreams some fictitious idea, something only made possible when asleep? Or are dreams an unachievable future, something only few are ever able to reach? Dreams are neither of these, while being both at the same time. They are something that few people ever reach, but only because few people recognize what their true dream is. So many people look at life and claim that their “dream” is to be successful, or their “dream” is to follow their passion. In truth however, neither of these are the person’s true dream. Hidden underneath the layers of specifics, almost every person’s dream is to be happy, to find happiness in their lives. And the truth about happiness is you don’t need to achieve anything to reach a level of joy. There is a story about a businessman going down to a beach and meeting a fisherman, resting on the beach, playing with his child. There are many slight variations to the story, but the base idea is that the businessman asks the fisherman why he is not catching more fish, to which the fisherman responds that he has caught all the fish he needs to for that day. The businessman tells the fisherman that he should go out, catch more fish so he could buy a bigger boat, and then he could catch even more fish and then one day he would be rich enough to sit back and enjoy life. The fisherman responds with the simple response, “What do you think I am doing now” (Thune). This story demonstrates that to reach this dream, the ideal of being happy in life, all it takes is the

optimism to look at your life and decide you already are happy, or find out what you need to do to become so. A pessimist, no matter what they have, no matter what they achieve will never truly reach their dreams. But an optimist? They are already there.

Works Cited

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