# How you Work with Optimism

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Jane and Mark have just held a really successful garden party. The next day, Mark remarks to Jane that they always host good parties. Jane is not so sure. She comments that they were lucky to have selected the right group of people for a good garden party.

Mark is an optimist whilst Jane shows pessimistic traits. Mark considers his success to apply to a whole range of occasions (all parties) over a long period of time (over many years), whilst Jane associates the success to a very specific event (the garden party) and associates it with one moment in time (yesterday) and not necessarily due to her.

The optimist explains positive events as permanent and pervasive (general) and personal. The pessimist, on the hand, will see them as temporary and specific (limited) with little to do with them.

Later in the year, after a very wet summer, the garden is in a mess. Jane thinks that she is a useless gardener whilst Mark comments that the weather hasn't enabled him to do any gardening during the year.

Mark, the optimist, sees this negative event by making it temporary (this year), specific (my garden) and nothing specifically to do with him. Jane, the pessimist, does the opposite by making it permanent, applying it to all gardening situations (pervasive) and due entirely to her.

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From your recent past describe one good experience and one bad experience.

Using Seligman's three factors, describe how you explained each experience to yourself.

Did you use an optimistic or pessimistic explanatory style? What impact did your explanations have?

**Good experience**

Permanence:

Pervasiveness:

Personal:

**Bad experience**

Permanence:

Pervasiveness:

Personal: