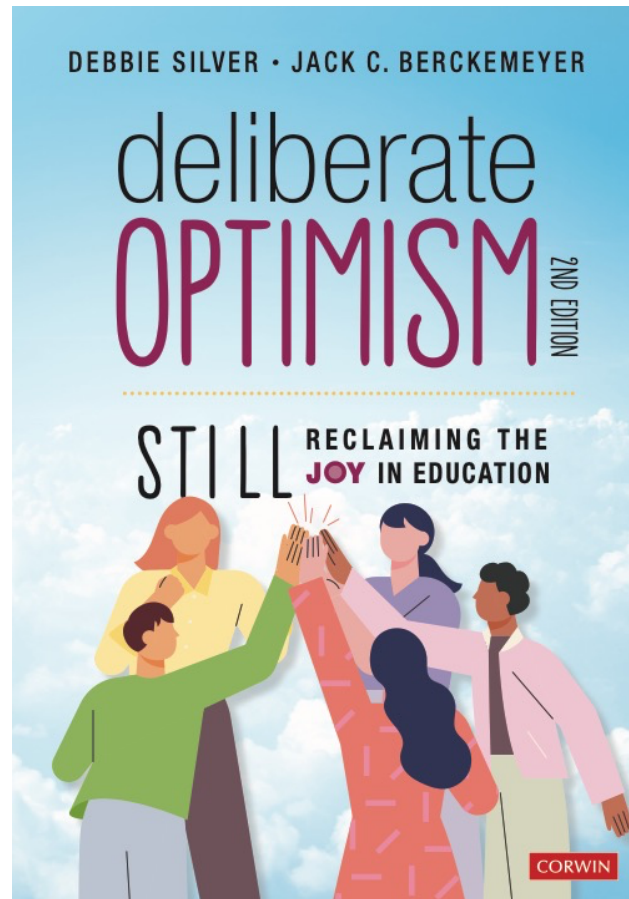




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Deliberate Optimism— Reclaiming the Joy in Education

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debbie silver
speaker • author • humorist

The Teacher

"Concerning a teacher's influence, I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or deescalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized."

--Haim Ginott

Four Principles of Deliberate Optimism

1. **Gather Accurate Information**
2. **Control What You Can**
3. **Do Something Positive**
4. **Own it**

Determine what you can and cannot control

What You Cannot Control:

- How others choose to feel about you.
- How others do their jobs.
- The friendliness or the lack of friendliness people demonstrate toward you.
- Assignments given to you by a superior.

What You Can Control:

- How you react to others.
- How you do your job.
- How you treat others.
- How you handle what you are given.
- What steps you take to alleviate the problems.



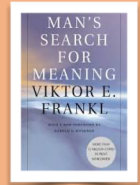
The Power to Choose

Between stimulus and response
there is a space.

In that space is our power to choose
our response.

In our response lies our growth
and our freedom.

-paraphrased from Victor Frankl's [Man's Search for Meaning](#)



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Optimism is the foundation of all good teaching. Optimism in the face of daunting reality is downright heroic—and that, in fact, is what good teachers practice all day long while others denigrate their contributions to society.

-- [Rafe Esquith](#)

"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Viktor Frankl

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Looking at a problem from a different perspective (humorous) can make it seem less formidable for greater objectivity and insight.

There is an unspoken message in a chuckle that says, "I promise, you'll get through this."



Laughing WITH Others

1. **Going for the jocular vein.**
2. **Based on caring and empathy.**
3. **Builds confidence.**
4. **Involves people in the fun.**
5. **A person enjoys being the "butt" of the joke.**
6. **Amusing, invites people to laugh.**
7. **Supportive.**
8. **Brings people closer.**
9. **Leads to a positive repartee.**
10. **Pokes fun at universal human foibles.**
11. **Nourishing.**
12. **Icebreaker.**

Laughing AT Others

1. **Going for the jugular vein.**
2. **Based on contempt and insensitivity.**
3. **Destroys confidence.**
4. **Excludes some people.**
5. **A person does not have a choice in being made the "butt" of the joke.**
6. **Abusing, offends people.**
7. **Sarcastic.**
8. **Divides people.**
9. **Leads to one-down-manship cycle.**
10. **Reinforces stereotypes.**
11. **Toxic.**
12. **Ice maker.**

From "Laughing Matters" magazine published by The Humor Project, Inc. as quoted in Jump Start Your Brain by Doug Hall.

Before you open the door, put a smile on your face!

It doesn't matter how your day went. Or what you're doing next. Or if you're starving.

For 30 seconds, at least pretend that you're elated to see them.

Make them feel like you were looking forward to getting back home.

After all, they're your favorite people in the whole world. I hope.

But your attitude sets the tone for the rest of the evening within 15 seconds of walking in the door.

Coming home is the most important thing you do.

That's your whole life. Fix it.

Start today.



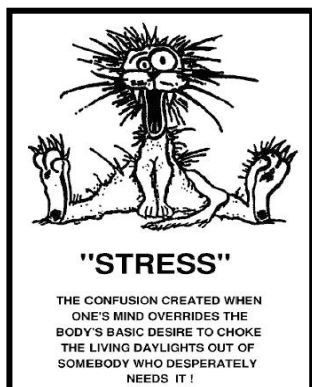
Benjamin Holmgren quoting Brené Brown

Practicing “Safe Stress”

Signs That You’re “Stressed Out” Checklist:

- ___ Headaches
- ___ Irritability
- ___ Fatigue
- ___ Feelings of hopelessness
- ___ Depression
- ___ Anxiety
- ___ Boredom
- ___ Ulcers
- ___ Frequent Colds
- ___ Sleeplessness or too sleepy
- ___ Pain in neck and back
- ___ Pain in joints and muscles
- ___ Weight gain/ loss
- ___ Cardiovascular problems
- ___ Gastrointestinal problems
- ___ Absenteeism
- ___ Apathy
- ___ Disregard for appearance
- ___ Lack of energy
- ___ Mood swings
- ___ Paranoia
- ___ Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- ___ Loss of sense of humor





How To Tell If You Are A Stress-Prone Personality?

Rate yourself as to how you typically react in each of the situations listed below. There are no right or wrong answers.

4-always 3-frequently 2-sometimes 1-never

- ☐ 1. Do you try to do as much as possible in the least amount of time?
- ☐ 2. Do you always have to win at games to enjoy yourself?
- ☐ 3. Do you find yourself speeding up in the car to get through yellow lights?
- ☐ 4. Are you unlikely to indicate you need help with a problem?
- ☐ 5. Do you constantly seek the respect and admiration of others?
- ☐ 6. Do you have the habit of looking at your watch or clock often?
- ☐ 7. Do you spread yourself "too thin" in terms of your time?
- ☐ 8. Do you have little time for hobbies or time by yourself?
- ☐ 9. Do you have a tendency to talk quickly or hasten the conversation?
- ☐ 10. Do you feel vaguely guilty if you relax and do nothing during leisure?



How Vulnerable Are You to Stress?

(Adapted from the work of Dr. Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith, reprinted with permission)

Score each item either 1 (almost always), 2 (a lot), 3 (sometimes), 4 (almost never), or 5 (never) according to how each statement applies to you.

- ___ 1. I eat foods that are healthy.
- ___ 2. I get 7 to 8 hours sleep at least four nights a week.
- ___ 3. I give and receive affection regularly.
- ___ 4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.
- ___ 5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least 3 times a week.
- ___ 6. I refrain from smoking.
- ___ 7. I take fewer than 8 alcoholic drinks a week.
- ___ 8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.
- ___ 9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.
- ___ 10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.
- ___ 11. I regularly attend club or social activities.
- ___ 12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.
- ___ 13. At work I feel capable and valued.
- ___ 14. I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, and teeth).
- ___ 15. I drink less than 3 cups of coffee, glasses of tea, or colas a day.
- ___ 16. I am able to use my sense of humor to balance my reaction to boring and stressful situations.
- ___ 17. I do something for fun at least once a day.
- ___ 18. I am able to organize my time effectively.
- ___ 19. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.
- ___ 20. I take quiet time for myself during the day.

TOTAL: To get your score, add the figures. Any number over 50 indicates a vulnerability to stress. You are seriously vulnerable if your score is between 60 and 75, and you are extremely vulnerable if it is over 75

“We may not always be able to reach every student, but we must reach for every student.”

Scott Sater, teacher, Shakopee, MN



Deliberate Optimism: Reclaiming the Joy in Education

Presented by Dr. Debbie Silver

List of Resources and Suggestions for further reading:

Seligman, M.E.P., & Maier, S.F. (1967). Failure to escape traumatic shock. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 74(1): 1-9.

Seligman, M.E.P. (2006). *Learned optimism: How to change your mind and your life*. New York, New York: Vintage Books.

Silver D.(2010), *Drumming to the beat of different marchers*. Chicago, IL: Incentive by World Book, Inc.

Silver, D.(2013). *Fall down 7 times, get up 8: Teaching kids to succeed*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Silver, D.(2014). Freedom to fall and get up and succeed. *Principal Leadership* 14(5): 48-51.

Silver, D. (2013). Relax and recharge: 5 ways to de-stress this summer. *The Classroom Teacher* 34(2): 18.

Silver, Debbie, Jack Berckemeyer, & Judith Baenen, 2014. *Deliberate Optimism: Reclaiming the Joy in Education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press/AMLE



Sometimes the strength within
you is not a big fiery flame for all
to see; it is just a tiny spark that
whispers softly, 'You've got this,
keep going.'

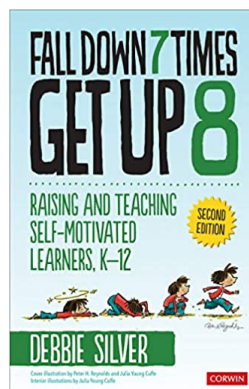
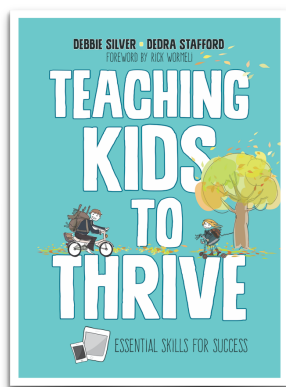
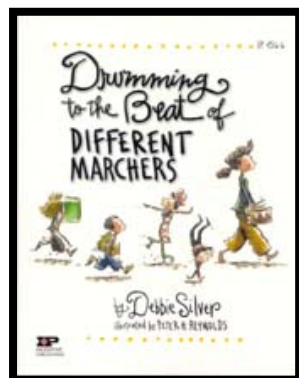
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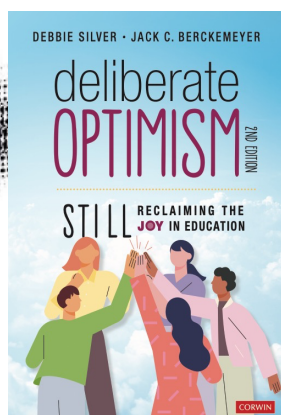
(login: iamateacher)

FB: www.facebook.com/drdebbiesilver

Twitter: @DrDebbieSilver



**COMING
SOON**



Silver, D. & Berckemeyer, J. (2023).
*Deliberate Optimism: Still
Reclaiming the Joy in Education*.
Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin
Press.