

Resilience and Learned Optimism:

Critical Thinking and Discussion Questions K-8

OPTIMISM

Grades K-2

What makes a flower better than a weed?

“Your mind is a garden; the thoughts are the seeds.” Give examples of good thoughts about yourself.

How do you feel when you make a mistake?

Do athletes or musicians ever mess up? What thoughts help them try again?

What good thoughts can you have when something looks hard?

Grades 3-5

“Your mind is a garden; the thoughts are the seeds”. Give examples of good seeds to plant. Give examples of bad seeds that become weeds.

Do you ever “listen” to some of the thoughts you have about yourself? What positive things do you think about yourself? What negative things do you want to stop thinking about yourself?

An optimist sees the brighter side of a bad situation. A pessimist keeps thinking the worst about a situation or a person. Have you been in a bad situation longer than you wanted? How can you view the situation temporarily, rather than unchanging?

How does optimism help a person stay resilient and never give up?

How can Learned Optimism help you at home? At school?

Grades 6-8

An optimist sees the bright side of a bad situation. A pessimist keeps thinking the worst about a situation or a person. Have you been in a bad situation longer than you wanted? How can you view the situation so that it does not make you depressed, hopeless, or angry?

Define these terms. Share how they affect our final outcomes when dealing with adversity:

Temporary vs permanent

Impersonal vs personal

Specific vs pervasive

Give examples of famous people who faced a setback and used optimism to overcome. What were the challenges? How did they react and “talk to themselves” to overcome the hard times?

Why is **optimism** associated more with happiness and success in life? Since stress is unavoidable, how can you prepare yourself now for hard situations?

Have you or someone you know ever been depressed? How can Learned Optimism help?

RESILIENCE

Grades K-2

Do you remember when you were learning to tie your shoes? Make your bed? Did you want to give up or try harder? How do you feel when you keep trying and don't give up?

Who is Simone Biles? What happened to her in the Olympics? How did she show resilience?

Who is Michael Jordan? What did he do when he was not good enough for his high school basketball team? What can you learn from his story?

Do you have something you want to do well? Will you keep trying?

Grades 3-5

Name things that have been hard, but made you want to try harder. Name things that have been hard, and made you want to give up. How can you ignore the desire to give up, and be resilient?

How did Simone Biles demonstrate resilience in the 2018 Olympics? Why did she not give up?

How can you bounce back from disappointment, a failed test, or losing a game?

How would you feel if you decided to never give up when something was hard?

Why are resilient people more successful?

Grades 6-8

Resilience means “the ability to bounce back after a setback or stressor.” Stress can motivate us or overwhelm us. Do the stressors (home, school, neighborhood, sports) you face motivate you or overwhelm you? How do you deal with the stressors that make you want to give up?

How do thoughts impact whether we give up or keep going?

How did Simone Biles demonstrate resilience in the 2018 Olympics? Name the emotions that she had to process and overcome?

Do you know someone who has failed a test, lost a game or done poorly in a competition? How would you encourage a friend to not give up.

One teacher suggested that the word *fail* means: First Attempt in Learning. How can you bounce back from disappointment?

How can you show resilience with a difficult assignment? Your friendships? What about your family life?

“Resilient people tend to be more successful in life.” Why do you think that is?