Self-Assessment

Assessing Your "LOT" in Life:
The Life Orientation Test

Do you consider yourself to be an optimist or a pessimist? Do you expect good things to happen or do you find the cloud around the silver lining? The Life Orientation Test may provide you with insight into your general outlook on life.

Directions: Indicate whether each of the items represents your feelings by writing a number in the blank space according to the following code. Then turn to the scoring key at the back of this manual.

4 = strongly agree
3 = agree
2 = neutral
1 = disagree
0 = strongly disagree

_____ 1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.
_____ 2. It's easy for me to relax.
_____ 3. If something can go wrong for me, it will.
_____ 4. I always look on the bright side of things.
_____ 5. I'm always optimistic about my future.
_____ 6. I enjoy my friends a lot.
_____ 7. It's important for me to keep busy.
_____ 8. I hardly ever expect things to go my way.
_____ 9. Things never work out the way I want them to.
_____ 10. I don't get upset too easily.
_____ 11. I'm a believer in the idea that "every cloud has a silver lining."
_____ 12. I rarely count on good things happening to me.

Source: Michael F. Scheier & Charles S. Carver (1985), Optimism, coping, and health: Assessment and implications of generalized outcome expectancies, *Health Psychology*, 4, 219–247. Reprinted with permission.

Scoring Key for Life Orientation Test

In order to arrive at your total score for the test, first *reverse* your score on items 3, 8, 9, and 12. That is,

4 is changed to 0
3 is changed to 1
2 remains the same
1 is changed to 3
0 is changed to 4

Now add the numbers of items 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, and 12. (Items 2, 6, 7, and 10 are "fillers"; that is, your responses are not scored as part of the test.) Your total score can vary from 0 to 32.

Scheier and Carver (1985) provide the following norms for the test, based on administration to 357 undergraduate men and 267 undergraduate women. The average (mean) score for men was 21.03 (standard deviation = 4.56), and the mean score for women was 21.41 (standard deviation = 5.22). All in all, approximately two-thirds of undergraduates (men and women combined) obtained scores between 16 and 26. Scores above 26 may be considered quite optimistic, and scores below 16, quite pessimistic. Scores between 16 and 26 are within a broad average range, and higher scores within this range are relatively more optimistic.