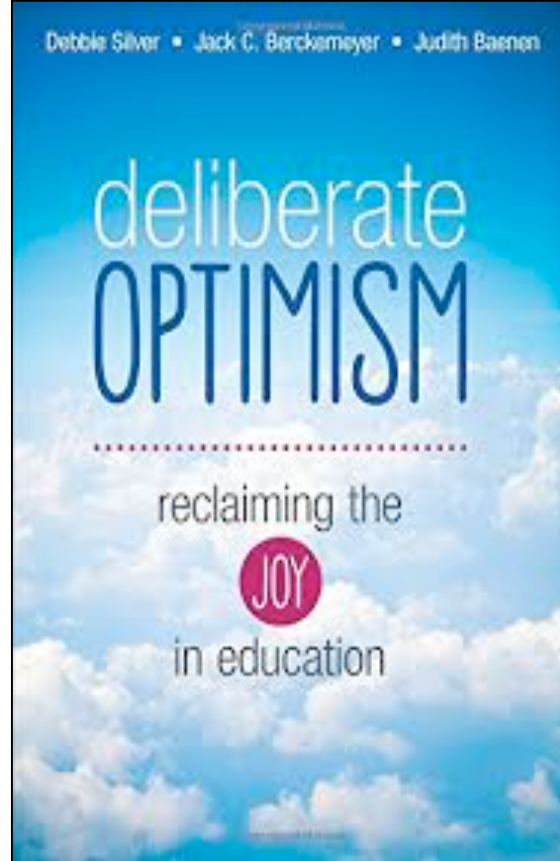


AMLE2015



TAKING BACK THE LOUNGE— BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AT SCHOOL

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Five Principles of Deliberate Optimism

1. Before acting or *reacting* **gather as much information** from as many varied sources as possible.
2. **Determine what is beyond your control** and strategize how to minimize its impact on your life.
3. **Establish what you can control** and seek tools and strategies to help you maximize your power.
4. Actively **DO something positive** towards your goal.
5. **Take ownership** of your plan and acknowledge responsibility for your choices.

What you can't control	What you can control
Curriculum – Usually decided by the State or local district	How you use the curriculum to engage students and lead them to success
Job placement – Guidelines provided by the local district	Learning everything you can about the grade-level and subject matter in order to assure students achieve
Colleagues' attitudes – Some are worn down, worn out or not meant to be in teaching	Keep yourself healthy and upbeat. Use encouragement instead of argument
Student context – Everything from neglected to over-protected	Make every day in your class a lesson in stability and thoughtful decision making
Parent expectations – The best for their child, but sometimes unreasonable	Communicate with parents in every way possible. Build relationships

Learning Styles

The concept of four basic personality types has its roots in ancient history and philosophy. Swiss psychologist Carl Jung (1923) popularized the division of personalities into four categories; thinking, sensing, feeling, and intuition. Since that time numerous psychometric instruments have been developed that basically attribute central human tendencies to four major groups. The MBTI® (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) distinguishes areas similar to Jung's; extroverted/introverted, intuitive/sensing, feeling/thinking, perceiving/judging. Silver (no relation), Strong & Associates, Inc. (1980) identify areas similar to Jung's; sensing/thinking (mastery style), sensing/feeling (interpersonal style), intuitive/thinking (understanding style), intuitive/feeling (self-expressive style).

Religious writer, Florence Littauer (1986) has spoken at length on her four categories; sanguine, choleric, melancholy, and phlegmatic. A current popular testing/training program is that of True Colors®, which uses colors to indicate these personality distinctions; courageous, conventional, compassionate, conceptual. And there are many others.

The important thing to remember is that whatever the classifications, there is demonstrable evidence that different learners can best be taught through identified instructional strategies and assessments. Teachers can most effectively engage each and every learner by adapting differentiated approaches.

Most of the learning style inventories and categories I have studied have the same theoretical underpinnings as the one by Dr. Anthony Gregorc. The following classifications are the property of Dr. Gregorc. They have emerged from his extensive research on the topic of learning styles. For a full presentation of this material along with a self-scoring inventory, please visit Dr. Gregorc's website at <http://www.gregorc.com/instrume.html>

Dominant Style Characteristics (From work by Dr. Anthony Gregorc, Ph.D.)

The following classifications are the property to Dr. Anthony Gregorc. They have emerged from his extensive research on the topic of learning styles. For a full presentation of this material along with a self-scoring inventory, please visit Dr. Gregorc's website at <<http://www.gregorc.com/instrume.html>>

The Concrete Sequential learner is usually slow and hesitant about change. His approach to life is realistic, patient, and conservative. He prefers an environment that is ordered, quiet, and stable. He has a finely tuned ability to derive information through direct, hands-on experience. This person has an extraordinary development of the five senses and likes touchable concrete materials. He likes step-by-step directions when confronted with a new situation.

He does not like surprises and prefers to be in control of most situations. He is the one learner who not only looks for directions but follows them!

The Abstract Sequential learner is indecisive about change. He focuses on knowledge and facts; he insists upon documentation before “buying in” to new ideas. His approach to life is realistic, serious, logically intellectual, and determined. He likes an environment that is mentally stimulating but non-authoritative. He likes to direct his own learning. He has excellent decoding abilities in the areas of written, verbal, and image symbols. He has a preference for presentations which are rational and have substance. He pays attention to detail, and he usually prefers to work alone.

The Concrete Random learner is open and amenable to change; this person is sometimes the instigator of change. His approach to life is inquisitive and independent. He likes an environment that is competitive and stimulus-rich. This person has an experimental attitude which is often accompanied by a trial-and-error approach to problem solving. He gets the gist of ideas quickly and demonstrates the uncanny ability to make intuitive leaps in exploring unstructured problem-solving experiences. This person is often self-motivated and not interested in details.

The Abstract Random learner’s approach to change is subject to emotions and his level of interest. His approach to life is idealistic, emotional, and always intense. He prefers an environment that allows emotional and physical freedom, is “active,” and is colorful. He is distinguishable by his attention to human behavior and an extraordinary ability to sense and interpret “vibrations.” He prefers to receive information in an unstructured manner, and is therefore, comfortable in groups and with busy environments. He tends to evaluate all experiences “as a whole” and see the world in “black and white.”

Applying What We Know Student Learning Styles

From: [Dennis W. Mills Ph.D.](#)

The way we see the world in a way that makes the most sense to each of us is called perception. Our perceptions shape what we think, how we make decisions, and how we define what’s important. Our individual perception also determines our natural learning strengths, or learning style.

There are two perceptual qualities: concrete and abstract.

Concrete: This quality enables you to register information directly through your five senses: sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing. When you are using your concrete ability, you are dealing with the obvious, the “here and now.” You are not looking for hidden meanings, or making relationships between ideas or concepts. “It is what it is.”

Abstract: this quality allows you to visualize, to conceive ideas, to understand or believe that which you cannot actually see. When you are using your abstract quality, you are using your intuition, your imagination, and you are looking beyond what is to the more subtle implications. "It is not always what it seems."

There are two ordering abilities in Gregorc's model: sequential and random.

Sequential: Allows your mind to organize information in a linear, step-by-step manner. When using your sequential ability, you are following a logical train of thought, a traditional approach to dealing with information. You may also prefer to have a plan and to follow it, rather than relying on impulse.

Random: Lets your mind organize information by chunks, and in no particular order. When you are using your random ability, you may often be able to skip steps in a procedure and still produce the desired result. You may even start in the middle, or at the end, and work backwards. You may also prefer your life to be more impulsive, or spur of the moment, than planned.

There are four combinations of the strongest perceptual and ordering ability in each individual:

1. [Concrete Sequential \(CS\)](#)
2. [Abstract Random \(AR\)](#)
3. [Abstract Sequential \(AS\)](#)
4. [Concrete Random \(CR\)](#)

No one is a "pure" style. Each of us have a unique combination of natural strengths and abilities. By learning some of the common characteristics of each of the four combinations used by Gregorc, we can recognize and value what our students do best. We can help them to improve in areas that are least used and understood.

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<http://www.csnet.org/csnet/articles/student-learning-styles.html>

Gregorc's 4 Basic Learning Styles

Abstract Random

Their Traits

- Sensitive
- Compassionate
- Idealistic
- Empathetic
- Imaginative
- Sentimental
- Spontaneous
- Flexible

What They Do Best

- Listen to others
- Understand feelings and emotions
- Focus on themes and ideas
- Bring harmony to group situations
- Establish positive relationships with everybody
- Recognize and meet the emotional needs of others

What's Hard For Them?

- Having to explain or justify feelings
- Working with dictatorial/authoritarian personalities
- Working in a restrictive environment
- Working with people who are not friendly
- Concentration on one thing at a time
- Giving exact details
- Working under exact time restrictions
- Accepting even positive criticism

NOTES:

Gregorc's 4 Basic Learning Styles
Concrete Sequential
Their Traits

- Factual
- Organized
- Dependable
- Stable
- Hardworking
- Conventional
- Consistent
- Accurate

What They Do Best

- Apply ideas in a practical way
- Organize
- Fine-tune ideas to make them more efficient
- Produce concrete products from abstract ideas
- Work well within time limits

What's Hard For Them?

- Working in groups
- Discussions that seem to have no point
- Working in an unorganized environment
- Following incomplete or unclear directions
- Working with unpredictable people
- Dealing with abstract ideas
- Demands to "use your imagination"
- Questions with no right or wrong answers

NOTES:

Gregorc's 4 Basic Learning Styles Abstract Sequential

Their Traits:

- Knowledgeable
- Thorough
- Analytical
- Objective
- Structured
- Systematic
- Deliberate
- Logical

What They Do Best:

- Gather lots of information before making a decision
- Analyze ideas
- Research
- Provide logical sequence
- Use facts to prove or disprove theories
- Figure out what needs to be done

What's Hard For Them?

- Being forced to work with those of differing views
- Too little time to deal with a subject thoroughly
- Repeating the same tasks over and over
- Lots of specific rules and regulations
- "Sentimental" thinking
- Expressing their emotions
- Being diplomatic when convincing others
- Not monopolizing the conversation

NOTES:

Gregorc's 4 Basic Learning Styles Concrete Random

Their Traits:

- Curious
- Quick
- Intuitive
- Realistic
- Creative
- Innovative
- Instinctive
- Adventurous

What They Do Best:

- See many options and solutions
- Contribute unusual and creative ideas
- Visualize the future
- Offer a different way of doing things
- Accept many different types of people
- Think fast on their feet
- Take risks

What's Hard For Them?

- Restrictions and limitations
- Formal reports
- Routines
- Re-doing anything once it is done
- Keeping detailed records
- Showing how they got an answer
- Having no options

NOTES:



Are You A Good Listener?

Do you have positive listening habits? How often . . .

	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1. So you really try to understand the other person's point of view?	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Do you let the other person know you understand by putting in your own words (paraphrasing) what he or she says?	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Do you then allow him or her time to correct anything you might have misinterpreted?	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Do you show interest non-verbally? Through posture? Eye contact?	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Do you ask questions to draw out the other person and learn more about what is meant?	_____	_____	_____	_____

Do you have negative listening habits? How often . . .

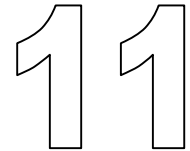
	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1. Do you fail to hear the other person because you are planning what to say as soon as you get a word in?	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Are you thinking about yourself rather than what the other person is saying?	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Do you answer with irrelevant responses which really show you aren't listening and don't care about what is being said?	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Do you drift in and out of the conversation, listening only occasionally?	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Do you criticize, evaluate or judge the other person or respond before you know what the other person really means?	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Do you listen only to catch the mistakes of the other person?	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Do you busy yourself with obvious distractions while the other person is speaking?	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Do you misinterpret what the other person is saying?	_____	_____	_____	_____

9. Do you give your meanings for words and events more merit than you do the other person's meaning? _____
10. Do you simply give too little time and attention to the process? _____

Evaluate your answers and pay close attention to those areas you need to strengthen to be an effective and active listener. (Source: *Adapted from Family Communication: Keep Connected in a Time of Change*. Maureen Miller, Paulist Press.)

Eleven Proven Ways to Get Along Better With EVERYONE

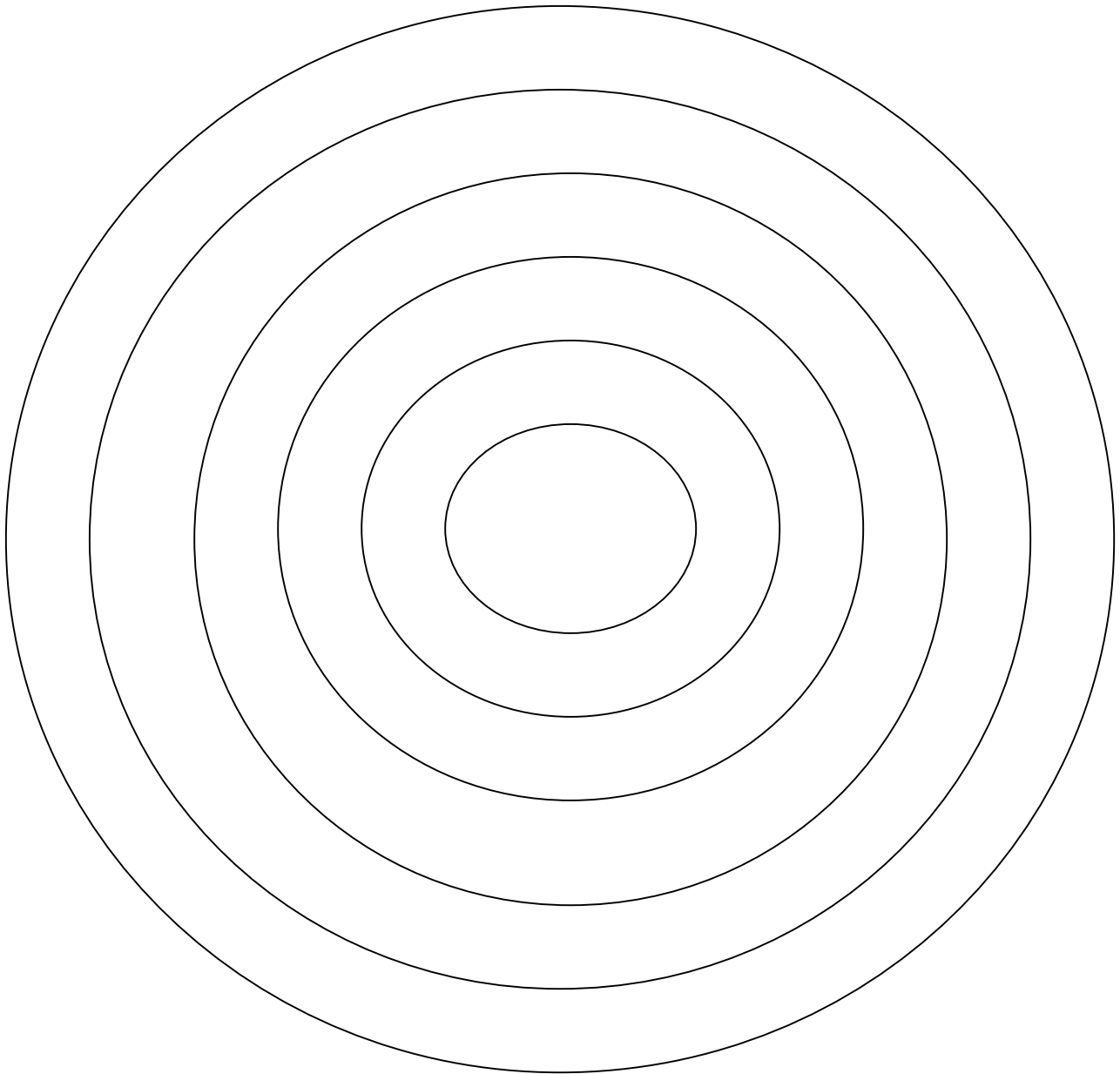
1. Before you say anything to anyone, ask yourself 3 things:
 - a. Is it true?
 - b. Is it kind?
 - c. Is it necessary?
2. Make promises sparingly and keep them faithfully.
3. Never miss the opportunity to compliment or say something encouraging to someone.
4. Refuse to talk negatively about others; don't gossip and don't listen to gossip.
5. Have a forgiving view of people. Believe that most people are doing the best they can.
6. Keep an open mind; discuss, but don't argue (it is possible to disagree without being disagreeable.)
7. Forget about counting to 10. Count to 1,000 before doing or saying anything that could make matters worse.
8. Let your virtues speak for themselves.
9. If someone criticizes you, see if there is any TRUTH to what is being said; if so, make changes. If there is no truth to the criticism, ignore it and live so that no one will believe the negative remark.
10. Cultivate your sense of humor; laughter is the shortest distance between two people.
11. Do not seek so much to be consoled, as to console; do not seek so much to be understood, as to understand; do not seek so much to be loved as to love.



This is an exercise in rethinking or reframing perceptions about a person. Select a person who needs affirmation or a person about whom you have ambivalent or negative feelings.

My Favorite Things About You

Put the identified person's name in the center circle. In each surrounding circle put words or phrases that describe your favorite things about that person. The most important factors should be placed closest to the name in the center, and their order from most important to least important should spiral outward.



STRENGTH WORD LIST

romantic	investing	serene	prudent
busy	strong-willed	organizer	confident
kind	motivated	tactful	tireless
artistic	understanding	committed	industrious
careful	disciplined	spontaneous	thoughtful
convincing	self-reliant	commanding	expressive
friendly	persistent	tolerant	settled
gentle	neat	goal-directed	persuasive
loyal	caring	progressive	affectionate
distinctive	thinker	sharp	graceful
perfectionist	clever	capable	reliable
exact	self-determined	certain	leader
tenacious	well-informed	looked up to	growing
tenacious	creative	dedicated	eager
ambitious	orderly	courageous	active
outgoing	individualistic	consistent	influential
steadfast	searching	honorable	giving
poised	appreciative	productive	original
strong	fair-minded	determined	thrifty
considerate	respected	planner	unselfish
fulfilled	flexible	efficient	self-aware
manager	likes new ideas	cooperative	self-directed
open-minded	forceful	dependable	adjusted
talented	predictable	comforting	inquiring
witty	intelligent	sociable	practical
systematic	encouraging	serious	unique
trustworthy	imaginative	adaptable	precise
foresight	pursuing	forgiving	listener
empathetic	compassionate	visionary	humorous
cheerful	motivating	artistic	athletic
energetic	disciplined	sharing	caring
daring	risk taker	courageous	patient
coordinated	loyal	fun loving	perceptive

Tough-Minded Optimists:

- **Are seldom surprised by trouble.**
- **Interrupt their negative thought patterns.**
- **Practice their powers of appreciation.**
- **Imagine their way out of problems.**
- **Are cheerful even when they can't be happy.**

Dealing With Difficult Colleagues

Avoiding *Talking Snakes*

1. Be polite, but share minimal information about yourself, your class, or your achievements. Your success threatens them, and your failures delight them. Keep your conversations with them light and business oriented.
2. In social situations do not willingly join a group they are already in or they frequently attend. If the negative person is “holding court” in the teacher’s lounge find somewhere else you need to be. Without drawing attention to what you are doing always try to manipulate your way out of places where the *talking snake* is present.
3. If the negative person tries to bait you into an argument, take the high ground and use the Stephen Covey line, “I guess we will just have to agree to disagree on that point.” Walk away.
4. Do NOT gossip. If you have a trusted friend, you can share your feelings about Mr. or Ms. Negative, but other than that stay as neutral as you can whenever that person’s name is mentioned. Never let students, parents, or casual acquaintances initiate defaming conversations or repeat derogatory information about the *talking snakes*. Such indulgences are not helpful and will only further drain your positivity.
5. Realize that everyone may not see the person the way you do. Don’t force colleagues to take sides. Politely decline with a reasonable excuse any invitations that include the negative person and leave it at that. Let others make their own decisions about dealing with *snakes*.
6. There will be times when you cannot avoid the person (s/he may be on your team or teach next door to you). Figure out what you can control and do it. With a polite smile on your face you can repeat this mantra in your mind, “I may be forced

to work with you, but I am not required to like you. I will work with you for the benefit of our students, but you are getting none of the personal real estate I have in my head. I've got more positive things to think about."

7. We recommend that you try to diminish as much as possible the time you give yourself to think about the *snakes* in your life. In desperate situations you might consider asking to be transferred to another grade group, wing, or even a different school. You can try to negotiate a different lunchtime and planning period from them. You can park your vehicle in a spot far removed from where the offending party parks and plan your arrival and departure times different from hers/his.
8. Focus on your students, your team, and your personal goals. Don't waste energy worrying about what the *snakes* are doing. (Unless you believe they are harming kids or bullying weaker teachers – then you have a moral obligation to speak up.) Time and energy focused on people who do not want to change is wasted. Try to remain attentive to the people who value and appreciate you.

Determine what you can and cannot control

What You Cannot Control:

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

What You Can Control:

1. How you react to others.
2. How you do your job.
3. How you treat others.
4. How you handle what you are given.
5. What steps you take to alleviate the problem.

LIFE IS A THEATRE

Author unknown

Life is a theater . . . invite your audience carefully.

Not everyone is good enough to have a front row seat in our lives.

There are some people in your life who need to be loved from a distance.

It's amazing what you can accomplish when you let go of draining, negative relationships.

Observe the relationships around you. Which ones lift . . . which ones lean?

Which ones encourage . . . which ones discourage?

Which ones are on a path of growth uphill . . . which are going downhill?

When you leave certain people...do you feel better . . . or worse?

Which ones don't really understand or appreciate you?

The more you seek quality and growth, the easier it will become to decide who gets to sit in the **front row**... and who should be moved to the **balcony** of your life.

YOU **CANNOT** CHANGE THE PEOPLE **AROUND** YOU....
BUT YOU **CAN** CHANGE THE PEOPLE YOU ARE **AROUND**!

Choose Wisely.

Reference

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

