

## Deliberate Optimism – Reclaiming the Joy in Education

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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.

### 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.



## SELF-EFFICACY INFLUENCES

- The choices we make
- The effort we put forth (how hard we try)
- Our perseverance (how long we persist when we confront obstacles)
- Our resilience (how quickly we recover from failure or setbacks)

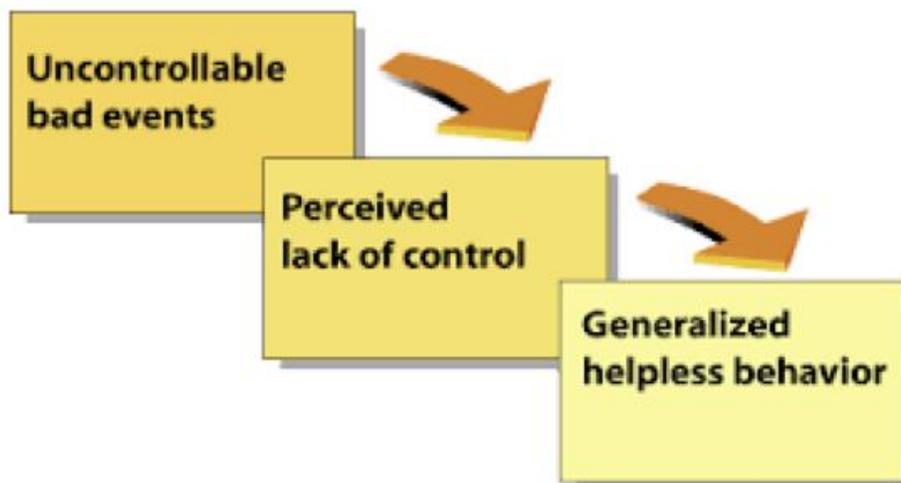


Albert Bandura (1925 -) popularized the term self-efficacy. He defines it as the part of our "self system" that helps us to evaluate our performance. Perceived self-efficacy refers to one's impression of what one is capable of doing. This comes from a variety of sources, such as personal accomplishments and failures, seeing others who are similar to oneself, and verbal persuasion.

Verbal persuasion may temporarily convince people that they should try or avoid some task, but in the final analysis it is one's direct or vicarious experience with success or failure that will most strongly influence one's self-efficacy. For example, a teacher may "fire-up" her students before a standardized test by telling the kids how great they are, but the enthusiasm will be short-lived if the test is completely beyond their ability or their perceived beliefs that they can actually do well.

People with high-perceived self-efficacy try more, accomplish more, and persist longer at a task than people with low perceived self-efficacy. Bandura speculates that this is because people with high-perceived self-efficacy tend to feel they have more control over their environment and, therefore, experience less uncertainty.

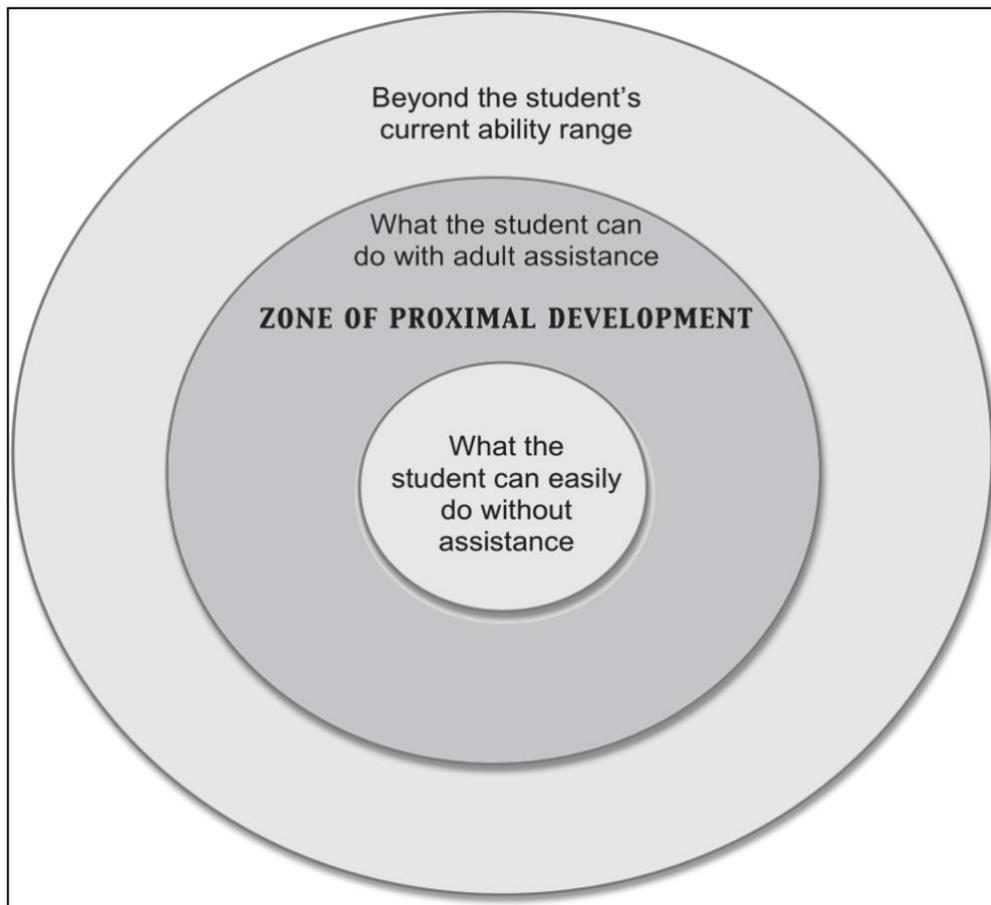
## Learned Helplessness



## STRATEGIES TO COMBAT LEARN HELPlessness

1. Help students understand that everyone has problems, fears, failures, and self-doubt. Share stories about people like those who have overcome similar or even harsher circumstances.
2. Help learners attribute their success or lack of it to internal rather than external causes and show them how they have power over the results.
3. Treat students' successes as though they are normal, not an isolated example or a fluke.
4. Help learners seek alternate paths to success when they encounter a roadblock or setback.
5. Help students learn the difference between hard work and strategic effort.
6. Continually reinforce the idea that the students can work on things within their control, like effort and choices, and they can always control those parts of her life.
7. Concentrate on improvement rather than on a finite goal. Give continual feedback on progress toward the goal.
8. Keep the learner operating in the zone of proximal development. Tasks that are too easy or too difficult will squash motivation.
9. Help students understand that intelligence and talent are not permanent entities. They can be incrementally improved in everyone.
10. Use feedback that is specific, constructive, and task specific.





## Zone of Proximal Development...ZPD

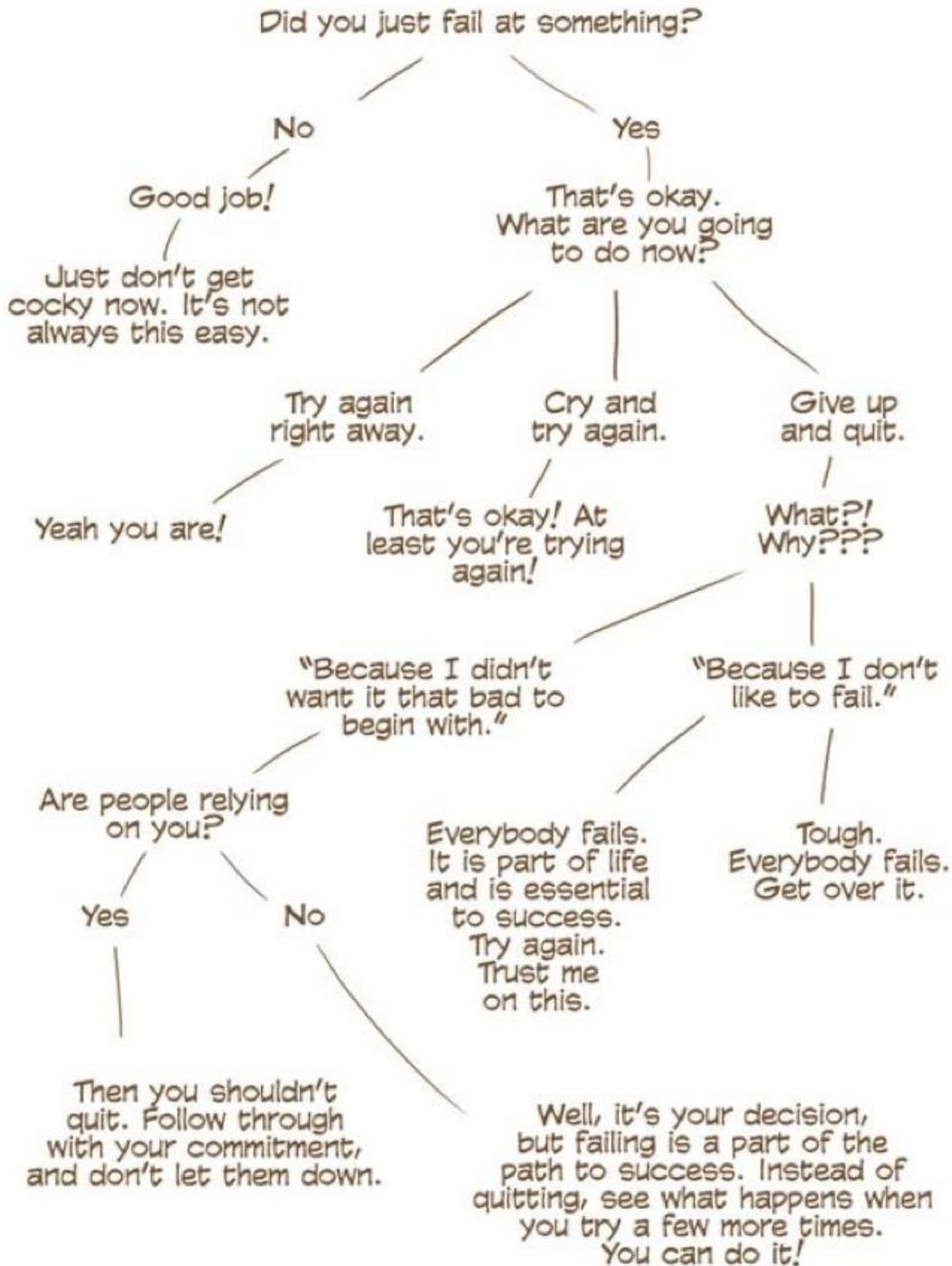
**Zone of Proximal Development, an idea developed by Lev Vygotsky over one hundred years ago, seeks to define the process through which students effectively learn in cooperation with a teacher.**

**A student's Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD, is defined as the student's range of ability with and without assistance from a teacher or a more capable peer. On one end of the range is the student's ability level without assistance. On the other end of the range is the student's ability level with assistance.**

The teacher should act as a scaffold, providing the minimum support necessary for a student to succeed. The idea is to assist without denying the student's need to build their own foundation. The challenge for the teacher, then, is to find the optimal balance between supporting the student and pushing the student to act independently.

To effectively scaffold the student, the teacher should stay one step ahead of the student, always challenging him or her to reach beyond his or her current ability level. However, if instruction falls outside of the zone (above or below a student's ZPD), no growth will occur.

# fail chart





## Gratitude

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others

— Marcus Tullius Cicero

An Experiment in Gratitude:  
The Science of Happiness

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHv6vTKD6lg>



### 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 a 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.

## How Vulnerable Are You to Stress?

(Adapted from the work of Dr. Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith,  
Stress Directions; 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 (mindfulness).

**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



## Some Simple Suggestions For Managing Stress:

**1. TALK TO SOMEONE.** Confide your worry to some levelheaded person you can trust; spouse, parent, friend, clergyman, family doctor, teacher, school counselor. Talking things out often helps you to see things in a clearer light and helps you see what you can do about it.

**2. BE HONEST IN IDENTIFYING THE REAL SOURCE OF STRESS.**

Eliminate the source if possible. At least decide on a plan to keep it from getting the best of you.

**3. ACCEPT WHAT YOU CAN'T CONTROL.** Death and taxes are just a few of the things in life you can't avoid. Try to prepare for them as much as possible.

**4. TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF.** Eat right. Get enough sleep. Exercise. Learn a relaxation technique. Schedule recreation where you do something for pleasure, something that helps you forget about your work.

**5. GO EASY ON YOUR CRITICISM.** Don't expect so much of others and you won't be disappointed. Instead, look for the good in others. You will feel better about yourself.

**6. SHUN THE "SUPERWOMAN" or "SUPERMAN" URGE.** Don't expect so much of yourself. Nobody is perfect, or capable of doing everything. Decide what you can do well and what you like to do and put your effort into those things.

**7. DO SOMETHING NICE FOR SOMEBODY ELSE.** Then give yourself a pat on the back.

**8. TAKE ONE THING AT A TIME.** Attack the most urgent task -- one at a time. Don't overestimate the importance of what you do. Your mental and physical health are vitally important.

**9. ESCAPE FOR A WHILE.** Making yourself "stand there and suffer" is self-punishment and not a way to solve a problem. Recover your breath and balance, but be prepared to deal with your difficulty when you are composed.

**10. WORK OFF YOUR ANGER.** If you feel like lashing out at someone, try holding off that impulse for a while. Do something constructive with that energy. Cool down, then handle the problem.

**11. GIVE IN OCCASIONALLY.** No one is right all of the time. And, even if you are right, it is easier on the system to give in once in awhile.

**12. IF YOU NEED HELP, GET AN EXPERT.** These simple suggestions may not be enough to help you handle your stress. If emotional problems become so distressing that you can't cope, you need PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT, just as you would for any other illness.

## Deliberate Optimism – Reclaiming the Joy in Teaching

Presented by Dr. Debbie Silver

### List of Resources and Suggestions for further reading:

Brassell, D. (2012). *Bringing joy back into the classroom*. Huntington Beach, CA: Shell Educational Publishing, Inc.

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.

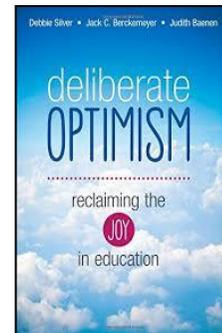
Silver D.(2010), *Drumming to the beat of different marchers*. Chicago, IL: Incentive by World Book, Inc.

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.



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