Building a Positive Outlook

Here are some strategies to consider that encourage optimism:

1. **Avoid negative people.** If this is not realistic, make every effort to seek the company of positive individuals. Sometimes this may mean associating with peers in other areas. Stay away from the professional complainer.

2. **Celebrate your strengths.** The key to high achievement and happiness is to use your strengths, not correct your weaknesses. Focus on what you do well.

3. **Manage or ignore what you cannot change.** When faced with setbacks, identify what you can change and proactively try to find ways to do something about it. Be inspired by Benjamin Franklin's words: "While we may not be able to control all that happens to us, we can control what happens inside us."

4. **Learn to reframe.** This involves deliberately shifting perspective and looking for the hidden positive in a negative situation: the proverbial silver lining. Look for the gift in the adversity.

5. **Adapt your language and outlook.** Consider how a simple shift in the language you use can make a difference in your outlook: Do you frequently say: "yes, but...." in response to suggestions? The "but" automatically negates anything you have said in the beginning part of the sentence. A simple shift to "yes, and..." might make a positive difference. Check the emails you have sent recently. Count the proportion of negative to positive words. It could be enlightening.

6. **Nurture a culture of optimism.** When you are in charge of other people at work, expect people to succeed. Even when they occasionally fail to achieve what they set out to do, encourage them so that they can tackle the next challenge.

7. **Consider the health benefits.** If you need extra motivation for practicing optimism, consider the statistics linking optimism to greater health. There is evidence that immune systems among optimistic people are stronger than among pessimists.