

MATTMCWILLIAMS

Live with Passion. Lead with Purpose. Leave a Legacy.

How to Overcome Pessimists Once and for All

Have you ever actually listened to an economist on the news? They might be the single most depressing group of people on earth. I've never heard one actually say anything optimistic.

Here's what a typical interview sounds like:

News reporter: Good news! The economy added 200,000 new jobs last month.

Economist: Yes, but...doom and gloom, obscure economic principle, the end of the world is near, etc. etc.

200,000 people who last month didn't have jobs now have jobs and somehow Mr. Economist manages to find the negative. Do you know anyone like that?

The Cloud in Every Silver Lining

Some people are just like economists. No matter what happens in the world, they find the cloud in the silver lining. They're called pessimists and I'll share with you how to overcome them.

When the pessimist hears good news like 200,000 people found work, he immediately thinks of all the possible problems with that. Rather than focus on the positives (like the satisfaction those 200,000 people feel right now), they focus on whatever faults they can find in the numbers. Maybe the average wage is slightly lower or some of those 200,000 are still under the poverty line. Rather than celebrate a big win, they remind us that the world is still not perfect (news flash!).

The Problem with Pessimists

The problem with pessimists is the *4 D's of Pessimists*. They are:

- **Depressing** - Hang around them long enough and you'll be depressed.
- **Draining** - They literally sap the energy right from you.
- **Dominating** - Pessimists can't stand an optimist. They'll argue with you until you either agree with them or submit.
- **Defeating** - They can find fault in the past, present and future. They strip away all hope.

How to overcome pessimists – Step One

When I hear a pessimistic economist (I know, that is redundant) here's what I do. It's the only thing you can do with pessimists:

I turn them off.

That's what *you* need to do.

You turn them off.

Shut them up.

Tune them out.

Change the channel.

Hang up the phone.

Cover your ears.

Walk away.

End the friendship.

Leave the job.

How to overcome pessimists – Step Two

After you've tuned them out and left them behind, you have to replace the pessimism with something else or cover it up. Much like painting over a stain on the wall, you sometimes have to cover up the damage. That means an influx of positivity.

Once you've tuned out or moved on from the pessimism, do these four things:

1. **Find the silver lining.** Focus specifically on what is good. What does this make possible? What can I learn from it? What good comes out of this?
2. **State the positives.** State, out loud, what is good about what you've just heard or read.
3. **Keep it to yourself.** Don't go share the doom and gloom with others. It only reinforces the pessimism.
4. **Cheer yourself up.** Sometimes, what you need more than anything is a pick-me-up and that is OK. Read something positive. Say something positive. Listen to comedy. Whatever gets you back to being...you!

Focus on what is good and enjoy the escape from the negativity. It takes less effort than you think to overcome pessimists.

How have you overcome pessimistic people, including yourself?