

Optimists: How do you fill your glass?

Written by Julie Desmond
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During a Leadership discussion last week, we were asked to rank ourselves and our lives on a scale of one to ten in regards to finances, fitness, fun, family and a couple other categories. Under fitness, I gave myself a ten, although I was feeling more like a four. I asked the group, if you say something out loud, does that make it true? Of course, I was referring to my fitness level, wholly personal and no global impact there, I promise.

However, the discussion went in an interesting direction: If you say it and it isn't true, are you lying? The government, educators, spiritual leaders... if it comes from them, it must be true, or it is a lie, said the group. So what I am wondering is, is it okay to frame something in a positive way in order to move in that direction? For example, you're a little tired today. But if you say, "I'm not tired at all! I'm ready for action! C'mon, dog, let's go for that walk!" then are you lying? Or are you reframing? And if a reframe is a lie, then where do our positive vibes come from? How do we get through a week of bombings, manhunts, unemployment and snowstorms if we can't see any hope in the future?

I've asked around a bit, and I've decided it's okay to frame things in a positive light, as long as you stay seated in reality while you do it. For instance, one can say, We don't know who bombed the marathon, which for a week or so was true.

Or one can say, We are looking for the culprit. Also true, but certainly more hopeful, more optimistic than the former statement.

Here's another one: Sales are way down this month. Let's assume that's a true statement. If one says, instead, We are committed to improving our sales numbers next month, is that a lie? Or is that a different way to frame the concept in order to make it more positive?

Perhaps the optimistic solution isn't to lie; rather, the goal should be to think forward, framing statements in the most positive light, and looking for glimpses of things to be hopeful about as we go through our days. In my case, I should have said, Today, my fitness feels like a four, but I'm going to change that to a ten by taking the dog out twice today. True statement plus positive outlook equals action and growth and success.

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