

# A FORMULA FOR OPTIMISM

*Are you someone who sees the glass half empty, or do you see the glass half full?*

If you're an optimist, you see the *glass half full*, and here is how *The Catholic Principal's Guide to Core Competencies* describes you:

*... Optimism is the habitual expectation of success in one's efforts to address challenges and confront change now and in the future. Optimistic leaders habitually expect good things to result from their initiatives while pessimistic leaders habitually assume that their efforts will be thwarted, as often as not. When the expectations of optimistic leaders are not met, they pursue alternative paths to accomplish their goals. Leaders' optimistic expectations, however, do not necessarily extend to their organizations as a whole. Rather, optimistic leaders expect their efforts to be successful in relation to those things over which they have direct influence or control but not necessarily to be powerful enough to overcome negative forces ... over which they have little or no influence or control; they are realistic as well as optimistic.*

Optimism certainly sounds like a healthy state, but we all know people of the *glass half empty* attitude. Perhaps we're even one our self. The good news: there may be a formula to bring about an optimistic attitude to everyone. It includes: healthy food choices, supplementation with antioxidants and essential fatty acids (EFAs), plus drinking green tea and observing spiritual practices.

Motivated by the hypothesis that optimism can result in less illness, increased productivity and even less depression, I explored a number of research studies that linked supplementation with antioxidants and EFAs, spiritual practices and the consumption of green tea to stimulating a more optimistic attitude, including a sense of hope and efficacy (confidence) in the light of adversity. A detailed list of the studies I explored can be found at the end of this article.

If you're not as optimistic as your colleagues, don't despair. I believe you can attain a much greater sense of optimism by following these tips. So before you forget the formula, why not start by adding at least one of these suggestions to your daily routine this week? As a Catholic School leader, there are so many advantages for yourself and those you interact with every day, to seeing the *glass half full* and enjoying a more optimistic state of mind.

## Your Daily Formula for Optimism

- Take a good quality antioxidant every day
- Supplement this with fruit and vegetables that cover all the colours of the rainbow
- Get your omega 3 and 6 oils by taking a daily teaspoon of each: sesame seed oil, flax oil and 2,000 mg. evening primrose oil (If you do not have the stomach to drink the oils, there are several brands of multi EFA capsules that combine all the necessary oils)
- Drink a minimum three to eight cups green tea
- Take time for spiritual practice and prayer

## Other factors that may enhance an optimistic attitude include

- Decrease sugar in all forms, as sugar will create a physical and emotional roller coaster that can lead to decreased optimism
- Eat protein at every meal and snacks
- Eat regularly every three to five hours and you will surprise yourself at how positive you can be
- Limit intake of saturated fats and heavy meats, particularly pork and cold cuts
- Limit coffee to one or two cups a day
- Limit alcohol to a minimum intake
- Be sure to get adequate sleep
- Get to bed before 11 p.m.

Alex Gellman is a Motivational Speaker, Author, Life Coach, Practitioner of Homeopathy and has a Doctorate in Natural Medicine. Visit her website [alexgellman.com](http://alexgellman.com) for more information.

## Article's List of Studies

- Unrealistic optimism: east and west? (Carter, February 13, 2013 )
- Green tea consumption is associated with depressive symptoms in elderly (Kaijun Niu, December 2009 )
- Role of antioxidants in generalized anxiety disorder and depression (medhavi Gautam, 2012)
- Association of n-3 long chain PUFA and fish intake with depressive symptoms and low dispositional optimism in older subjects with a history of myocardial infarction (Ondine van de rest, 2010 )