



## Emotional Style Assessment

### 2. OUTLOOK

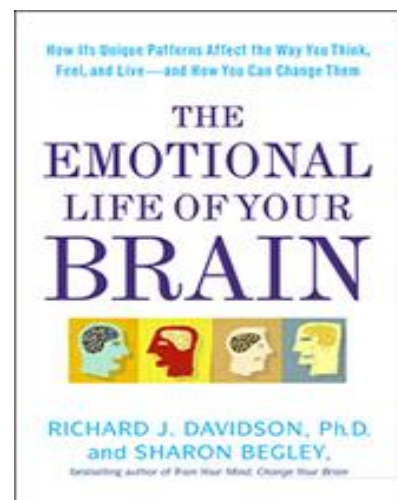
People in the positive extreme of the Outlook dimension have an uncanny ability to *maintain* positive emotions. The "maintain" aspect is the key characteristic of this dimension: It measures not whether you can feel joy, but how well you can keep that feeling alive. At the other end of the scale are people for whom joy tends to melt away as quickly as a snowflake in the sun. These are the cynics and pessimists who cannot sustain the sense of joy very long at all.

The following ten questions are designed to help you better understand your Emotional Style of 'Outlook'. If you are tempted to think long and hard about a question, or if you feel that there are too many nuances or exceptions, resist. The most accurate results come from making a snap judgment about whether a question is True or False about you. There are no right answers here - take it from the profile's creator, CIHM Founder Richard Davidson. This is not a pop quiz - it's about better understanding who you are, how you perceive the world, and how you navigate the obstacles of life.

The profile consists of simple 'True/False' statements and should take only a couple minutes to complete. You can even ask someone close to you to answer these questions about you for an additional perspective. That serve as a reality check.

Following the assessment are some exercises that can help you adjust your Outlook. Nothing is guaranteed, of course, and what you get out of it depends a great deal on what you put in.

Remember, this is simply a starting point to learning more about Emotional Style. To learn more about how Dr. Davidson describes the neural underpinnings of Emotional Style, the remaining five dimensions and strategies and tips to shift within the continuum of each, we encourage you to read the book!

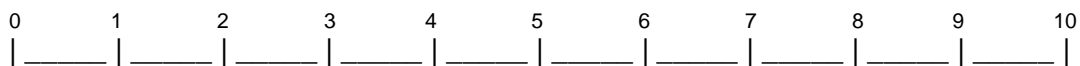


## OUTLOOK ASSESSMENT

Question	T or F?	Score
1. When I am invited to meet new people, I look forward to it, thinking they might become friends, rather than seeing it as a chore, figuring these people will never be worth knowing.		
2. When evaluating a coworker, I focus on details about which areas he needs to improve rather than on his positive overall performance.		
3. I believe the next ten years will be better for me than the last ten.		
4. Faced with the possibility of moving to a new city, I regard it as a frightening step into the unknown.		
5. When something small but unexpected and positive happens to me in the morning – for example, having a great conversation with a stranger – the positive mood fades within minutes.		
6. When I go to a party and I'm having a good time at the outset, the positive feeling tends to last for the entire evening.		
7. I find that beautiful scenes such as a gorgeous sunset quickly wear off and I get bored easily.		
8. When I wake up in the morning I can think of a pleasant activity that I've planned, and the thought puts me in a good mood that lasts the entire day.		
9. When I go to a museum or attend a concert, the first few minutes are really enjoyable, but it doesn't last.		
10. I often feel that on busy days I can keep going from one event to the next without getting tired.		
TOTAL =		

Scoring: Give yourself one point for each True answer to questions 1, 3, 6, 8 and 10, and one point for each False answer to questions 2, 4, 5, 7 and 9. All other answers score zero.

Plot your score on this scale:



Negative Outlook

Positive Outlook

The Outlook Dimension captures both your disposition about the future as well as your ability to maintain a positive feeling about an event in the past. As was the case with Resilience, your Outlook about trivial events is correlated with and predictive of your Outlook about momentous ones.

Outlook reflects how long and how well you can sustain positive emotions, either after something good happens to you or as a result of deliberately engaging in emotionally positive thoughts, such as thinking about someone you love. Although individual circumstances will affect the answers, the questions nevertheless capture the core of the Outlook dimension.

An excessively positive Outlook could impair your ability to learn from mistakes and the ability to postpone immediate gratification in favor of a greater payoff in the future.

An excessively negative Outlook, on the other hand, can sap your motivation and suck the joy out of your relationships; becoming more positive can add some sparkle to your perspective.

**Key Tools to adjust your Outlook include:**

1. Well-Being Therapy. Every day for a week, do these three exercises:

1. Write down one positive characteristic of yourself and one positive characteristic of someone you regularly interact with. Do this three times each day. Ideally, you'll write down a different trait each time, but if you're stuck on how "helpful" your office colleague is, that's okay.
2. Express gratitude regularly. Pay attention to times you say "thank you." When you do, look directly into the eyes of the person you are thanking and muster as much genuine gratitude as you can. Keep a journal; at the end of the day, note the specific times you felt a genuine, even if brief, connection with another person during the act of expressing gratitude.
3. Compliment others regularly. Watch for opportunities to do so, such as a job well done at work, a beautiful garden a neighbor created, or even a stranger's gorgeous coat. Look directly into the eyes of the person you are complimenting. In your journal, note the specific times you felt a genuine connection with someone you complimented.

After a week of this, reflect on what changes you noticed in your Outlook style.

2. Adjust your environment. Fill your workspace or home with upbeat, optimistic, gratifying reminders of happy times and people who gave you meaning to life. Change the pictures every so often, so that you do not habituate to them. Spend time with optimistic people; reduce your time with negative ones.

3. Immediate Reward – Delayed Reward. Seek out situations in which an immediate reward beckons, and then resist its lure. Don't make it hard on yourself at first. Compare the short term reward with the longer term reward. Two examples:

a. You just made some brownies in mid-afternoon for your dinner this evening. Just a little taste now wouldn't hurt, would it? Well, think about now, and the future (dinner). Imagine enjoying the brownies with your family or friends because you know that you did not overindulge earlier. You may have one guilt-free! Also, think about what that extra brownie does to your waistline and over-all health. Finally, find a distraction for now until dinner. This type of strategy strengthens the planning function of the prefrontal cortex, strengthening your future resolve.

b. You've gone shopping. For a while, take only cash and no credit card – that will make this easier until you have had more practice. While shopping you see something that you would like (notice "like" versus "need"). Focus on the benefits of the money that you save; paying off a debt, saving for college later, or a new car – visualize the future reward clearly in your mind. Sometimes a short-term goal, like a new TV set, will work, too. Save up for it; but be sure to reward yourself once that time actually arrives – you earned it!

4. To temper a too-positive Outlook: envision potential negative outcomes to a situation or decision. If considering an expensive purchase, for example, spend time reflecting on the possible negative consequences of that choice – ongoing expenses, additional maintenance, potential for damage to it, etc.

The exercises in this segment and the other five segments all work through the mind to actually change your brain. They have the power to alter your neural systems that underlie each of the six dimensions of Emotional Style:

- Resilience
- Outlook
- Social Intuition
- Self-Awareness
- Sensitivity to Context
- Attention

Any decision to shift your set point on any of these dimensions should be based on thoughtful introspection about whether it is keeping you from being the person you wish to be and living the life you aspire to.

Emotions help us appreciate others and the world around us; they make life meaningful and fulfilling.