

# the LETTER

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## From The Editor

*Dr. Glenn Terrell*

For the first time, we have combined the Summer and Fall issues of THE LETTER, in this instance due to the production of the new centerpiece program, *Imagine 21™*. Part One of this issue is a report of the Education Initiative, featuring an article by Dr. Joe Pace and John Rattay, along with several testimonials of university executives who have used or are now using The Pacific Institute's *Investment in Excellence®* with their faculty colleagues or with students.

Part Two features recent publications about two of our consultants, Albert Bandura and Martin Seligman, in which these two distinguished psychologists and scholarly leaders outline what they consider to be the accomplishments of psychology to date, and most important, what they believe to be the most fruitful and valuable goals of behavior science in the future.

As you read these statements you will be acutely aware of the relevance of their visions of the future of psychology to our work at The Pacific Institute. The key concepts they both use in describing their visions of the future are the key concepts we stress in describing the mission of TPI: Hope, optimism, efficacy, change, beliefs, resilience, proactive, exercising control, self regulation, faith, human agency, self directedness, explanatory style (self talk), learned optimism and learned helplessness,

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## The Success Strategies for Effective Schools Process

*by Dr. Joe Pace and John Rattay*

### Defining the Problems

It's not hard to get widespread general agreement among postsecondary college and school administrators and teachers on the half-dozen most crucial challenges facing their organizations today. Just about everyone believes that what's needed is (1) larger numbers of students enrolled, (2) fewer no-shows after enrollment, (3) more students who stay the course through to completion, (4) lower percentage of loan defaults, (5) greater number of successful job placements, and (6) employee development and motivation.

What is much more difficult is achieving consensus about how best to respond to these problems, given our current resources. As a college president for many years, a former commissioner of the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), and past chairman of the Florida Licensing Board for Private Postsecondary Schools, Dr. Pace knows how easy it is to define the problem in general terms and how hard it can be to agree on specific solutions. But he also knows that sometimes our definition or perception of the problem can stand in the way of finding the answers. Let us explain what we mean.

People who believe that the responsibility for a problem is "out there" someplace, whether it be the federal government, the state, the economy,

the administration, the system, etc., are more than likely going to look "out there" for a solution. As a result, they may feel relatively powerless to change things for the better themselves and, because they feel powerless, they may not even try. The most they can do in a scenario like this is adjust, cope, and make sense of it.

On the other hand, people who believe that every problem has a solution and that they are the ones who are responsible for developing it are going to look to themselves for action and answers. If they have a clear vision of the results they want and if their sense of self-efficacy (perceived power to make something happen) is high, they will persist in the face of obstacles and setbacks until the problem is solved.

These, of course, are not simply our opinions. There is a very large and

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mastery, and insight, to mention but a few.

There are similarities and differences between Bandura's and Seligman's approaches to a more hopeful world and the contributions that psychology can make toward that end. Bandura's social cognitive theory is based on the assumption that human beings possess a greater ability than has been acknowledged to self regulate. He refers to this ability as "human agency," a collection of skills that enables people to acquire a high degree of efficacy, both individual and collective, which in turn

leads to control, the key word in the subtitle of Bandura's most recent book *Self Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*.

Seligman stresses the fact that psychology has learned much about how to diagnose and treat behavior problems, which he refers to as the negative, albeit important, aspects of the discipline, and that now is the time to address the broader issues that will create a better, more hopeful world. The key concepts in his approach are optimism, learned optimism, and that people have the ability to reverse pessimism, thereby creating a better world for themselves and others.

Hope for a better future is an important component of both Bandura's and Seligman's theories and research. Bandura's efficacy theory is the basis for most of the research that he and his colleagues have done for the past twenty five to thirty years, while Seligman's optimism/pessimism formulation was originally a theory of depression he developed while providing counseling for college students at The University of Pennsylvania.

The theory and research of both Seligman and Bandura provide psychological underpinnings of the work of The Pacific Institute, and form the basis for their vision of the future.

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growing body of valid, reliable psychological research that supports these statements. Much of it involves self-efficacy theory, which says that what we can do is affected by our beliefs about what we can do as much as it is by our actual ability. But what does all of this have to do with colleges and schools? As it turns out, a great deal.

**Moving Toward Solutions**


While Dr. Pace was researching stu-

dent retention and persistence techniques for his doctoral dissertation – techniques that seemed at best uncertain and at worst useless – he discovered a short course of study based on cognitive psychology and centered around efficacy theory. Developed and produced by The Pacific Institute, it is a curriculum that transforms some of the most widely accepted principles of human behavior into easy-to-understand, immediately useful, personally relevant concepts. It teaches people, not

what to think, but how to think. And it teaches them how to examine and change their limiting beliefs, self-defeating habits and negative expectations in order to improve the results they are getting in virtually every area of life. At the time, it seemed to Dr. Pace that this education had everything necessary to dramatically impact student retention and success.

Although it was new to him, he found that The Pacific Institute's curricu-

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**THE PACIFIC INSTITUTE**®

1709 HARBOR AVENUE SW  
SEATTLE, WA 98126-2049

Phone: (800) 426-3660  
Fax: (206) 587-6007  
www.loutice.com

Dr. Glenn Terrell, Editor  
gterrell@pac-inst.com

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*We all, The Pacific Institute family, in our endeavor to fulfill the mission statement of The Pacific Institute, are in the constant process of improving ourselves in order to better serve those we are committed to reach. The translation of research into practical application is a continuous and dynamic effort and we trust that The Letter, will help each of us stay involved in that process.*



**Dr. Glenn Terrell** earned his B.A. in Political Science from Davidson College, his M.S. in Psychology from Florida State University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. Dr. Terrell served as Chairman of the Department of Psychology, University of Colorado, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and as Dean of Faculties at the University of Illinois in Chicago before an 18-year tenure as President of Washington State University.

**Dr. Joe Pace** is currently the Managing Partner of the Higher Education Initiative for The Pacific Institute. As a nationally known speaker and psychologist, he conducts seminars and workshops in areas of school management, faculty development, student retention, psychology and motivation.

**John Rattay** is the Program Manager for the Higher Education Initiative, and strongly believes that the TPI curriculum and process in which it is delivered is effective and beneficial to anyone who wants to make lasting positive changes in their lives.

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lum was familiar to a great many organizations and individuals. In fact, for more than 25 years it has been in active use by Fortune 500 corporations, many small and medium-size businesses, the U.S. military, a broad array of social service agencies: adult welfare recipients, at-risk youth, staff and inmates in state and federal prisons; and numerous collegiate and professional sports organizations. It is also being used with excellent results by organizations and individuals in many other countries around the world.

Dr. Pace contacted The Pacific Institute to learn more about what they were doing, and the more he learned, the more impressed he became with the quality of their work. During the past few years, he has been serving as National and International Director of The Pacific Institute's Education Initiative. TPI's mission and that of the Initiative is to spread the word about the effectiveness of this curriculum in helping educators and students alike achieve their objectives. One of the things we have done in this capacity is to develop a strategic and business planning process that incorporates this curriculum and effectively addresses the postsecondary college and school challenges mentioned previously.

### **Instead of Band-Aids, A Process That Produces Lasting, Measurable Results**

This is not a quick fix, cookie-cutter program claiming to be a panacea for all of the problems plaguing colleges and schools. Rather, it is a comprehensive, custom-tailored, six-step intervention process that consists of education, training and consulting and is designed to produce measurable, lasting results.

Key result areas for students and staff alike include improved productivity and teamwork; greater loyalty, involvement and accountability; lower stress and tension levels;

higher confidence and initiative; enhanced ability to solve problems, make decisions and handle complaints; and a more positive influence on others. It is common for participants to report improved relationships with family and friends, as well.

The process takes into consideration the unique environment and resources of each particular institution and incorporates feedback and evaluations from staff and students regarding its effectiveness in addressing specific objectives. The six steps are as follows:

1. *Administration and Staff Training:* Using The Pacific Institute's centerpiece curriculum, *Investment in Excellence*<sup>®</sup>, we teach effective thinking skills necessary to achieve personal, professional and organizational goals and high self-efficacy.
2. *Institutional Application and Facilitator Training:* Our "train the trainer" program is a step-by-step method wherein the staff learn how to facilitate the curriculum to others. This technique, designed to make application easy through participation, goes far beyond the typical teaching of a course in a traditional classroom situation. This step of the training makes it easier for students to incorporate the information in all areas and departments throughout the school.
3. *Student Training Implementation:* In-house "certified" facilitators begin delivering The Pacific Institute curriculum to students via *Thought Patterns for a Successful Career*<sup>™</sup> student curriculum.
4. *Strategic Vision Building Workshop:* This is a session for the school's key decision makers and those who were trained in Steps 1 and 2. The workshop is designed to help the institution create and/or clarify a shared vision, establish commitment and support, define specific measurable goals for the school and determine precise

strategies to obtain these goals. It is during the Strategic Vision Building workshop that we help participants determine exactly what outcomes they want, how those outcomes will be measured and how The Pacific Institute's curricula will assist in achieving the outcomes desired.

5. *On-going Student Training:* Certified facilitators continue to train students by providing the tools and techniques necessary to assimilate effective thinking skills needed to achieve high self-efficacy. The curriculum empowers people to become accountable for the choices they make. The course content takes a look at proximal and distal goals, which allows retention to be the by-product of a student's own goal-setting strategy.
6. *Follow-up Services:* Follow-up services include on-going support, additional training, research updates and fine-tuning. Telephone coaching and advising are also provided year-round.

### **Outcomes of this Process**

#### **Benefits include:**

1. A 25-50 percent increase in student success and retention that recaptures some of the thousands of tuition dollars currently being lost due to high dropout rates.
2. Significant increases in graduation rates and job placements.
3. Lower student loan defaults and lower school student loan cohort default rates due to fewer dropouts.
4. Greater efficacy during the admissions process resulting in fewer "no shows" from enrollment to start date.
5. Enhanced employee development and motivation by intensive staff and faculty training. This is the same training The Pacific Institute has provided to over 60 percent of the Fortune 500 companies around the world.

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6. Improved self and organizational efficacy and personal growth for students and staff. Effective management of change for students and staff.
7. Development of "team" environments.
8. Students can take a complete course (credit or non-credit) that is designed to fit into the institution's current programs of study. Ideally, it is offered as one of the first courses a student would take. It can be easily administered in 21 contact hours and the concepts can be smoothly integrated into other courses throughout the student's program of study.
9. The staff training satisfies faculty in-service requirements as well as institutional effectiveness and outcomes assessment criteria used in the certification and accreditation process. Continuing Education Units can be issued upon program completion.

**Testing Results in the Real World**

Institutions that have incorporated this process into their own curricula have experienced significant positive results, including increased student retention, increased student enrollment, fewer no-shows, and lower student loan default rates. In addition, faculty and staff report an increased sense of job appreciation and security, resulting in improved on-the-job performance. Here is a representative sample of the kind of responses this process has been receiving:

- "In our first year of using the *Success Strategies for Effective Schools* process our student enrollment went from 363 to 403 students."
- Tom Marley, Director, ITT Technical Institute, Arlington, Texas*
- "I am convinced that we would not be nearly as successful a degree-granting institution as we are, were it not for the *Success Strategies for Effective Schools* program."

*Stephen Friedheim, President, Executive Secretarial School, Dallas, Texas*

- "This is our eighth year with this program... It's the best I've seen."
- C.M. Fike II, President, City College, Fort Lauderdale, Florida*
- "One of the benefits for both students and the college is that there has been a 28.6 percent increase in the academic retention of students who have completed the course."

*South College, Savannah, Georgia*

- "We have had a 27.5 percent increase in student retention."
- Wayne Major, Vatterott College, St. Joseph, Missouri*
- "We have been successfully involved with this program for the past eight years."

*Rasmussen College System, Minnetonka, Minnesota*

The table below contains student completion rates for two programs at ITT Technical Institute in Arlington, Texas. Electronic Engineering Technology (EET) and Computer-Aided Drafting (CAD) for 1997, before The Pacific Institute's *Success Strategies for Effective Schools* process, and for 1998 after the six-step intervention process was implemented. As can be seen in the table, the retention rate in 1997 for the EET program was only 41% at the end of twelve months. Twelve months after The Pacific Institute's intervention, the retention rate rose to 57%. For the CAD program, the retention rate after twelve months increased from 58% to 67%. These increases are considered very significant within the Higher Education arena.

The Higher Education Initiative currently serves approximately 150 colleges and schools in the United States and Canada. These include various two and four-year institutions such as: ITT Technical Institutes (a national chain of 68 schools), Pima Community College, Tucson, Arizona and City Colleges, located throughout the State of Florida. Various public school districts include Chicago Public Schools, several school districts throughout the State of Kentucky and South Florida's division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education. Universities involved in the Higher Education Initiative include National American University (10 campuses throughout the United States), Johnson and Wales University, Providence, Rhode Island and at the University of Southern California (USC) doctoral students from the School of Education.

Other Higher Education Initiative clients include Glencoe-McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, the Career College Association (CCA), Washington, D.C., ACCSCT Accrediting Commission, Washington, D.C., and various Education State Associations throughout the country including Florida and Texas.

We have also recently entered into an agreement with City University in Seattle, Washington. This agreement is a joint venture to offer various bachelor and master level degrees on-site with select client colleges and schools in addition to corporate clients.

In the future, we expect to be working with more four-year colleges and universities, including those offering advanced degrees.

	EET March (Electronic Engineering Technology)				CAD March (Computer Aided Drafting)			
	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 months	3 months	6 months	9 months	12 months
<b>1997</b>	68%	49%	44%	41%	79%	63%	63%	58%
<b>1998</b>	69%	61%	57%	57%	80%	67%	67%	67%

## Testimonials by University Faculty and Administrators

1. "Dear Dr. Terrell, I am writing to share with you a series of individual successes which principles of your Institute have inspired. As a WSU faculty member, I attended Dean Wilson's very effective course (*Investment in Excellence*®) on self improvement. I systematically learned how to take hold of my life and to positively change negative and self-limiting habits. From a personal standpoint, this reprogramming has facilitated and driven away several of my bad and destructive habits. The quality of my marriage and relationships with my children have been greatly enhanced. The attitudes of students completely changed from thinking failure was imminent to thinking problems really represent opportunities.

Recognizing the opportunity to create a private company outside the University, I recently started CancEr2, a company focused on can-

cer in men. As a veterinarian with a specialty in equine reproduction, I could feel unqualified to speak with MDs who have focused on cancer for their entire careers. However, with a still inner confidence, I realize the novel information I possess may be critical to preventing and curing prostate cancer in men. I am refining my affirmations, such that I will be calm and assured while I explain the reason why there has not been one reported case of a stallion with prostate cancer. I have the identified chemicals that prevent prostate cancer in stallions, and that may prevent and cure prostate cancer in men. I realize that my challenge will be to convince these scientists to look "outside the box" and to shift their paradigm. Your Institute works miracles in the lives of countless individuals."

*Gordon L. Woods, DVM, Ph.d., Professor, Northwest Equine Reproduction Laboratory*

2. From the first time I completed the program (many years ago) as a trainee to the present, as a facilitator, I have been impressed with the power of the *Investment in Excellence*® program. Participation in the program provides participants with enhanced self-confidence, personal motivation, and understanding of self and others, thus facilitating improved interpersonal relationships. While a few may say, to devote so much employee work time to such a program is wasteful, I would suggest that participation in/completion of this program cannot help but to enhance productivity as employees – staff, administrative professionals, and faculty – find new awareness, new energy and new meaning in their respective worlds.

*Karen Kay Zucco-Gatlin, Manager Human Resource Services Employee Development, Washington State University*

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**Seattle, Washington May 18 -20, 2000**

## Albert Bandura

Written by Kathleen O'Toole for the Stanford Report

"Despite the bad news you hear, the world is full of resilient people who lick drug and alcohol addiction on their own, benefit from stress and hard work, survive traumatic childhoods and extend their lives through health enhancing behavior."

This optimistic message comes from Albert Bandura, the David Starr Jordan Professor of Social Science in the Psychology Department whose work on "social cognitive theory" has won him many honors, the latest of which was being named honorary president of the Canadian Psychological Association this month. Bandura has chosen to "swim against the mainstream of negativity in the profession in recent talks to professional associations, because," he said, "our theories grossly overpredict pathology."

"Take, for example, nicotine, alcohol or other drug addictions," Bandura said. In formal treatment programs and research studies, professionals "see the hard core cases. We have dreary relapse curves for these programs, and so we have all these theories about how every puff of a cigarette affects the brain, and claims that long term addiction produces brain disease," he said in a recent interview. "But 40 million people have quit smoking on their own, so you have to ask yourself, where is the brain disease and how did they uproot it singlehandedly? The mass of successful self-changers is the elephant that no one sees." Similarly, Bandura said, "If you look at our theories of social pathology and then at the dismal conditions in which children grow up in our ghettos, you would predict that all of them would be on drugs or psychological basket cases. Yet if you use criteria like gainful employment, forming partnerships and life without crime, you will find that most of those kids make it. Their parents are

fantastically proactive in promoting their children's competencies as well as shielding them from dangers." These parents, he said, are modeling for their children a "proactive mastery" of their environment, rather than the "reactive risk model" of professional psychology.

Medicine is another area where negativity prevails. Our conception of health emphasizes "disease prevention, not health enhancement," he said, even though "it is just as meaningful to speak of levels of vitality as of degrees of impairment." Evidence shows that "by exercising control over a few healthy habits, people can live longer, healthier lives and slow the process of aging." Yet national efforts to control escalating health costs "do little to reduce the demand for medical services by enabling people to stay healthy."

A large part of Bandura's research has been focused on documenting how people, by regulating their own motivations and activities, produce experiences that play a major role in their well-being. In his 1997 book, "Self Efficacy: The Exercise of Control," Bandura explains that people need to develop beliefs in their ability to produce desired results, which usually entails their working to develop competencies needed for mastery and self-renewal. "People who believe they have the power to exercise some measure of control over their lives are healthier, more effective and more successful than those who lack faith in their ability to effect changes in their lives."

Another way to build people's sense of personal efficacy is to provide them with successful models who transmit knowledge, skill and inspiration. Bandura has helped people develop clinical treatment programs using this approach, but more recently, he became an adviser to Click Health, a company that markets com-

puter games that try to increase people's efficacy in dealing with health problems. A game for children with diabetes, for example, features two diabetic elephant characters who go on a treasure hunt and survive in a jungle by picking the right foods, regularly checking their blood glucose level and taking insulin shots. In a study at Stanford Medical Center, children who used the games were four times less likely to require urgent-care visits during the six-month study period than those who played another game.

Negative warnings are a more common approach to health issues. Bandura illustrates this with the example of stress, which is routinely portrayed in journals and the popular press as bad for one's health. Among other things, stress is said to undermine a person's immune system. But in research with others, Bandura found that stress aroused while people were actively acquiring the ability to cope and master new situations enhanced components of the immune systems. "Stress experienced while acquiring coping efficacy has different effects than stressed aroused in aversive situations with no prospect of ever gaining any self-protective control," he said.

Neglecting the positive side of people's emotional lives has other implications, Bandura said. Books and articles, for example, often frame women's recent entry into the workplace as a social problem that undermines families.

"There are countless studies on the negative spillover of job pressures on family life but few on how job satisfaction enhances the quality of family life," he said. A few studies that have looked for positive spillover have found that women's personal well-being and health is enhanced by their sense of efficacy in handling dual roles.

## Martin E.P. Seligman

Written by Huntly Collins for  
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Bandura traces the roots of negative bias to prevailing theories in psychology and biology that underestimate humans as active agents in their own lives. Theorists saw the mind as a “passive black box” and later, as a linear-processing computer. Such theories treat people as “automatons undergoing actions, devoid of any conscious regulation, phenomenological life or personal identity,” he said. “It is the height of irony that a science of human functioning should strip people of the very capabilities that make them unique in their power to shape their environment and their own destiny.”

Biological theories that espouse “one sided evolutionism” also have contributed to the negative bias, he said. They emphasize the constraints on people’s behavior based on their evolved biological structures, without acknowledging the other side of the co-evolution process. “People are not just reactive products of selection pressure. Through their construction of ever more complex environments, people are producers of new selection pressures in the co-evolution process. In the case of complex human behavior, nature operates as a potentialist rather than a determinist,” he said.

Because humans have an unparalleled capacity to become many things, Bandura said, societies are wise to cultivate “generalizable competencies, instill a robust sense of efficacy, create equitable opportunity structures, provide aidful resources, allow room for self-directedness.”

He urged his fellow psychologists to “venture forth to agentically humanize our psychology and psychologize biology, forswear Prozac, and may the efficacy force be with you.”

Martin E.P. Seligman was a young graduate student in 1964 when he observed the strange behavior of dogs in the psychology lab at the University of Pennsylvania. Instead of jumping to avoid a mild electrical shock, the dogs simply lay down and whimpered.

Seligman came up with a novel explanation: The dogs, he reasoned, had learned from previous experiments that they could not escape the shock so there was no point in even trying.

Seligman’s theory, which he dubbed “learned helplessness,” was met with skepticism in the scientific community which believed that all animals learned only through a system of rewards and punishments.

Today that skepticism has all but vanished as Seligman, now a Penn professor, prepares to assume the presidency of the American Psychological Association, the leading professional group in the field.

Seligman’s once-scorned notion of learned helplessness in animals has led to important new understandings about a similar phenomenon in people. And its flip side, a theory that Seligman calls “learned optimism” is now one of the hottest ideas in psychology.

The theories, say adherents, help explain a wide variety of human behavior from welfare dependency to school achievement to who gets elected president of the United States. And they have enormous potential for practical application everywhere from the living room to the classroom to the board room.

“There’s almost no area of psychology where the kinds of insights Marty has generated haven’t had an impact,” said Barry Schwartz, associate provost and professor of social theory and social action at Swarthmore College.

Seligman, 55, is not surprised that what began as an arcane experiment more than three decades ago has led to a new psychology that is generating so much enthusiasm today. “The first time I saw a helpless animal in the laboratory I knew we were on to something important,” he said.

Last week, more than two dozen scholars from around the country, most of them former students of Seligman’s at Penn, gathered in Philadelphia for a one day symposium aimed at advancing Seligman’s theories to the next level.

“We are looking to develop a new psychology of hope,” said Schwartz, a psychologist who got his PhD at Penn.

The conference, titled “The Science of Optimism and Hope” was sponsored by Seligman and the John Templeton Foundation, a Radnor based group that attempts to bridge the gap between religion and science.

Over most of the last half-century psychology has focused on fixing what’s broken in the human psyche. Seligman wants to get the profession to focus on the other side of the coin – nurturing psychological strength and resiliency.

“Psychology has forgotten its mission of looking at the best things in life,” said Seligman, an ebullient man who likes to play bridge.

His work falls into a larger field known as cognitive behavioral psychology. It holds that how people think determines how they feel, not the reverse.

Seligman believes that everybody has an “Explanatory Style,” a way of explaining adverse events to him or herself. Although a person’s explanatory style is established about age 9, Seligman believes that it can be changed through training.

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Some people, he believes, have an optimistic explanatory style. When something bad happens they give themselves messages that enable them to cope with the situation. Other people have a pessimistic style. When they experience adversity, they give themselves messages that leave them feeling bad.

For instance, two women may react very differently when a fiancée breaks off an engagement. One may feel devastated. Her feeling is driven by thoughts such as, "It's all because of my personality flaws. I'll never find anybody else to marry. Without a husband, I'm worthless."

Another woman may be upset but able to cope. Her feelings are driven by such thoughts as, "He broke it off because I moved the wedding date up. Thank God, I'm saved from what would have been an unhappy marriage. It might take some time, but I'll find somebody else."

Such optimism, Seligman says has nothing to do with happy faces, empty-headed wishful thinking, or Norman Vincent Peale. Instead, he says, it involves clear-headed thinking about the facts of a particular situation: the ability to see a setback as temporary rather than permanent, and the refusal to personalize a problem by blaming oneself.

At last week's symposium, psychologists presented research findings showing that people with an optimistic style fared better than those with a pessimistic one in a wide range of areas from physical health to mental health to creativity.

A study of 120 male heart patients at Stanford University Medical Center, for instance, found that a pessimistic explanatory style was a better predictor of death from heart failure than smoking or high blood pressure.

Other data showed that college students with an optimistic approach had fewer colds and trips to the student health center than those with a

pessimistic style.

Psychologists at Temple University and the University of Wisconsin reported findings from a study of 2700 freshmen from both schools. They followed about 1400 who were determined to be at risk for depression based on a questionnaire. The federally funded study, which excluded students who were mentally ill, followed the students over three years. Those who had a pessimistic style were more likely than those with an optimistic one to have an episode of depression.

Optimism also appears to help people cope with the death of a loved one. Susan Nolen-Hoeksema, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Michigan studied 240 people in the San Francisco area who had lost a spouse, child or significant other. All had died while in hospice care. Sixty five percent reported that they found something positive that made them more able to cope. For some, the death helped them to be more sensitive. For others, it taught them patience, gave them courage or helped them realize the importance of personal relationships.

Some of the most convincing data came from Seligman's own project aimed at helping children at risk for depression move from a pessimistic style to an optimistic one. The project, known as the Penn Optimism Program puts children aged 9 through 13 through a training program of 12 two-hour sessions. The children meet in small groups and learn to tune into the thoughts they have when they are faced with a tough situation. The children are then taught how to come up with alternatives to negative thoughts. "With time and practice the kids get good at it," said Andrew Shatte, a Penn research associate. The researchers use cartoons depicting difficult experiences the children are likely to encounter, such as being called a name on the playground. The children are encouraged to become a detective like Sherlock Holmes, looking for posi-

tive thoughts to replace negative ones. Anyone who thinks negatively is called a Merlock, a worm that nobody wants to be. The approach, which has been used in six cities around the country and one in Australia, has had impressive results.

In an experiment in Abington and Wissahickon school districts, 70 children assessed to be at risk for depression were put through the training. They were matched with 70 controls, children also at risk for depression who did not receive the training. Shatte reported that two years after the training, 44 percent of the controls had suffered moderate to severe depression versus just 22 percent of the children who got the training. The approach is now being tried in the Lower Merion School District.

Seligman hopes to extend such "optimistic training" to corporate America and other arenas through a company he established last year to develop and market the work coming out of his laboratory.

"We've got a tiger by the tail," said Dean Becker, the president of the firm known as Basic Learning. Next month, managers from a number of Fortune 500 companies are to gather in Philadelphia to learn this way of thinking. As they work to promote a psychology of hope, Seligman and his colleagues are well aware of the hurdles. One is competition from the drugs that have been developed in the last decade to treat depression and other mental illness. But Seligman contends that cognitive-behavioral therapy is as effective as the new drugs – and can be ended without the kind of recidivism that often occurs when medications are withdrawn. Another challenge is to make sure that the new psychology of hope does not turn a blind eye to pressing social problems – everything from inner-city poverty to corporate downsizing.

"Sometimes," said Schwartz, "people are miserable for very good reasons."