

Explanatory (Attributional) Style

Explanatory style is how you describe the events in your life, both positive and negative, to yourself. It is generally characterized as positive or negative. The three main domains are permanence (temporary vs permanent), pervasiveness (specific vs pervasive), and personal (due to an external or internal cause). It has been shown in studies to impact job retention, job performance, cancer progression, response to treatment, sports success, response after failure, and more.

For more information:

1. Seligman, M.E.P. (1990). [Learned Optimism](#). New York: Knopf.
2. Seligman, M.E.P. and Schulman, P. (1986). [Explanatory style as a predictor of productivity and quitting among life insurance agents](#). Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50, 832-838.
3. <https://positivepsychology.com/explanatory-styles-optimism/>
4. www.positivepsychology.org

Tests of explanatory style:

1. <https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/testcenter>
2. <https://web.stanford.edu/class/msande271/onlinetools/LearnedOpt.html>
3. <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/resources/questionnaires-researchers/attributional-style-questionnaire>