

Looking for Luck



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Therapist, Laureate Eating Disorders Program

Morgan Richardson, LPC began working with the Laureate Eating Disorders Program in 2012 as a psychiatric technician, which sparked her passion for working in this field. She currently serves as the outpatient therapist for the eating disorders program and also works with residents of Magnolia House, Laureate's independent living home for women in recovery from eating disorders. She also facilitates groups and provides meal support for the inpatient program and occasionally provides supplemental therapy for inpatients that have a history of trauma.

Morgan received her Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Oklahoma Christian University and her Master of Science degree in community counseling from Oklahoma State University. She is trained in EMDR therapy, which she utilizes to help clients process and find relief from past traumas.

Morgan has a passion for empowering individuals and their families in the process of finding healing, strength and purpose in their unique experiences. She pulls from internal family systems, dialectical behavior therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy in her practice.

Have you ever bought a car, then suddenly it seemed like those cars were everywhere? Chances are after you bought that car, 100's of people did not drop what they were doing to go and buy the exact same car. In reality, those same cars were there all along, they just weren't noticed because they weren't at the front of your mind. I see luck much in the same way. Sure exciting and totally unexpected things can happen, like hitting a game winning half-court shot right as the buzzer goes off, but luck is really less about those extreme moments and more about noticing what things and opportunities we already have in the seemingly ordinary day to day. In other words, the people who feel the luckiest are the people who look for luck. Here are two ways to notice the luck in life.

Take an optimistic bias

On Christmas Day a few years back, I attended an Oklahoma City Thunder basketball game. It was a close and exciting game and the Thunder won 112-100. "How exciting and lucky is that?!" I thought. I am quite certain, however, that the opposing team's

fans behind me felt pretty unlucky that they had traveled all the way to Oklahoma, on Christmas day, to watch their team lose. What I am describing here is the framing effect (Tversky 1981). According to the framing effect theory, the perception of luck is really just a matter of perspective. Optimism is seen as a key influence in an event being perceived as lucky (Hales 2018). When we are optimistic or able to look at the glass half full, we are able to see the good, the joy and the "luck" in life. Through practice, we can train ourselves to look at situations, others and ourselves in a positive light.

- Practice looking at situations in an optimistic light is by looking for the silver lining or the good in that situation. Surely we have all felt frustrated by the never ending cycle of laundry (guilty over here), however, it can help when to put this in its context and remind ourselves that laundry means we have clothes on our back.
 - Taking an optimistic bias towards others means looking for their strengths and how their strengths complement the relationship you have
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with them, rather than dwelling on what you may wish was different about that person. This can be especially helpful in a relationship with a spouse or significant other. When we think about what we appreciate about the person we are with, we feel lucky to be with them, which helps us not take them for granted.

- We can take an optimistic self-bias by using the DBT skill of cheerleading for ourselves. When going into a new or intimidating situation, it can be helpful to engage in positive self-talk, tell ourselves “I’ve got this” and think about what could go right instead of what could go wrong. When we take this optimistic bias towards ourselves, we are more likely to put ourselves out there and take more risks, which brings me to the second way of looking for luck in life...

Look for opportunities/take risks

According to Zhao et. Al (2018) people are likely to experience luck based on three factors – courage, ability and willingness. People must have the courage (i.e., the bravery) and willingness (i.e., the desire) to try new things, as well as the ability, e.g. resources, time and opportunity. If you try new things and look for opportunities to push your comfort zone, it increases your chances of good things happening. You know that saying “you miss 100% of the shots you don’t take?” well, that is what I am talking about here. Start conversations in the line at the grocery store, try a new hobby or join a virtual networking meeting. What may seem like a simple choice or interaction can lead to new and unexpected experiences and relationships. From a social justice perspective, we can also be aware of the ability to try new things based on race, gender and body size. For example, what some people have that others do not. We can make small but significant choices, such as voting, volunteering or donating to make the world a more accessible place for others to have equal opportunity. There is plenty of luck to go around and creating more luck for others does not mean decreasing luck for you.

In conclusion, luck not chance, coincidence or even objective. Luck is a state of mind and a result of openness to new experiences. This St. Patrick’s Day, I encourage you to think about the pots of gold in your life. Who are you lucky to have in your life? What open doors can you walk through? Where is the silver lining in a difficult situation? I believe we all have something to feel lucky for, if just willing to look.

About Laureate

Founded in 1989 by The William K. Warren Foundation, Laureate Psychiatric Clinic and Hospital in Tulsa, OK, provides a full spectrum of psychiatric services as well as research and education for the general public and professional community. At Laureate, we want our patients not only to recover and function, but also experience a fulfilling life within their family, business and community.

Laureate is a private, not-for-profit, freestanding psychiatric facility. The campus is set on 47 acres of rolling hills in a series of related buildings forming a retreat-like atmosphere. Its beautifully landscaped surroundings include wooded courtyards, walking trails, a waterfall and a small lake. Everything on campus, from the outpatient clinic to patient rooms, is designed with patients’ needs in mind.

Laureate is dedicated to providing only the latest diagnostic services and medical technologies. The treatment concepts, the programs, the buildings and the campus itself are an outgrowth of the constant re-examination of how behavioral healthcare should be delivered.

For questions, or to schedule an appointment with a mental health professional, please call the Laureate Outpatient Clinic, Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 918-491-3700.

Hales, S. D., & Johnson, J. A. (2018). Dispositional optimism and luck attributions: Implications for philosophical theories of luck. *Philosophical Psychology*, 31(7), 1027-1045.

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1981). *The framing of decisions and the rationality of choice*. *Science*, 211, 453-458.

Zhao, J., Li, Z., & Xiong, G. (2021). *Effects of luck beliefs on consumers’ variety-seeking behavior*. *Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal*, 49(2), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.9243>