

My Friend, Lydia

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BEFORE YOU READ: What do the words *optimist* and *pessimist* mean? Try using them in sentences.

She Inspires Me

My friend Lydia inspires me. Like me, she is an immigrant from China. But not like me, she is very optimistic.

She moved to Connecticut from China two years ago with her family. Connecticut is quiet and rural. I was thinking it must be a big challenge for Lydia. When she first came to Connecticut, she tried to learn to drive. She is not good at driving. It took her four tests to get her license. Sometimes she drives two hours to the Asian supermarket in Boston to buy groceries for her family.

I remember I was depressed for a long time when I first came to the U.S. Lydia is different.

Usually, when people move to other countries, they have to get used to different food and different cultures. Everyone needs to adjust their mind. I was depressed for a long time when I first came to the U.S. Everything was new. I had to learn English. I complained about everything. Lydia is different. She faces everything with a smile.

She Is Busy and Glad

Every time I see Lydia, she is always busy and glad. One day I saw that she bought some flour and learned to make dumplings for her kids. I was impressed. I asked her, "Are you tired? Do you feel a little lost? You used to have a housekeeper in China to do this, but now you are a housewife!"

She smiled and told me a story: "You have a half glass of water. If you see the glass as half empty, you have a negative perspective. You are a *pessimist*. You go through life feeling depressed.



Xiuping He (right) with her friend, Lydia.

If you see the glass as half full, you have a positive perspective. You are an *optimist*. You go through life feeling happy, and you have less stress."

Lydia's words woke me up. Even though she felt a great shock moving to the U.S., she is optimistic. She goes to school to learn English, takes her children to new places, and gets involved in activities. On Sunday, she goes to church and makes new friends. Her daughter got an award at school. Things are getting better for her.

Lydia supported and inspired me. Gradually, I started to appreciate the good things that happen in my life. I appreciate my surroundings. We have a choice in life. Lydia can do it. We can do it too.

AFTER YOU READ: What evidence does the author provide to show that Lydia is an optimist? How is it helpful to Xiuping to have a friend like Lydia?

Xiuping He is a student at the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center in Boston, MA. She is from China. She loves Boston and likes to make friends. She believes everyone should be optimistic and remember that all difficulties will become valuable experience.