

Keep Your Fork 642.3

When a pessimist is told there's a light at the end of the tunnel, he's likely to assume it's an onrushing train. According to journalist Sydney Harris, "A cynic is not merely one who reads bitter lessons from the past; he's prematurely disappointed in the future."

Pessimism and cynicism are fashionable these days, but it's the people who see and celebrate the positive aspects of life who live best.

According to a well-traveled story, when Tillie died in her 90s, her friends were taken aback when they viewed her body and noticed a fork in her right hand. Tillie knew this would provoke questions, and she had instructed her pastor to give anyone who asked about the fork a copy of a signed note from her that read:

"I'm glad you asked about the fork. I've been to lots of church socials and potluck dinners in my life, and one thing I've noticed is when the dishes and flatware for the main course are being cleared, someone usually says, 'Keep your fork.' I loved that part because I knew dessert, the best part of dinner, was coming. So even as I pass from this life, I wanted a fork in my hand to remind you that the best is yet to come."

British wit Samuel Johnson called hope a species of happiness. To the extent we can discipline ourselves to choose our attitudes, it only makes sense to think positively and be hopeful.

This is Michael Josephson reminding you that character counts.