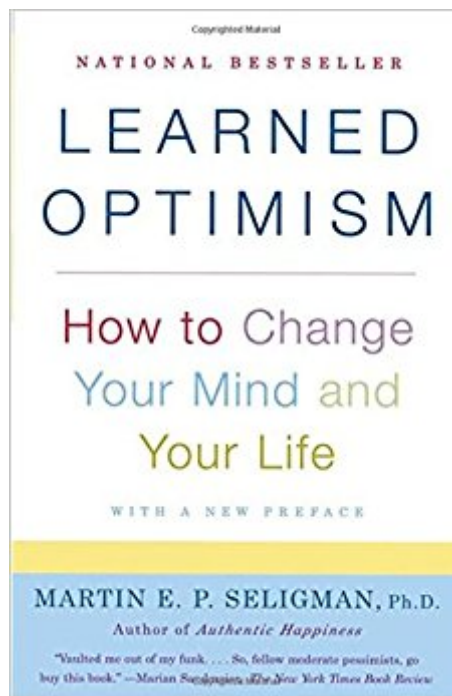




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# Learned Optimism: How To Change Your Mind And Your Life



## Synopsis

National Bestseller  
The father of the new science of positive psychology and author of *Authentic Happiness* draws on more than twenty years of clinical research to demonstrate how optimism enhances the quality of life, and how anyone can learn to practice it. Offering many simple techniques, Dr. Seligman explains how to break an "give-up" habit, develop a more constructive explanatory style for interpreting your behavior, and experience the benefits of a more positive interior dialogue. These skills can help break up depression, boost your immune system, better develop your potential, and make you happier. With generous additional advice on how to encourage optimistic behavior at school, at work and in children, *Learned Optimism* is both profound and practical "and valuable for every phase of life." Vaulted me out of my funk.... So, fellow moderate pessimists, go buy this book." —Marian Sandmaier, *The New York Times Book Review*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Martin Seligman, a renowned psychologist and clinical researcher, has been studying optimists and pessimists for 25 years. Pessimists believe that bad events are their fault, will last a long time, and undermine everything. They feel helpless and may sink into depression, which is epidemic today, especially among youths. Optimists, on the other hand, believe that defeat is a temporary setback or a challenge--it doesn't knock them down. "Pessimism is escapable," asserts Seligman, by learning a new set of cognitive skills that will enable you to take charge, resist depression, and make yourself feel better and accomplish more. About two-thirds of this book is a psychological discussion of pessimism, optimism, learned helplessness (giving up because you feel unable to change things),

explanatory style (how you habitually explain to yourself why events happen), and depression, and how these affect success, health, and quality of life. Seligman supports his points with animal research and human cases. He includes tests for you and your child--whose achievement may be related more to his or her level of optimism/pessimism than ability. The final chapters teach the skills of changing from pessimism to optimism, with worksheet pages to guide you and your child. --Joan Price --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

The author, a leading expert on the theory and treatment of depression, has written a lively, very accessible book on the power of a positive outlook and how to develop it. Basing his theories on his original research on "learned helplessness," Seligman goes on to develop a systematic model for the cognitive treatment of depression. This book summarizes his more recent work on a person's characteristic predisposition toward optimism or pessimism. Convincingly demonstrating that an optimistic mood contributes to one's success and happiness, Seligman goes on to demonstrate how a more optimistic outlook can be developed. Presented for lay readers, this book can be highly recommended to professionals as well for its lucid and informative introduction to cognitive therapy and its approach to issues of mood and depression.- Paul Hymowitz, New York Medical Coll. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

It's a little early to say, but I have just started applying the thought framework this book suggests and I'm seeing positive change on the first day. I've felt very stuck in various aspects of my life for about five years now, and I've tried life coaching, counseling, reading other self help books etc with little change. This book is helping me realize that across all the spheres of my life I feel stuck in, I've developed really negative beliefs. I have a hard time accomplishing work goals, and believe myself lazy. I often forget to call my loved ones, and believe myself selfish. What I'm seeing now is that these negative thoughts have consequences--they're causing an immobility, depression spiral. I believe myself to be lazy, and I have a harder time working because of it. I think of myself as selfish, assume my friends will be angry with me when I do call them, and so avoid making the calls. Maybe I'm not lazy, selfish, or depressed--I just have a system of negative thoughts that are making me feel disempowered and helpless. It's becoming clear that my thinking is VERY cyclically pessimistic; I even feel a clenching in my chest every time I return to one of my negative beliefs. But even today, the first day I've consulted with this book, I've used some of its technique to challenge my negative thinking, with positive results. I'd been putting off returning a friend's text because I thought he might be upset with me, but just examining that belief made me realize how knee-jerk and baseless it is.

Having reoriented myself, I texted him back. It's one small step but that felt VERY powerful. I already did feel compelled to reattribute much of my depression as pessimism, and if I do that there will be ways to positively change every thought I have. All we are is the set of assumptions we make about the world, and I'm amazed at how little I've been examining my own assumptions. I am so happy I bought this book. Take a look at the preview and see if it resonates with you; it did with me because it's so research-based, not airy or cheerful at all. Just useful and powerful. If you struggle with any sort of depression or ineffectiveness, I recommend you give those first few pages a read. It really might give us all a way to get better.

Learned Optimism will change the way you think about being negative. Martin Seligman was, "accustomed to focusing on what was wrong with people and then on how to fix it." He is known as the father of the new science of Positive Psychology, and draws on more than 20 years of experience as a clinical research Psychologist, to demonstrate how optimism enhances the quality of your life. He claims that when we practice techniques we can change. His overall theory talks about how to look at what was going right and how to make it even better! What a great way to think of things. I believe corporate America needs to get into this seat and drive! This book will help you discover your own pessimistic tendencies, if you have them, or those of people you love and care about. It will introduce you to the techniques that have helped others undo lifelong habits of pessimism. You will look at your setbacks with new perceptiveness. I enjoyed learning from Martin Seligman and hope you do as well. ~ © 2012 Jackie Paulson

An excellent book for pessimists who don't want to stay pessimistic, one must be prepared to slog through a couple chapters of the author patting himself on the back for moving the field of psychology forward with the ideas presented in the book. Considering that this was a pretty significant achievement in the 70s we can forgive the author spending so much time on his achievements and casting himself in the role of hero against the established world of behaviorists and worse. The most valuable part of the book for me has been the tools for quantifying one's own worldview and the extremeness of it. I had thought I was a fairly equanimous person, but according to his tests I am in fact quite pessimistic. Using the language and approach of the book I have realized that his test feels quite accurate, and I am starting to put his steps for change into action. It's slow going and I cannot accurately review the results of said steps yet but I am very hopeful as everything in the book has an internal logic and consistency that is refreshing in the world of psych. I actually have been recommending this book most to "healthy" people, as it gives a great view into

the world of the pessimist and the depressed person. Its very difficult to make generally optimistic people understand what it is like to be trapped in a pessimist worldview, and the first chapters of the book do an excellent job giving people reference points for this understanding.

I bought this book recently... for the 2nd time, having loaned out the copy I bought 15+ years ago. Bought the first copy [referenced in an article on depression in the local paper] back then, after a huge career change that exposed how performance-oriented my well-being was. Having gotten very depressed, and feeling hopeless, the book made a good case [to me] for that frame of mind being both understandable and change-able. It was the turning point in my recovery... feeling "grounded". When I realized recently that I was skidding that direction again, I bought another copy, expecting that "understandable & changeable" input to help me turn the tide once again... it did. A good reference book... once again back on my bookshelf.

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