



Learned Optimism

How to Change Your Mind and Your Life

by Martin Seligman

Vintage © 2006

336 pages

The Big Ideas

Cognitive Therapy

vs. behaviorism.

Optimism

vs. positive thinking.

Learned Helplessness

Dogs, depression and you.

Explanatory Styles

Where it's at.

The Three P's

Permanence, pervasive-ness, personalisation.

Cool Studies

Met Life, Biondi, NBA

Why Optimism?

Health, performance, etc.

Become Optimistic

Question auto-responses.

Commit

To your world.

“Habits of thinking need not be forever. One of the most significant findings in psychology in the last twenty years is that individuals can choose the way they think.”

~ Martin Seligman from *Learned Optimism*

“I can ‘learn’ optimism?!?”

Yep, according to psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman, you sure can...and if you believe the research, you definitely should!

We all know that optimists see the glass as half-full while pessimists see it as half-empty. But, that doesn't come close to doing justice to the importance of optimism and how it affects our lives.

Martin Seligman, past President of the APA, visionary behind the Positive Psychology movement and one of the leading psychologists in the world, has spent the last three and a half decades researching the influence of optimism on our lives. Much of his work is presented in his book *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*.

In this *Note*, we'll take a quick look at the underlying theories of optimism, talk about some cool applications (such as: optimistic professionals sell more and optimistic sports teams win more), and talk about how you can improve your optimism.

Hope you enjoy!

■ Cognitive Therapy vs. Behaviorism

Let's start with a quick history lesson in psychology. It wasn't *too* long ago that the field of psychology was dominated by B. F. Skinner and his lineage that believed EVERYTHING was a result of how we were conditioned.

In fact, when Seligman and his colleagues first presented the idea (around 1965) that we could learn new cognitive strategies that would result in different behaviors, the old school behaviorists thought that was blasphemy.

Now, of course, we know that cognitive therapy DOES work. And, the “explanatory style” lessons we'll explore in this *Note* form a critical part of this work.