

Mercer Free School **Open Forum** (March 20, 2012)

Optimism, Mindfulness, and Well-Being

Web page: <http://mfs.insi2.org/activities/forum.php> (or Google search "Mercer Free School")

Description the MFS Open Forum Series

This series is an opportunity for the community to share and discuss ideas on various topics. Each session will have a specific topic. You are welcome to just come and listen, ask questions, or actively participate in the discussion. If you want to propose a topic and/or are interested in facilitating a session, please contact the school (mfs1@insi2.org or 609-403-2383).

Suggested Questions

#1: Is optimism essential for our lives, individually and societally?

Positive psychology has been pioneered by Martin Seligman (2002). A more recent discussion is put forward by Tali Sharot (2011).

#2: Is optimism being abused, by some people and organizations?

Relevant points are discussed by Barbara Ehrenreich (2009) and Robert Trivers (2011).

#3: Is optimism a form of self-deception and thus illusion?

Relevant points are discussed by Tali Sharot (2011) and Robert Trivers (2011).

#4: What would be the impact of mindfulness (to see things as they are)?

The connection between self-deception and mindfulness is suggested by Arbing Institute (2010). Recent introductions to mindfulness include a book by Ronald Siegel (2010).

#5: For our well-being, where should we stand with respect to optimism and mindfulness?

Selected Reading (all available through the Mercer County Library System)

Seligman, Martin E. P. 2002. *Authentic happiness: using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York: Free Press.

Sharot, Tali. 2011. *The optimism bias: a tour of the irrationally positive brain*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2009. *Bright-sided: how the relentless promotion of positive thinking has undermined America*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Trivers, Robert. 2011. *The folly of fools: the logic of deceit and self-deception in human life*. New York: Basic Books.

Arbing Institute. 2010. *Leadership and self-deception: getting out of the box*, Expanded 2nd ed. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Siegel, Ronald D. 2010. *The mindfulness solution: everyday practices for everyday problems*. New York: Guilford Press.

Next session: Business, Ethics, and Success, Tuesday, April 17, 7pm, Ewing Library