

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](mailto: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**