Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life

Par Martin E.P. Seligman

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Par Martin E.P. Seligman : Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life  before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life:

Commentaires clientsLes clients les plus utiles 3 internautes sur 3 ont trouvé ce commentaire utile. une immense découvertePar GosseCe livre m'a permis de comprendre des ressorts psychologiques qui m'avaient complètement inconnus et je les trouve extrêmement important comprendre. Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'on est déprimé ou tout simplement...
be alarmed if your newborn fails to startle at loud noises or fails to orient toward sound. The startle reflex and attention

book from the shelf. "Let's read what's in the baby book," she says. She looks up "hearing" and reads out loud: "Don't

focus yet." "But there wasn't the slightest movement, even when you clapped as hard as you could." The mother takes a

she's not," the mother says. "I mean, it's too soon to say a thing like that. Look, she's brand-new. Her eyes don't even

gown around her. Together they go into the nursery. She calls the baby's name, jingles the bell, claps her hands. Then

respond to noise at all," he says. "It's as if she can't hear." "I'm sure she's all right," the wife says, pulling her dressing

attached to the rail of the bassinet and shakes it, ringing the bell it contains. The baby's eyes don't move. His heart has

calls her name, expecting that she will turn her head and look at him. Her eyes don't move. He picks up a furry little toy

giving and gratitude for the beauty of her, the perfection. The baby opens her eyes and stares straight up. The father

looking down into the crib at his sleeping newborn daughter, just home from the hospital. His heart is overflowing

worksheet pages to guide you and your child. --Joan Price

optimism/pessimism than ability. The final chapters teach the skills of changing from pessimism to optimism, with

psychological discussion of pessimism, optimism, learned helplessness (giving up because you feel unable to change

I-give-up habit, develop a more constructive explanatory style for interpreting your behavior, and experience the

negative thoughts and build a life of rewards and lasting happiness. Learned Optimism shows you how to: recognize

benefits of a more positive interior dialogue. These skills can help break up depression, boost your immune system,

optimism to pessimism, with worksheet pages to guide you and your child. --Joan Price

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to-follow techniques that have helped thousands of people rise above pessimism and the depression that accompanies

Optimism In this groundbreaking national bestseller, Martin E.P. Seligman shows you how to chart a new approach to

living with "flexible optimism." Drawing from more than twenty years of clinical research, Dr. Seligman outlines easy-

to-follow techniques that have helped thousands of people rise above pessimism and the depression that accompanies

optimism/pessimism and the impact of one's "explanatory style" in his/her life achievements (and in particular his/her

chances of becoming depressed). It not a do-it-yourself book to cure or avoid depression:- Conclusions are the result of

a well documented research.- Results, as often with scientific methodology, are somewhat counterintuitive ("pessimists are more realistic than optimists!"). Even more troubling are findings about the impact of a mother's "explanatory style" on her children (father counts for zero... ouf!) and the impact of spouse fighting and divorce. Why didn't someone told me about this book earlier, when I was raising my 4 kids, completely unaware of those dramatic (but simple) findings! Learned optimism is one of my top reads, one of those books I fear I you could have missed, in the same league as "Forms of intelligence" of Howard Gartner, "Getting to yes", "Les mots sont des fenetres.." (Marshall Rosenberg)3 internautes sur 3 ont trouvé ce commentaire utile. The book we all should have read earlier! Par Philippe Korda

Definitely one of Seligman's greatest books. Lots of amazing learnings based on research, fascinating conclusions and practical tips: thank you Martin!

Description du produit You can significantly improve your life -- starting today -- with the power of Learned Optimism In this groundbreaking national bestseller, Martin E.P. Seligman shows you how to chart a new approach to living with "flexible optimism." Drawing from more than twenty years of clinical research, Dr. Seligman outlines easy-

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to sound often take some time to develop. Your pediatrician can test your child's hearing neurologically. "There," the mother says. Doesn't that make you feel better?" Not much," the father says. "It doesn't even mention the other possibility, that the baby is deaf. And all I know is that my baby doesn't hear a thing. I've got the worst feeling about this. Maybe it's because my grandfather was deaf. If that beautiful baby is deaf and it's my fault, I'll never forgive myself. "Hey, wait a minute," says the wife. 'You're going off the deep end. We'll call the pediatrician first thing Monday. In the meantime, cheer up. Here, hold the baby while I fix her blanket. It's all pulled out." The father takes the baby but gives her back to his wife as soon as he can. All weekend he finds himself unable to open his briefcase and prepare for next week's work. He follows his wife around the house, ruminating about the baby's hearing and about the way deafness would ruin her life. He imagines only the worst: no hearing, no development of language, his beautiful child cut off from the social world, locked in soundless isolation. By Sunday night he has sunk into despair. The mother leaves a message with the pediatrician's answering service asking for an early appointment Monday. She spends the weekend doing her exercises, reading, and trying to calm her husband. The pediatrician's tests are reassuring, but the father's spirits remain low. Not until a week later, when the baby shows her first startle, to the backfire of a passing truck, does he begin to recover and enjoy his new daughter again. THIS FATHER and mother have two different ways of looking at the world. Whenever something bad happens to him—a tax audit, a marital squabble, even a frown from his employer—he imagines the worst: bankruptcy and jail, divorce, dismissal. He is prone to depression; he has long bouts of listlessness; his health suffers. She, on the other hand, sees bad events in their least threatening light. To her, they are temporary and surmountable, challenges to be overcome. After a reversal, she comes back quickly, soon regaining her energy. Her health is excellent. The optimists and the pessimists: I have been studying them for the past twenty-five years. The defining characteristic of pessimists is that they tend to believe bad events will last a long time, will undermine everything they do, and are their own fault. The optimists, who are confronted with the same hard knocks of this world, think about misfortune in the opposite way. They tend to believe defeat is just a temporary setback, that its causes are confined to this one case. The optimists believe defeat is not their fault: Circumstances, bad luck, or other people brought it about. Such people are unfazed by defeat. Confronted by a bad situation, they perceive it as a challenge and try harder. These two habits of thinking about causes have consequences. Literally hundreds of studies show that pessimists give up more easily and get depressed more often. These experiments also show that optimists do much better in school and college, at work and on the playing field. They regularly exceed the predictions of aptitude tests. When optimists run for office, they are more apt to be elected than pessimists are. Their health is unusually good. They age well, much freer than most of us from the usual physical ills of middle age. Evidence suggests they may even live longer. I have seen that, in tests of hundreds of thousands of people, a surprisingly large number will be found to be deep-dyed pessimists and another large portion will have serious, debilitating tendencies toward pessimism. I have learned that it is not always easy to know if you are a pessimist, and that far more people than realize it are living in this shadow. Tests reveal traces of pessimism in the speech of people who would never think of themselves as pessimists; they also show that these traces are sensed by others, who react negatively to the speakers. A pessimistic attitude may seem so deeply rooted as to be permanent. I have found, however, that pessimism is escapable. Pessimists can in fact learn to be optimists, and not through mindless devices like whistling a happy tune or mouthing platitudes ("Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better"), but by learning a new set of cognitive skills. Far from being the creations of boosters or of the popular media, these skills were discovered in the laboratories and clinics of leading psychologists and psychiatrists and then rigorously validated. This book will help you discover your own pessimistic tendencies, if you have them, or those of people you care for. It will also introduce you to the techniques that have helped thousands of people undo lifelong habits of pessimism and its extension, depression. It will give you the choice of looking at your setbacks in a new light. The Unclaimed Territory AT THE CORE of the phenomenon of pessimism is another phenomenon— that of helplessness. Helplessness is the state of affairs in which nothing you choose to do affects what happens to you. For example, if I promise you one thousand dollars to turn to page 104, you will probably choose to do so, and you will succeed. If, however, I promise you one thousand dollars to contract the pupil of your eye, using only willpower, you may choose to do it, but that won't matter. You are helpless to contract your pupil. Page turning is under your voluntary control; the muscles that change your pupillary size are not. Life begins in utter helplessness. The newborn infant cannot help himself, for he is almost entirely a creature of reflex. When he cries, his mother comes, although this does not mean that he controls his mother's coming. His crying is a mere reflex reaction to pain and discomfort. He has no choice about whether he cries. Only one set of muscles in the newborn seems to be under even the barest voluntary control: the set involved in sucking. The last years of a normal life are sometimes ones of sinking back into helplessness. We may lose the ability to walk. Sadly, we may lose the mastery over our bowels and bladder that we won in our second year of life. We may lose our ability to find the word we want. Then we may lose speech itself, and even the ability to direct our thoughts. The long period between infancy and our last years is a process of emerging from helplessness and gaining personal control. Personal control means the ability to change things by one's voluntary actions; it is the opposite of helplessness. In the first three or four months of an infant's life some rudimentary arm and leg motions come under voluntary control. The flailing of his arms refines into reaching. Then, to his parents' dismay,
crying becomes voluntary: The infant can now bawl whenever he wants his mother. He badly overuses this new power, until it stops working. The first year ends with two miracles of voluntary control: the first steps and the first words. If all goes well, if the growing child's mental and physical needs are at least minimally met, the years that follow are ones of diminishing helplessness and of growing personal control. Many things in life are beyond our control—our eye color, our race, the drought in the Midwest. But there is a vast, unclaimed territory of actions over which we can take control—or cede control to others or to fate. These actions involve the way we lead our lives, how we deal with other people, how we earn our living—all the aspects of existence in which we normally have some degree of choice. The way we think about this realm of life can actually diminish or enlarge the control we have over it. Our thoughts are not merely reactions to events; they change what ensues. For example, if we think we are helpless to make a difference in what our children become, we will be paralyzed when dealing with this facet of our lives. The very thought "Nothing I do matters" prevents us from acting. And so we cede control to our children's peers and teachers, and to circumstance. When we overestimate our helplessness, other forces will take control and shape our children's future. Later in this book we will see that judiciously employed, mild pessimism has its uses. But twenty-five years of study has convinced me that if we habitually believe, as does the pessimist, that misfortune is our fault, is enduring, and will undermine everything we do, more of it will befall us than if we believe otherwise. I am also convinced that if we are in the grip of this view, we will get depressed easily, we will accomplish less than our potential, and we will even get physically sick more often. Pessimistic prophecies are self-fulfilling. A poignant example is the case of a young woman I knew, a student at a university where I once taught. For three years her advisor, a professor of English literature, had been extremely helpful, almost affectionate. His backing, along with her high grades, had won her a scholarship to study at Oxford for her junior year. When she returned from England, her main interest had shifted from Dickens, her advisor's specialty, to earlier British novelists, particularly Jane Austen, the specialty of one of his colleagues. Her advisor tried to persuade her to do her senior paper on Dickens, but seemed to accept without resentment her decision to work on Austen and agreed to continue as her co-advisor. Three days before her oral examination, the original advisor sent a note to the examining committee accusing the young woman of plagiarism in her senior thesis. Her crime, he said, was failing to give credit to two scholarly sources for her statements about Jane Austen's adolescence, in effect taking credit for those perceptions herself. Plagiarism is the gravest of academic sins, and the young woman's whole future—her fellowship to graduate school, even graduation itself—was threatened. When she looked at the passages the professor said she had failed to credit, she found that both had come from the same source—the professor himself. She had gotten them during a casual conversation with him, in which he had spoken of the perceptions as just his own thoughts on the matter; he had never mentioned the published sources from which he had obtained them. The young woman had been sandbagged by a mentor jealous of losing her. Many people would have reacted with fury at the professor. Not Elizabeth. Her habit of pessimistic thinking took over. To the committee, she was certain, she would appear guilty. And, she told herself, there was no way she could prove otherwise. It would be her word against his, and he was a professor. Instead of defending herself, she collapsed inwardly, looking at every aspect of the situation in the worst possible light. It was all her own fault, she told herself. It really didn't matter that the professor had gotten the ideas from someone else. The main thing was that she had "stolen" the ideas, since she had failed to credit the professor. She had cheated, she believed; she was a cheat, and she probably always had been. It may seem incredible that she could blame herself when she was so obviously innocent. But careful research shows that people with pessimistic habits of thinking can transform mere setbacks into disasters. One way they do this is by converting their own innocence into guilt. Elizabeth dredged up memories that seemed to her to confirm her extreme verdict: the time in seventh grade when she had copied test answers from another girl's paper; the time in England when she had failed to correct the misimpression of some English friends that she came from a wealthy family. And now this act of "cheating" in the writing of her thesis. She stood silent at her hearing before the examining committee and was denied her degree. This story does not have a happy ending. With the washout of her plans, her life was ruined. For the past ten years she has worked as a salesgirl. She has few aspirations. She no longer writes, or even reads literature. She is still paying for what she considered her crime. There was no other force to hold her. One of the most significant findings in psychology in the last twenty years is that individuals can choose the way they think.