

# Mind Reading: Positive Psychologist Martin Seligman on the Good Life

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## *TIME:*

These days Martin Seligman, author of the best-selling book *Authentic Happiness*, is perhaps best known as a father of positive psychology — the study of people’s strengths and virtues, rather than on pathological behavior.

But, previously, Seligman’s work focused on “learned helplessness” — when people or animals learn helpless behavior as a result of exposure to powerful experiences over which they have no control. That research spawned thousands of related studies and helped researchers better understand the basis of depression. It was also used by the Bush administration to help devise its torture policy. Currently, Seligman is working with the military to develop strategies to prevent post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and improve soldiers’ psychological health.

His new book, *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*, offers ways to move beyond simply seeking good feelings to pursuing a better life.

Read more: [TIME](#)