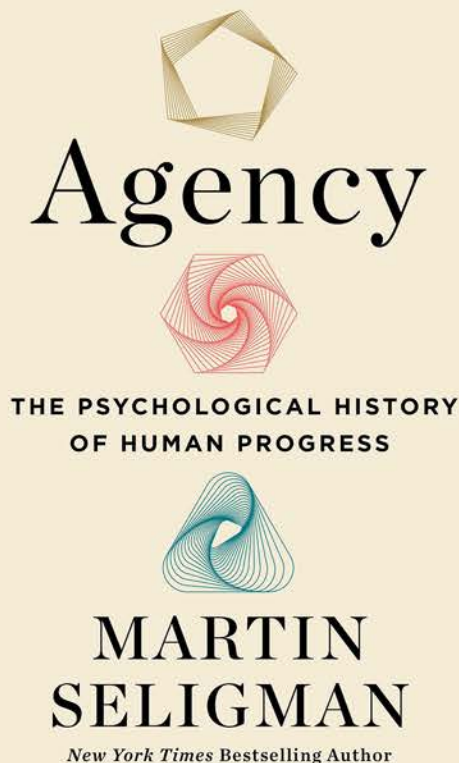




## Agency: The Psychological History of Human Progress

**Martin E.P. Seligman, Ph.D.**

Zellerbach Family Professor of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, where he directs the Positive Psychology Center.

**James O. Pawelski, Ph.D.**

Professor of Practice and Director of Education in the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

**Friday, October 9, 2026, 12:00 PM CT**

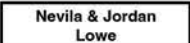
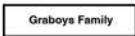
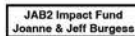
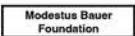
**Register: [www.bit.ly/SeligmanFANWebinar](http://www.bit.ly/SeligmanFANWebinar)**

**BOOK GIVEAWAY, sponsored by FAN! Details on Zoom registration page.**

This event is #freeandopentothepublic and will be recorded. Suitable for youth 12+



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[familyactionnetwork.net](http://familyactionnetwork.net)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARTIN E.P. SELIGMAN, Ph.D. – ON ZOOM**

**CONTACT:** Lonnie Stonitsch, Executive Director of FAN, [lonnie@familyactionnetwork.net](mailto:lonnie@familyactionnetwork.net)

**Friday, October 9, 2026 | 12:00 PM CT (Note earlier-than-typical start time)**

**Agency: The Psychological History of Human Progress**

**A FAN webinar featuring Martin E.P. Seligman, Ph.D., in conversation with James O. Pawelski, Ph.D.**

**REGISTER:** [www.bit.ly/SeligmanFANWebinar](http://www.bit.ly/SeligmanFANWebinar)

**Book Giveaway:** FAN is giving away copies of *Agency* to randomly selected Zoom attendees. Details on the webinar registration page.

What drives human progress, and why does it surge in some eras and stall in others, even under similar conditions? In ***Agency: The Psychological History of Human Progress***, psychologist **Martin E.P. Seligman, Ph.D.**, the founder of positive psychology, offers a bold answer: the missing variable is not economic, political, or geographic, but psychological. Across 2,500 years of history, Seligman identifies agency, the belief that we can shape our own future, as the hidden engine behind innovation, resilience, and societal flourishing.

Drawing on six decades of research, Seligman breaks agency into three components: efficacy, the confidence to act now; optimism, the expectation that effort will pay off; and imagination, the ability to envision new possibilities. From ancient Athens and the Enlightenment to the Civil Rights Movement and today's AI revolution, he traces how the rise and fall of these forces has quietly shaped the course of civilizations and why strengthening them matters so much now.

As concern grows about mental health, the attention crisis, and the future of work, Seligman makes the case for shifting from a model focused on pathology to one centered on human potential. He also explores how emerging technologies, including AI, might measure and amplify agency at scale, for personal growth, clinical practice, and collective progress.

Seligman is the Zellerbach Family Professor of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, where he directs the Positive Psychology Center, and a former president of the American Psychological Association. He will be in conversation with his Penn colleague **James O. Pawelski, Ph.D.**, professor of practice and director of education in the Positive Psychology Center.

This event is suitable for youth ages 12 and up. It will be recorded and available on FAN's website and YouTube channel.

Sponsored by **FAN**, in partnership with The Alliance for Early Childhood, The Ancona School, The Avery Coonley School, Avoca D37, Baker Demonstration School, Barrington D220, Beacon Academy, Bennett Day School, Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School, Brickton Montessori School, British International School of Chicago, Catherine Cook School, Compass Health Center, Connections Health, Countryside Day School, The Cove School, Evanston Scholars, Evanston Township HS D202, The Family Institute at Northwestern University, Family Service Center, Foundation 65, The Frances Xavier Warde School, Francis W. Parker School, Glenbrook HS D225, Glencoe D35, Glenview Public Library, Gorton Center, Hyde Park Day School, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Josephinum Academy, Kenilworth D38, Lake Bluff D65, Lake Forest Community High School D115, Latin School of Chicago, Leo Catholic High School, Lycée Français de Chicago, North Shore Country Day, Northwestern University Office of Neighborhood and Community Relations, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy, Oakton College, Pope John XXIII School, Regina Dominican High School, Rogers Park Montessori School, St. Bernard's School, Santa Clara University School of Law, Science & Arts Academy, The Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, Stevenson HS D125, Township High School D113, Township High School D214, Wilmette Public Library, The Winnetka Public Schools, Wintrust Bank, Wolcott College Prep, Woodlands Academy, Youth & Opportunity United.