

Welcome



The Neuroscience of Optimism

with Ellen Petry Leanse

G24080205

August 4-9, 2024

Greetings,

I'm delighted that you've enrolled in The Neuroscience of Optimism and very much look forward to meeting you in August at Ghost Ranch.

Please find below a short overview of our agenda, some details I wanted to share, and links to sites where you can learn more about my work.

We'll gather from Sunday, August 4 through Friday, August 9. After dinner on Sunday night – I'll see you there – we'll spend a bit of evening time getting to know one another and introducing core concepts we'll explore during our week together.

After that, our daily schedule will be quite consistent: learning and practice sessions each morning (9am - 12pm), open time in the afternoons, and interactive exercises each evening.

Monday through Friday, expect to be immersed in optimism-building learning and activities from 9am until noon.

We'll spend about 90 minutes in discussion and interaction after dinner each night.

Our themes will include:

- **MONDAY:** The quest for optimism and the human desire for good. Expect an easy-to-understand overview of the brain and how its cognitive and emotional functions shape our outlooks – for better or for worse.
- **TUESDAY:** We'll look at optimism as a "survival technology" and dive deep into the experiences that diminish optimism and resilience – and explore practices for welcoming it back.
- **WEDNESDAY:** Mindfulness as an optimism practice: training the brain toward mindsets of resilience.
- **THURSDAY:** Proactive optimism: cultivating and developing sustainably hopeful mindsets, even while navigating challenge.
- **FRIDAY:** Group practices, intention-setting, and closing activities. Note: check-out time is 10am; I'll build flexibility for this into our plan for that day.

I will keep office hours each afternoon, and will offer an afternoon art project focused on the themes we'll explore. This project will take about 4 hours total and will result in you creating a one-of-a-kind piece commemorating your Ghost Ranch experience.

If this interests you, plan on two working sessions (each about 90 minutes long) during the course of the week – and expect to take a unique and memorable work of art home at the end of the week. I'll bring all needed materials and will request a \$15 supplies fee from participants. If you'd like to attend, bring an image or quote that inspires you (something from a magazine, a page from a book, a vintage photo, a postcard or travel image) and we'll work it in. Smaller than 8x10" would be ideal.

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GHOST RANCH



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If you'd like to "warm up" with an understanding of basic neuroscience, consider listening to my podcast, The Brain and Beyond; it's available on all major podcast players and on my website, www.thebrain-andbeyond.com. Episodes 1 and 2 would be a good place to start. You may also enjoy Episode 9, which explores the hemispheres of the brain and how their use may correlate to rising levels of stress and hardship in modern life.

I'll be in touch again in July.

With best regards,

Ellen