POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN PRACTICE

Happiness and Positive Psychology

AUTHORS

Sandie McHugh
and Jerome Carson

HAPPINESS AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

The concept of happiness can be challenging to define and enhance in psychological practice due to its subjective and multifaceted nature. However, this book helps shape our understanding of what it means to be happy and, more importantly, how one can work towards improving their own happiness and the happiness of others. The authors provide a comprehensive model to explain the role that positive psychology can play in improving wellbeing.

—*Dara Mojtahedi*, University of Huddersfield, UK

Building upon their previous study of happiness in Mass Observation's Worktown, McHugh and Carson's Happiness and Positive Psychology embodies a history of happiness and the function of positive psychology in its creation. Written in a clear style and setting thought-provoking questions, it will be of great value to students of positive psychology and also to anyone interested in the subject of wellbeing.

—*Robert Snape*, University of Greater Manchester, UK

This book offers an insightful new resource on happiness and positive psychology, ideal for students new to the topic and the more experienced researcher seeking to get to grips with the latest developments. The authors skilfully provide the reader with a comprehensive insight into the latest empirical and theoretical developments in the field considered and discussed at length alongside well established perspectives in the positive psychology literature. In my estimation, this then is an essential read for students, researchers, academics and practitioners wanting to expand their knowledge on the concept of happiness.

**—*Dominic Willmott*, Loughborough University, UK;
SWPS University, Poland**

McHugh and Carson have provided a scholarly, but very readable account of what happiness is and isn't. This is a book that should cause all those working in the field of mental health to reflect on what it is they seek to achieve. I also believe that the lay reader will benefit from the reading of this book. In my opinion, its major contribution is to challenge and in some cases debunk, many of today's fashions that might include life coaching, a therapy for everything and amorphous concepts such as 'Wellbeing'.

**—*Kevin Gournay*, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience,
Kings College London, UK; University of Sydney, Australia**

This book fills a current gap in positive psychology literature. It combines a concise historical background with an evidence-based mode of enquiry to help the reader form a reflexive standpoint through a global and individual perspective. The writers are experts in their field, explaining the concepts clearly and engaging us in wanting to learn more about this fascinating area of scientific study.

—*Jan Macfarlane*, University of Bolton, UK

The human search for meaning is an enduring theme and this text resonates with a quest by the author of Ecclesiastes: 'I wanted to find a way to enjoy myself and see what was good for people to do during their few days of life'. This book on happiness in the field of positive psychology offers valuable points for reflection and self-examination, introducing suggested practical applications to think about in relation to your development of meaning, positive social engagement and living well.

—*Russell Gurbutt*, Modern Monastery, UK

This book, written by two colleagues with a history of happiness research between them, explores the multifaceted nature of happiness and the role it plays in wellbeing. Drawing on historical, philosophical and contemporary perspectives, it looks at how happiness has been defined and measured, emphasizing the importance of personal relationships, social connection and community in fostering wellbeing. Critiquing the potential downsides of contemporary society, it emphasizes the importance of intrinsic values, such as helping others, cultivating gratitude and finding meaning and purpose in life. Then, it goes on to discuss wellbeing interventions, such as developing self-awareness, living in the moment and cultivating positive relationships. Starting out from a small Northern town called Bolton, this book takes you on a journey throughout happiness and out to where it needs to belong.

—*Michelle Tytherleigh*, University of Chester, UK

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN PRACTICE

Series Edited by:

Professor Jerome Carson, Professor of Psychology at the University of Greater Manchester, UK

Dr Michelle Tytherleigh, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Chester, UK

Positive psychology is the fastest growing area of psychology, and this series presents the latest developments in the field, providing a range of scholarly yet practical books for academics, practitioners and students.

Positive Psychology in Practice features volumes investigating fields such as addiction, resilience, positive education and healthcare. These volumes are authored by academics who have published and carried out research in that specific area, and many are co-authored by practitioners to provide real-world context and application.

Positive Psychology in Practice Volumes:

Positive Psychology for Healthcare Professionals: A Toolkit for Improving Wellbeing
Authored by Jan Macfarlane and Jerome Carson

Positive Education at All Levels: Learning to Flourish
Edited by Michelle Tytherleigh

The Positive Psychology of Laughter and Humour
Authored by Freda Gonot-Schoupinsky, Merv Neal and Jerome Carson

How Digital Technologies Can Support Positive Psychology
Authored by Steven Barnes and Julie Prescott

Positive Psychology for Addiction: Theory, Research and Application
Authored by Lisa Ogilvie and Jerome Carson

This page intentionally left blank

HAPPINESS AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

BY

SANDIE McHUGH
University of Greater Manchester, UK

AND

JEROME CARSON
University of Greater Manchester, UK

United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India
Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL.

First edition 2025

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83708-097-7 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-83708-096-0 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-83708-098-4 (Epub)

BOOK DEDICATION TO IAN HARRISON, RIP

This book is dedicated to the late much loved and outstanding Psychology Technician, Ian Harrison, who died too young, aged 70 in October 2024. His short retirement followed 44 years of dedicated service to psychology staff and students at the University of Bolton.

Ian provided advice and practical support to thousands of students completing their experiments and research reports for degrees. I can remember invaluable assistance in placing 2,000 questionnaires in envelopes for a research project into the psychology of credit choice. Any uncertainty I ever had about using recording facilities, new computer software, I didn't need to ask, Ian was always on hand to advise. He would go out of his way to provide help and reassurance to anyone struggling with computers, printers, administrative systems, whatever was required to oil the wheels for an effective Department.

He had a phenomenal memory and absorbed knowledge and understanding over a wide range of psychology experiments and research. This included biopsychology, sensory perception topics, cognitive and social neuroscience, social psychology, counselling, mental health studies, positive psychology. He was very much a psychologist, albeit one without degrees, but few could match his experience and knowledge. Widely read he was continually learning in science, humanities, he had an interest in general history especially of his hometown Bolton. He was an inveterate collector of stuff and useful equipment in his office, apparently a trait also in his domestic scene. He is remembered fondly by the authors for his support and interest in their work and as a personal friend. He is greatly missed.

—Sandie

Ian received the first British Psychological Society Technician Award in 2014, and in 2019, he was voted the Research Support Professional of the Year at the then University of Bolton, now the University of Greater Manchester. I think I can honestly say that Ian Harrison did more for me than for any other member of staff. This was largely due to my own technical ineptitude, so he had to help me with the most basic of tasks. *'This button switches on the computer Jerome'*. It also extended to help outside work. When I moved into my house, he helped assemble my furniture and beds though despite much 'huffing and puffing' we never did get that sofa bed up the stairs and it rests in the conservatory to this day!

We are both delighted to be dedicating this book to Ian. He was very interested in our happiness research which we started in 2013. We had many discussions with him on the topic. Ian was 'Bolton through and through'. It must be hard for his wife Lis and his sons Luke and Tom, facing a life without their beloved husband and father. Sandie and I both loved Ian and miss him terribly. Rest in peace Ian.

—Jerome
January 2025

CONTENTS

This page intentionally left blank

LIST OF TABLES

This page intentionally left blank

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sandie McHugh is a Visiting Academic Research Fellow in Psychology at the University of Greater Manchester. She was a Student of Modern History at the University of Manchester and was awarded the George Unwin Scholarship for post-graduate studies. During a career in the civil service and as an international sport competitor, she became interested in applied psychology and studied with the Open University and University of Bolton. Her early research and publications were in Economic Psychology as a Member of Professor Rob Ranyard's Financial Decision-Making Unit. She started research into happiness with Jerome in 2013. Her interests are happiness, positive psychology, wellbeing and positive ageing.

Jerome Carson has been a Professor of Psychology at the University of Greater Manchester since 2012. He helped establish an MSc in Positive Psychology at the University with Dr Chathurika Kannangara in 2016. His research interests are positive psychology, especially happiness, recovery from mental health problems, alcohol addiction, autoethnography, bereavement and positive ageing. He is a qualified clinical psychologist and worked in the British National Health Service for 32 years. He is the Editor in Chief of the *Emerald Journal of Mental Health and Social Inclusion*. He has published over 300 scientific papers. Along with Dr Michelle Tytherleigh from the University of Chester, he is the Editor for the Emerald series of books on Positive Psychology.

This page intentionally left blank

FOREWORD

Patrick McGhee

This volume is a useful introduction to ideas and research around this important topic and a challenge to continue the work. It will be invaluable to students and scholars coming to this area for the first time. Beyond that, the topic of happiness, to be understood properly, has to be examined from multiple points of view at the same time. In that regard, the book is an interesting example of psychology's approach to complex topics generally.

In that context, the book's approach to happiness as a concept is appropriately multifaceted and layered. Social, historical and cultural contexts are recognized as key to a full understanding of this very distinctive human experience. The balance between such broad review of and drilling down into specific research findings is a strength of the book and one which has characterized the work of Jerome and Sandie over many years and studies.

A central strength of this collection is its evidence-based approach. Whilst we all, to some extent, have direct experience of happiness in some way or other, the systematic study of happiness, like much else in psychology, requires a significant degree of dispassionate distancing. Only through a degree of detachment can we get a reliable and valid model of complex emotions such as happiness. This interplay of the personal and the scientific is also a recurrent theme of this book.

In terms of presentation, each chapter comes with a useful Points for Reflection which enables the reader to stand back from the wide range content and consider the links to the bigger picture of happiness research, models and practice. This complements the Summary and Conclusion sections in each chapter that aids clarity and focus.

Unlike the majority of books in this and related areas, this volume contains a wide-ranging review of research methodologies, which not only provides the reader with a sense of how happiness studies are conducted but also provides a useful toolkit for researchers interested in engaging in this fascinating area of psychology. The discussion of the potential reactivity and reflexivity aspects provides a useful context for assessing the ways in which the researcher can affect the results of their enquiry, which is perhaps more prevalent

in this area than in many others. Alongside this consideration of some core issues on the analysis of social media in an era of AI provides an interesting counterpoint to the risk of emotional engagement of researchers.

Of particular interest is the coverage of the mass observation project of the late 1930s which focused on the town of Bolton (called 'Worktown' in the original research reports at the time. An interesting choice of pseudonym in itself). The testimonies of individuals from a wide range of people give a unique insight into individual ideas about happiness within historically specific communities and cultures. The declaration by Mrs Bollington of 2nd April 1938 would resonate with many, I am sure: 'My opinion of happiness can be summed up in three small words "Peace of mind". It is life's most treasured possession, for without it, life is a misery'. Have things changed? How does our sense of happiness change over the decades in the same town? The authors indicate how comparison of 1938 and 2014 shows that reported happiness levels were similar, but respondents from the 1930s experienced a higher frequency of weekly happiness with less distinction between weekdays and weekends.

The material on happiness at a global level provides examination of Gross National Happiness (GNH) as an important adjunct to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Writers' views of the characteristics of happier nations have changed over the centuries, and multiple features appear to be associated with high levels of happiness, ranging from taxation, through public healthcare and absence of natural disasters. This complex area is presented in an accessible way despite the complexity of the datasets involved.

To some extent at the heart of the book is the key question: armed with what we know about happiness, how can we make ourselves happier?

The book reviews some of the less than effective approaches and the dangers of self-appointed gurus offer easy fixes overnight. By contrast, McHugh and Carson analyze the success of positive psychology in supporting individuals to flourish and lead happier lives. Here and elsewhere in the book are useful applications of Seligman's PERMA model (Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment).

Reflecting the dissatisfaction with therapies and research on wellbeing which focus on depression and anxiety, the book considers the role of self-awareness, living in the present, finding meaning and purpose and positive relationships in developing happiness. Focusing on these areas can not only reduce or prevent some mental health challenges, but they can also provide a foundation to help people thrive.

The book ends on a personal note with Jerome Carson sharing what has made him happy across his lifespan. This volume overall should also help

readers and researchers reflect on what has made them happy and perhaps also how they can facilitate the happiness of others.

The book is dedicated to Ian Harrison, an outstanding professional and human being. It was an honour for me to have worked with Ian first as Head of Psychology in the late 1990s and the more recently as Assistant Vice Chancellor over the last decade. He was an individual who found happiness in many things including his work and hobbies, such as model aircraft. But, I think Ian will be mostly remembered for the happiness he gave to others. Whether through the thousands of staff and students whose projects he supported, or through his cherished hours with family and friends, there is no doubt in my mind that he contributed to his country's Gross National Happiness much more than most.

—Professor Patrick McGhee

This page intentionally left blank

PREFACE

In life's journey, most of us seek happiness as we endeavour to make the most of our existence on this planet with whatever circumstances and opportunities are available to us. Often as we try to create as good a life as possible, we probably don't consider what this involves or realize that we have some control, especially if we utilize knowledge of happiness/flourishing and apply some of the techniques that we are now aware of.

In December 2005 whilst I was studying decision-making at the University of Bolton, I attended an ESRC conference in Bristol. One of the presenters making a flying visit from London along Brunel's Great Western Railway was Professor Lord Richard Layard. Only occasionally glancing at large index cards in his hand, he talked about a 'new science of happiness'. Using a wide range of data sources, he outlined some of the factors connected with a happier life and noted that as countries had become richer from the 1950s, they had not become happier partly because of increases in mental illness, crime and family breakdown. For me his presentation was one of the highlights of the conference. I never imaged that some 15 years later in an Exhibition Centre at Old Trafford, Manchester, I would chat to Lord Layard as we were given lunch before a live recording for TV. This show was *The Big Question* presented by Nicky Campbell where the moral and ethical question to be broadcast the next day was 'Do we have a right to happiness?' I had been invited as the research that Jerome and I had carried out on happiness in Worktown/Bolton had received international attention. There was an interest in whether Boltonians were happier in 1938 or in the 2010s, and whether there were the lessons from a previous age.

This book has been my post-doctoral work to date. The publications and conference papers from the happiness research formed the basis for my PhD. I was encouraged to continue, coupled with my belief in life-long learning, I did so. As in the adage, – the more you know about a subject, the more you realize there is to know. I felt that, although I had been involved in happiness research for a number of years and had achieved my doctorate, there was *so*

much more that I wanted to discover and to contemplate. I am extremely fortunate to collaborate with Jerome, such an inspiration and motivator. This is the story of how this book came into being.

—Sandie McHugh

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would not have been written but for the good-natured patience and support of my husband Dr Geof McHugh. I also thank my close friend from our school days Gill Rogers and my ex-colleague and friend Julie Ellison. Both have been empathetic sounding boards, supportive and their company has always been a fillip.

I would like to express my gratitude to the University of Greater Manchester (previously the University of Bolton) for personal support and for the Jenkinson awards without which our happiness research would not have been possible. I especially thank Professor Patrick McGhee for his Foreword in this book and his interest over the years in the research. I thank past and present staff and associates connected with the University; Dr Julie Prescott, Dr Richard Jagger, Emeritus Professor Robert Snape, Professor Rob Ranyard, Professor John Haworth, Dr Jo Smith, Dr Jan McFarlane amongst many others. Post graduate student Aishath Shahama. Library and administrative staff. From the University of Chester, my external PhD examiner Dr Michelle Tytherleigh. There are many people connected with the University and the town of Bolton that contributed to the happiness research. Without their input and without our participants, there would have been no research.

I am grateful to and thank the seven eminent academics who have taken the time to endorse this book. I would also like to thank my co-authors from previous publications. Does writing for publication get any easier? I leave that as an open question. For personal encouragement to continue beyond my doctorate, I give thanks to Dr Pedro Vital and Professor Gill Brown amongst others, and especially Professor Jerome Carson. For their example of continuing learning and their personal interest, I would like to acknowledge Professor Dick Horrocks and Dr Vera Rita de Mello Ferreira both known for some years. For their motivational contact and illustration that age is not a barrier to learning and achievement Dr Ken Heathcote, Professor Bob Johnson, Sue Johnson and Dr Barrie Green.

—Sandie McHugh

I want to thank all the staff involved with Emerald Publishing, especially the commissioning editor Dr Daniel Ridge and all the editorial staff in the Indian office, especially Kousalya Thangarasu. Your dedication and professionalism have turned our Word files into this amazing book! This is the third book that Sandie has produced in the field of Happiness. I still believe she has another book in her! Sandie and I are both grateful for the endorsements provided by Dr Dara Mojtahedi, Emeritus Professor Robert Snape, Dr Dominic Willmott, Emeritus Professor Kevin Gournay, Dr Jan Macfarlane, Emeritus Professor Russell Gurbutt and last, but not least, the co-editor of the Emerald Series in Positive Psychology, Dr Michelle Tytherleigh. We hope you the reader enjoy the fruits of our labours.

—Jerome Carson

1

INTRODUCTION TO HAPPINESS AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence

—Aristotle

ABSTRACT

This chapter looks at the topic of happiness from an historical perspective. Philosophers have considered the topic of happiness down the millennia. The concept of happiness even made it into the American Declaration of Independence, invoking a right to the pursuit of happiness. Research has been hindered by a number of linked concepts, such as subjective wellbeing (SWB), flourishing, wellbeing, all of which are linked to, but conceptually different from happiness. This chapter explores these and other related topics. Positive psychology (PP) certainly featured happiness in a lot of its earlier research. This concept has largely been replaced by the broader concept of flourishing based on Martin Seligman's PERMA Model, which has five aspects: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment.

Keywords: Hedonia; eudaimonia; Easterlin paradox; wellbeing; subjective wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

What is happiness? Can we define it? What does it mean to be happy or, indeed, the opposite unhappy? There is no universally accepted definition from academics or happiness gurus (see Chapters 4 and 6). Below are just a few definitions.

Tal Ben-Shahar (2008), a leading positive psychologist, defines happiness as 'the overall experience of pleasure and meaning' (p. 33). This definition pertains to a generalized aggregate of a person's experience of life, feeling pain at times, but being happy overall. Pleasure/pain is the experience of positive/negative emotions in the present, whereas meaning in happiness arises from a sense of purpose of the future benefit of our actions.

Richard Layard (2006) defines happiness 'as feeling good, enjoying life and wanting the feeling to be maintained' (Layard, 2006, pp. 11–12). He points to developments in neuroscience on brain activity which have identified the left side with good feelings and the right side with bad feelings. This means that what people say about their feelings may correspond with the actual level of activity in different parts of the brain. This he maintains provides a scientific basis for happiness feelings themselves and enables their measurement (see Chapter 2).

Nobel prize winner Daniel Kahneman's (2011) theory of happiness states that humans have a dual thought system for judgement and choice. System 1 is fast thinking, instinctive and almost effortless. This is the experience of happiness in the moment, feelings of pleasure or pain. The conscious remembering self, system 2 reflects on past experiences, evaluates and makes choices in the present and for the future. This conscious self is slower requiring more effort and concentration. As time passes from an experience, it is system 2 that will rate it, perhaps more on its intensity than on an average and duration. The remembering self and its evaluations of experiences will be more important in making judgements on overall life satisfaction over time and in anticipating the future. This Self 2 is important for the formation of motivations for certain courses of action and making a choice between different options.

The sociologist Veenhoven began considering the topic of happiness in 1964, and as his life's work, he has been instrumental in the creation of the World Database on happiness at Erasmus University in the Netherlands (Veenhoven, 2012). He points out that the word happiness is an umbrella term for all that is good, and it is often used interchangeably with wellbeing or quality of life. We will discuss the terms wellbeing and happiness later in the chapter. Veenhoven defines happiness as subjective enjoyment of life as a whole. It is an individual's judgement of how much they like the life they lead (Erasmus Happiness Economics Research Organization, 2024; Veenhoven, 2012).

This approach is like that of Frey (2018) who claims that happiness in contemporary times is an open individualistic question relating to intrinsic motivation. In an individualistic age, it is the satisfaction people gain from reaching desired goals of autonomy, competence and personal relationships, all part of psychological self-determination theory (SDT). This theory emerging from humanistic psychology suggests that a person's intrinsic motivation draws them towards activities because they are appealing, enjoyable, and fulfilling, and this makes them happy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Thus, as happiness can be an enjoyable feeling people will be intrinsically motivated to seek it out. Motivation is the key in this approach rather than a passive acceptance of when happiness occurs. SDT may explain the reasons for activities requiring effort and time, but which enhance wellbeing as they meet the innate psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

In our research into happiness in Bolton and beyond, we did not define happiness, but we explored what it meant to the participants. We asked for comments on what happiness meant to them. To complement this approach, we also used the same questions in the 2010s that Mass Observation had formulated in the 1930s. Our analysis compared the essence of happiness and how it changed over an 80-year period (McHugh & Carson, 2017) (see Chapter 3).

It is not just in the 20th and 21st centuries that interest in happiness has occurred, humanity has been pondering the question from ancient times. Socrates (470–399 BC), the Greek philosopher, gave importance to critical self-reflection and a considered life. The desire for happiness was seen as natural for humanity. It could be claimed he introduced the idea of happiness as something tangible. Plato (427–347 BC), in his writings in The Republic, emphasized the importance of morality and of the cardinal values of justice (not a legal term – means to be selfish but also consider others), fortitude (courage and inner strength), prudence (reasonable) and temperance (moderation) for a happy life. Added to the natural desire for happiness, there was now a suggested structure for its attainment.

Aristippus (435–356 BC) a pupil of Socrates later taught that the goal of life was to seek pleasure by adapting circumstances for oneself. This view, in contrast to other Greek philosophers, was that pleasure was the only good, known as hedonism. To Aristotle (384–322 BC), happiness involved reason and virtue with humans finding joy by discovering and fulfilling their noble natures, known as eudaimonia. Happiness was seen as a goal in life, and by using reason and critical thinking, this could be achieved.

To Epicurus (347–271 BC), happiness was tranquillity with good and evil being pleasure and pain, respectively. A simple ascetic life could achieve happiness by memorization and repetition of his teachings. To bring about

change, the principles would be internalized without question, and slogans could be memorized to deal with adversity. This has some similarity with modern PP techniques.

Zeno of Citium (334–262 BC) founded the school of Stoicism. Happiness was tranquillity within an *active* life and being an effective member of society. Pain and problems in life could be alleviated by changing attitudes even to difficult external events. This gave guidance to living in uncertain times and to look up to sages for its provision. Stoicism was used by Christians as a model for being a good citizen, the sage being Jesus Christ (Brown, 2017; Delius et al., 2005).

Christianity was gradually established from the first century AD, teaching that happiness was to be sought in Heaven. The feelings of the heart, faith in the afterlife, became more important than logic and the rational thinking of the philosophers. Happiness on earth was marred by the concept of original sin from the Garden of Eden. Suffering was a sign of holiness, and following a prescribed Christian life could bring true happiness with later union with God (Brown, 2017). Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Italian friar and scholar, suggested that imperfect happiness on earth was possible prior to supreme happiness in the afterlife. He attempted to unite Christian doctrine with Aristotle's philosophy. In life faith, hope and charity were to be practiced as Christians worked in the world towards a better life in the next with God. Happiness on earth could be attained (Delius et al., 2005).

The Renaissance during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries saw a revival of Greek and Roman philosophy as the ancient texts were more widely read. Humanism emerged, emphasizing education, moral responsibility and a virtuous life. The Italian poet, scholar and diplomat Francis Petrarch (1304–1374) proclaimed the beauty and value of human life. People understood the world from subjectivity and objectivity with history as part of memory. He is credited with publishing a self-help book (Hardy, 2024; Myers, 2023).

The Lutheran Reformation movement from 1517 asserted the individual in Christianity challenging church hierarchy and its doctrine of infallibility. Martin Luther (1483–1546), Professor of Theology at Wittenberg University, considered the scriptures paramount. Through their own spiritual authority each person could find faith and grace, they had a direct relationship with God, not via an intermediary. Their search for happiness was righteous if aware of their sinful nature but through faith and hard work they could reach salvation (pbs.org, 2024).

The 17th and 18th centuries saw the Enlightenment Period, and the English Philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) suggested that humans have inner motivation with free will to shape their own thoughts without divine-inspired morality. Happiness was to be found through pleasure and human effort as

people advanced themselves (Brown, 2017). In the North American English colonies aspiration from Enlightenment principles were proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence in 1776 – Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. Happiness was now seen as a natural right given by mankind's creator that Governments should protect (National Archives and Records Administration, 2024).

In the 18th century, happiness came to be seen as important for all with the Utilitarian view that actions should bring happiness for the greatest number. Jeremey Bentham (1748–1832), founder of Utilitarianism, was also an advocate of freedom of expression. He favoured an end to slavery, capital and physical punishment alongside individual political and economic rights (Crimmins, 2021).

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), English philosopher, economist, journalist and liberal MP from 1865 to 1868 stated, in *On Liberty* in 1859, that individuals should have freedom of thought and emotion, to pursue their own tastes and to unite, provided these actions were not harmful to others. Self-realization and personal freedom were the goal with happiness obtained via the process of individual liberation. A blossoming of oneself was not selfish; it was to enrich humanity by making a personal unique contribution. Happiness came in the form of pleasures which could be rated in terms of their value. Through freedom people could pursue higher rated pleasures connected with the intellect, activity and moral sentiment. This individuality has sometimes been interpreted as 'flourishing' towards a character ideal. This has some similarities with PP (Macleod, 2016; Mill, 1991).

Developments from the Enlightenment period and utilitarian ideas could be considered to democratize happiness. It was no longer the preserve of an elite as in ancient times. In 1776, the Pursuit of Happiness was part of the Declaration of Independence. Bentham emphasized the concept of individual rights and happiness for the greatest number. Mill was an active campaigner for civil rights, championing women's suffrage and the abolition of slavery amongst others. He proposed individual self-development and blossoming. Happiness and liberty were proposed for all and could be obtained through education and personal development. In Chapter 4, we shall look at the next stage, humanistic psychology and PP that we are more familiar with today.

HEDONIA AND EUDAIMONIA

There is some broad consensus from the definitions of happiness described above that happiness has two components hedonia and eudaimonia. A stance that the authors of this book favour. Hedonia is the experience of pleasure and

enjoyment in the moment of time. Some of these relate to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. At the base of the pyramid are food, drink, shelter, sex and safety. Others are feelings of pleasure; gratification which will depend on the individual. Perhaps, it is by being with friends/family, watching TV, a fun-fair, going for a walk, being on holiday. It could be an activity or inactivity such as relaxation that is enjoyable.

One of the limitations of hedonic happiness is what is termed 'diminishing returns'. With human adaptability, we can become accustomed to pleasures and, therefore, they have less impact. We may enjoy celebrations like festivals and birthdays because they do not occur all the time. We appreciate them more. We might find pleasure in the company of friends and family but would not want them constantly in our daily lives (Lane, 2000). The law of diminishing utility, a term from economics, has been applied to the debate about wealth and happiness that as countries become wealthier happiness levels have not increased in tandem (Easterlin, 1974; Layard, 2006). It also has resonance for hedonic happiness.

The search for hedonic happiness is used in the advertising world to extoll us that happiness is ours if only we buy certain products. (For information on emotional advertising, see https://stevens-tate.com/articles/emotional-advertising.) Recently, there has been emphasis on creating 'happy memories' by purchasing day trips and holidays. It is recognized that for some people expenditure on activities provides more happiness than the purchase of consumer goods (Gilovich et al., 2015; Kumar et al., 2020). Although hedonic happiness experiences are temporary, if 'happy memories' are later evoked, they can enhance a mood, as pleasant reminisces (Kawakobo & Oguchi, 2021). Perhaps, these could become part of general life satisfaction and provide meaning (eudaimonia)? Recall of happy memories, especially of experiences, can be used as part of a PP intervention (see Chapter 7).

Eudaimonia the other aspect of happiness relates to meaning or having a purpose in life. This will be very individual. For some, it may be caring; for others, it may be pursuit of a career, a sport, a campaign to improve the world. Eudaimonia can provide structure and motivation in life. Unlike hedonism, it is not a fleeting feeling. It is a sense of a life well-lived and is likely to bring over time both pleasurable and uncomfortable feelings. It can bring satisfaction with life. Eudaimonia can have many strands; a person may have meaning in life from their profession and from their family. The life cycle may bring changes in the purpose of life, for instance as a young person it may be to pass examinations. Later, it may be to care for children, to travel, to devote time to charitable activities or to active campaigning. So, although longer lasting, meaning in life can change.

However, having a meaning in life may not bring happy experiences, and there can be important differences between the two. Consider, for example a person volunteering to be in a war zone or to work in an area where there has been a catastrophic natural disaster. This may add purpose to their life, but the experience is not likely to be a joyous one. Baumeister et al. (2013) from their analysis of multiple surveys suggest that people can have a highly meaningful life which is relatively low in happiness. They considered that whereas when we are happy thought is in the present, meaningful thought patterns consider the past, the present and the future. Meaning links thoughts and experiences across time, whereas happiness is in the moment and independent of other moments. As they also point out, meaning in life has cultural dimensions; the appraisal of meaning uses culturally transmitted symbols via language to evaluate life in relation to purposes and values. Meaning is, therefore, more linked to a person's cultural identity than to happiness which they see as the satisfaction of immediate wants.

From our own research, participants' self-reported happiness included some elements that could be identified as meaning such as work, study and relationships. It is possible that a clearer distinction needs to be made between the terms life satisfaction and meaning. Baumeister and colleagues see life satisfaction as integrating some things into the present from the past. This theory suggests that whereas happiness is natural, meaning has cultural or biological needs. These definitions matter when considering PP programmes. Some may be more applicable to enhancing happiness in the present, whereas others aim to provoke a feeling of meaning in life, what is worthwhile (see Chapter 5 on cultural influences on happiness).

HAPPINESS AND WELLBEING

An important distinction for this book is between the terms happiness and wellbeing. Not only will this help exploration of happiness per se, but it will also identify appropriate PP interventions. Amidst all the confusing terminology and interchangeability between the two words, we are defining wellbeing to refer to four ontological dimensions: physical, mental, social and spiritual. Wellbeing is the state of feeling healthy and happy (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). The state of being comfortable, healthy *or* happy is the definition from the Oxford English Dictionary (2023). It is noted that the term wellbeing is often linked to other domains, such as economic wellbeing, financial, emotional and national.

Whereas the definition of happy as a noun is the feeling of being happy, as an adjective, it is feeling, showing or causing pleasure or satisfaction (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Happiness is the state of pleasurable content of minds deep in pleasure or contentment with one's circumstances. Feeling or showing a deep sense of pleasure or contentment especially arising from satisfaction with one's circumstances or condition is the definition provided by the Oxford Dictionary (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023).

The definition of wellbeing is a reference to a person or community, the state of being healthy, happy or prosperous and physical, psychological or moral welfare. This is a far broader meaning than happiness and is not a new concept. Indeed, the frequency of the word wellbeing is estimated to be 10 times per 1 million words in the period 1750–2010 with a sharp increase in frequency since 1980. The frequency for the use of happiness is estimated to be 20 times per 1 million words. The highest frequency occurred in the period 1790–1830 with frequency then declining when an upward trend can be observed in 1990–2000. During the recent period 2017–2023, the spike in happiness word frequency was 2017–2018 then a dip and plateau until mid-2022 with further upward trend towards March 2023 (Oxford English Dictionary, 2023).

What of the wellbeing definitions by psychologists, sociologists and other academics in the humanities? They often refer to SWB. There is no English definition for this term in the Oxford or Cambridge dictionaries. It is generally accepted to refer to how people experience and evaluate their lives within specific domains and their activities. Researchers relate SWB to the design and collection of self-report data (National Library of Medicine, 2013). Diener and colleagues (2017) stated that SWB was not a united entity but could refer to broad appraisals such as satisfaction with life, health, judgements and feelings about specific events and circumstances (see Chapter 2 for the measurement of happiness).

Whether referring to a dictionary definition of wellbeing or to SWB from an academic perspective, we, therefore, consider that happiness is an aspect of wellbeing and impacts on it, but there are distinctions between the two concepts, and they are *not* interchangeable. We purport happiness has two components hedonic and eudemonic, whereas wellbeing is more holistic referring to mental, physical health, spirituality or moral welfare *and happiness*. Christina-Corina Bentea (2019) describes wellbeing as multifaceted, a combination of feeling good, finding flow, having a purposeful life, a sense of accomplishment and establishing authentic connections. She sees the goal of PP is to sustain that wellbeing and contribute to human flourishing.