Questions about the meaning, purpose, and pursuit of happiness and well-being have been addressed by thinkers since ancient times but over the past decade or so there has been a tremendous upsurge of scholarly interest in the subject. This renewed interest has come from a variety of academic disciplines, including psychology, neuroscience, and economics. The field has, in particular, been galvanized by the advent of the positive psychology movement at the turn of the century. Especially in the United States, but also in the UK and on continental Europe, Australia, and parts of Asia, research and courses in positive psychology are thriving. Harvard University’s positive psychology course, for example, is currently the most popular offering in the college’s history.

Governments and international organizations are also increasingly engaged by notions of well-being and happiness. The World Health Organization has recently redefined ‘health’ to include ‘psychological well-being’ and many national policy-makers have begun to recognize that measuring a nation’s success by traditional economic values alone no longer suffices and that we need also urgently to understand how people experience the quality of their lives.

Beyond the academy and government, there is also immense interest in the promotion and examination of happiness and well-being in many professional disciplines such as coaching, education, clinical psychology, and community-building.

As work on happiness and well-being flourishes as never before, this new title in Routledge’s Major Works series, Critical Concepts in Psychology, meets the need for an authoritative reference work to make sense of the subject’s vast literature and the continuing explosion in research output. Co-edited by two leading scholars, Happiness and Well-being is a four-volume collection of classic and contemporary contributions. Together, the four volumes provide a one-stop resource for all interested researchers, students, and policy-makers to gain a thorough understanding of the field, the variety of approaches, and where thinking on happiness and well-being is today. With comprehensive introductions to each volume, newly written by the editors, which place the collected material in its historical, intellectual, and practical context, Happiness and Well-being is an essential work of reference and a vital research tool.
Part 5—Interventions and Enhancements


Part 6—Public Policy


