

**Figure 1** Dimensions and specializations of well-being.

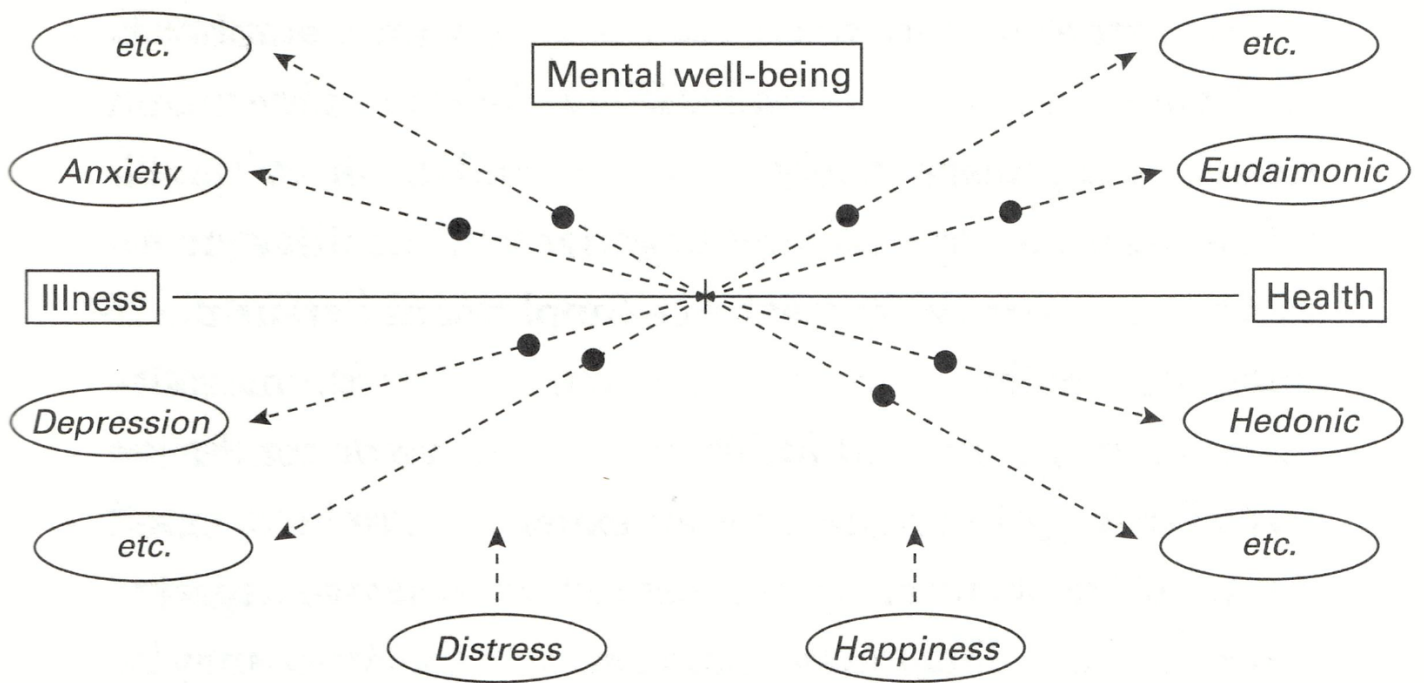
Definitions

**Anomie**

Lack of the usual social or ethical standards in an individual or group.

**Transcendence**

Existence or experience beyond the normal or physical level.



**Figure 3** The differentiated mental well-being spectrum.

Definitions

Eudaimonic - Aristotle

A contented state of being happy and healthy and prosperous.  
 The subjective experiences associated with eudaimonia or living a life of virtue in pursuit of human excellence.

Hedonic - Aristotle

Devoted to pleasure.  
 Of, characterizing, or pertaining to pleasure.

*The Roots of Happiness through time and in different cultures. These are roughly listed in chronological order and represent YOUR interpretations of the different sections in the book. The following outline will serve to place all of our future conversations about happiness in a more global historical context.*

### **Aboriginal**

Aboriginal people developed a rich, complex culture with ideas and insights dating back to 26,000 BCE. One of the most prominent cultural-religious belief systems that guided the group of Arrente's everyday life was *aljerre-nge*. *Aljerre-nge* was a way of well-being that demonstrated their holistic ways of perceiving life as interconnected. An important aspect of this theory is the concept of "everywhen" which helped the aboriginal people understand and embrace the past, present, and future and seek guidance on how they should best live.

### **Mesopotamian**

As an agricultural society developing in complexity, the Mesopotamians find happiness in enjoying daily life (food, et.). Specifically, the Epic of Gilgamesh emphasizes reconciliation with mortality and finding happiness, thus having a more positive outlook on life. Embracing simple pleasure on the earth is important to happiness. Pursue a meaningful life filled with virtue and be remembered for greatness.

### **Chinese**

Chinese roots of happiness can be traced to Taoism and the I Ching (Book of Changes). These principles guided people in their everyday lives and emphasized the ideas of change and opposites. As a result, the yin-yang motif was created to symbolize the interactions between opposites and to accept the pattern of life that is full of these things.

### **Vedantic**

The four Vedas, which were developed on the Indian subcontinent, are comprised of four materials that lead to eternal bliss. The foundations of Hinduism, the four Vedas are comprised of Samhitas (mantras and prayers), Aranyakas (rituals and ceremonies), Brahmanas (commentaries on rituals and ceremonies) and Upanishads (philosophical and spiritual teachings). The foundation, Ananda, is an intense, profound happiness translated as bliss, and can denote experiential release. The Vedas elucidate a path to attain this state of happiness. These are found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism.

### **Judaic**

The Judaic root of happiness focuses on the spiritual well-being, as the Jewish scripture becomes a "staple" teaching and practice throughout their lives. Many important scriptural texts, including the 10 Commandments, set the framework of how to live life. The influential pieces provide ideas like codification of wisdom, how to live life, the meaningful perspective of well-being that essentially "hold reverence for understanding of happiness". Moses ben Maimon (Jewish theologian) argues that since God provides us with the framework for how to be happy, one should be punished if they restrain themselves from joy.

### **Buddhist**

Buddhism offers the Noble Eightfold Path, which mainly covers the three broad dimensions of life – wisdom, ethical conduct, and meditation. The Noble Eightfold Path, the fourth of the Four Noble Truths, offers and alleviation of the *dukkha*, or suffering. Through the Noble Eightfold Path, one can achieve *sukha*, the opposite of suffering (*dukkha*).

## **Hellenistic**

Hellenistic happiness was an idea adapted by the Greeks and modern-life involving character growth, a pursuit for knowledge, and willingness to commit towards ethical development. Aristotle would emphasize eudaimonic concepts as opposed to superficial pleasures, and that regardless of what circumstance you have in life, you are always content as a happy person.

## **Christian**

Those who are faithful in God, despite their wealth, could find happiness in their faith. But to many, being blessed by God was considered “better” or a higher honor than just being happy.

## **Islamic**

Afterlife (sa’adah Jannah)

Eudaimonic fulfillment

Human conduct on earth determines your experience in the afterlife (character development)

## **Renaissance**

Knowledge

Hedonic pleasures

Emphasis on life on earth

Focus on your own happiness

## **The Enlightenment**

Secularism

Politics

Academics

Imagination/open-mindedness

Science/rationality

## **Therapeutic**

Psychiatry and psychotherapy focused on mental illness, which advanced studies on happiness later on.

## **Humanistic**

Humanistic largely focused on mental health, self-consciousness, and individuation.

Psychotherapy was considered important as it would provide safe spaces for people to explore individuation processes.

Focus on self-actualization, described as fulfillment of human potential (very similar to eudaimonism).

Set the stage for the “healthy half” of mental well-being, triggering research and theory to grow (causing scientific approaches).

## **Scientific**

Happiness on the scientific level is measured through tools that attempt to evaluate life. This includes the ten-rung ladder which people are asked to consider where they stand on this scale. The base to the top of this measurement represents a person’s best to worst possible life quality. However, another method to scientifically measure a person’s happiness would be the emergence of positive psychology in which there is a stronger focus on an individual’s mental health of well-being rather than disorder and dysfunction only.

## **Global**

The west contains connections to the enlightenment era with an emphasis on personal rights. In the east, however, dynamics were such that collectivism prioritizes the happiness of a group instead of individuals. This idea relates to well-being and happiness since there is an exploration of diversity that affects the idea of happiness is through various regions, cultures and places.