

for my clients. However, I had not come across a philosophy by which I could comprehensively identify and connect valid objectives and systematically enhance and maximize their pursuit. This did not disturb my functioning. Clients hired me to represent their defined or implied business objectives and not to answer deeper questions of what they really wanted or should want. But I had also relented finding these answers for myself. As this insight emerged, I understood why the professor's statement had stayed with me so persistently. For all this time, I had ignored the reminder of an unfinished task that my memory of his statement had continued to submit. I finally decided to pay attention and ask: If philosophies cannot provide authoritative answers to the question how to be happy, what or who can? The answer was obvious. I needed to find my own way. I began to see why I had avoided this task before. It seemed exceedingly difficult. There did not seem to be much to work with even now that I understood the challenge better. The assortment of principles I had gathered up along my path had served me reasonably well. Yet, if I was to improve on them, I had to take a few steps back and gain a better comprehension of happiness. I had to reflect deeper on what my impressions represented and might have to develop and supplement them. To undertake all that, I had to represent my thoughts and thus began to commit them to writing.

As my considerations progressed, I detected an unexpected development. Not only did I assemble a better picture of what happiness meant to me. I also began to notice the emergence of a general procedural concept about how happiness might be found, maintained, improved, and maximized according to an individual's autonomous insights. The development of this method instigated my writing of this book in addition to the personal records I built for myself. It does not presume to know the particularities of happiness for any of us. Rather, it explores how we can identify what will make us happy. It proposes that we must turn inward to accomplish this identification. We have to comprehensively come to know who we are and what we want. The book offers perspectives on how to achieve that knowledge and shows that autonomous acquisition of knowledge is not only possible but is also necessary. Once we have established a topical comprehension of what makes us happy, we must employ this knowledge in its practical context. We have to identify, examine, and select means and strategies to pursue our objectives. That work exceeds immediate technical concerns. We have to comprehend how to harmonize our pursuits within ourselves and with our human and nonhuman environment to obtain the best possible results. A significant portion of this book is therefore dedicated to the transitioning of our ideas of happiness into reality.