



Introduction Happiness and Psychotherapy

*It is not death that a man should fear,
but he should fear never beginning to live.*

Marcus Aurelius

Where are we now?

We live in difficult times. Though we thought that civilization and culture would bring us ease, comfort and happiness it has turned out to be a little more complex than that. In the Northern hemisphere we are certainly more prosperous than ever before. We now have plenty of personal possessions and we consume many commodities. We can boast of a myriad of technological achievements. We know so much and we control even more. We have access to multiple and varied resources and exploit them to the hilt. Our economies are based on constant growth and expansion. Yet we have not achieved a state of permanent bliss and are not likely to do so in the near future. There is nothing new under the sun. Life is still not easy. It never was and never will be. Each acquisition comes with new drawbacks and introduces new responsibilities and problems into our lives. It is still hard to live a good life and get it right. Many of us feel rather lost in the world today, because of its increasing complexity and stress. We want happiness but do not really know how or where to find it. We spend much of our lives in worry, fear, depression, regret, doubt, confusion and anxiety. Even those of us who do well for ourselves feel stressed out and tired much of the time.

This is hardly a new phenomenon. People since times immemorial have found living a difficult challenge. Artists and authors have witnessed the miseries that are part and parcel of the human condition and they have taken their inspiration from the struggles and heartaches that ensue from it. For this is essentially what human culture is: the product of our attempts at overcoming

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our fundamental fragility, our fears and our frustrations. Today science and technology have come up with many ways of dealing with the dangers of the natural world and they are fairly effective in achieving their objective of taming and controlling the material challenges we all have to face. The overall aim is to constantly make our lives easier and safer. In strictly material terms this goal seems nearer and nearer, be it at the cost of having to run ever faster on the treadmill of economic growth. We are increasingly aware of the price the human race is paying for this progress however. At each step of the way we are confronted with the paradoxical and potentially threatening by-products and unwelcome consequences of our comforts. It is clear that a complete 360-degree review of our way of life is crucial for the future of the planet and mankind (see for instance Martin, 2006).

Science or art?

Such a review has got to include the way in which we live our mental, moral and emotional lives. It is profoundly alarming when scientists who are progressively more knowledgeable about personal and interpersonal interactions assume this automatically gives them the right to manipulate, control and manage our emotions and behaviour. An invisible revolution is underway in this field with unforeseeable consequences for the decades to come. As neuroscientists and social scientists become more capable of programming our minds and guide our actions, we need to make sure that we keep the reins in hand and that we are clear on what we do and do not want for our own future. Much more thinking is needed about how we can make sure that mechanical and factual knowledge serves rather than controls us. How are we going to protect human freedom, spontaneity and creativity? How will we decide where meaning is to come from and what we will believe and aspire to? What is our idea of transcendence and what shall we worship in future?

Classically, and for good reasons, these aspects of human living have been the domain of the arts, religion and philosophy rather than of the sciences. The arts are reserved for the creative expression of people's struggles with the human condition, whilst religion regulates and controls these struggles, giving them a purpose. Customarily philosophy used to oversee both artistic expressions and religious prescriptions, providing the space to reflect on them and make sense of the world. In this way philosophers were in a position to guide politicians and educators, safeguarding the moral debate in society. Who is guiding politicians in their ethical thinking today? That duty has been taken over by lawyers, industrialists and economists, who all have a stake in the continued growth of the economy. Philosophers used to claim a neutral place from which to reflect on human living and make sense of it. Their job was to rise above the interest of the moment and provide the bigger picture. We have more or less dispensed with such

fundamental reference to human wisdom, even though the issues we are dealing with are increasingly vital to our survival. The scientific endeavour to pin human existence on concrete facts and figures has well and truly taken hold and has discredited the human capacity for discernment, reasoning and good judgement. Scientific values dominate philosophy today in the same way in which religious values dominated it in the past, obstructing its freedom and stopping its progress. Understanding and reflection on the human predicament are now secondary to rationality; if they are allowed at all. Will this make art, philosophy and religion redundant and eliminate human misery? It is highly unlikely.

Artists and philosophers have never been in competition with scientists. They cannot lose a battle they are not interested in fighting. Artists do not and never have proposed final solutions to the big questions of life. They do not seek to eradicate human suffering, finding plenty of interest in it. They rather describe and document it in their various ways, exposing the pain and joy of human existence and highlighting its contradictions, plumbing its depths, trying to fathom its endless mysteries. Art is the arena of human emotions and the artist's expression has often thrived on adversity, suffering and unhappiness because this is the fertile ground in which human ingenuity is rooted, grows and blossoms. It is in the depths and troughs of human experience that inspiration is to be found. Artists know that the richness of life is in its contrasts. For them the objective of living is not normality with its tedium of homogeneity, control and predictability; it is not the eradication of adversity they work towards, but the intensity and depth of passionate and radical human experience.

Similarly philosophers have never claimed that life could be smoothed out and made easy or brought under a simple rational common denominator. Philosophers seek to understand and make sense of the same human problems and difficulties that artists in their various ways explore and express, not in order to get rid of them, but in order to grasp their purpose. Philosophers do sometimes try to establish order in the chaos of the human condition, but not so as to eliminate conflicts and problems but so as to make sense of them and get better at resolving them. Philosophers, in the radical sense of the word (as lovers of wisdom), aim to deal with difficulties wisely, with calm and full awareness of what is the case and what is desirable. Their pursuit is somewhat similar to that of world religions and indeed some world religions are known as Eastern philosophies. Unlike most religions however philosophies do not prescribe a particular way of life and they do not establish a dogma that needs to be obeyed to the letter. Their objective is rather to encourage people to learn to think for themselves.

Why is it that we get inspired by artists and philosophers? It is because they are in touch with what matters and they remind us to heed what is precious. Good artists and philosophers work from the inspiration and direct experience of personal confrontation with reality. This often means that they use their

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emotional suffering and despair as a starting point. They document their own battles with life and their work is an attempt at transforming their anguish and agony into something of value. They walk on the firm ground of life itself. Art is a great leveller and we recognize the agonies of the artist even if we try to deny these to ourselves much of the time. Kierkegaard's philosophy is a case in point, since his work is so directly based in his own life. He was a master at transcending his suffering and he expressed it rather well:

My spiritual work satisfies me so completely and makes me come gladly to terms with everything if only I am absorbed in it. That's how I can see my life too: bringing to others good tidings of comfort and joy, while I myself remain bound in pain for which I can anticipate no alleviation – except for this one thing: that I can work with my mind in this way. (Kierkegaard, 1999: VIII 1 A 645)

It is uplifting to note that Kierkegaard got relief from his work and that he derived inspiration from his suffering. In facing his pain he found the key to coping with the anguish of life. Van Gogh was not so lucky or able to make sense of his suffering. He could only express it. His despair was surely his inspiration, but ultimately he found no redemption in it.

It is just in learning to suffer without complaint, in learning to look on pain without repugnance, that you risk vertigo, and yet it is possible, yet you may even catch a glimpse of a vague likelihood that on the other side of life we shall see some good reason for the existence of pain, which seen from here sometimes so fills the whole horizon that it takes on the proportions of a hopeless deluge. (van Gogh in Bernard, 1985: 203)

While some people feel deluged by their pain and others find inspiration in it, human beings have always striven to thrive on hardship and misfortune rather than be struck down by it. We have learnt to distil something good out of what is troublesome. But it is not always easy to hold on to such hard earned drops of wisdom and they frequently lose their strength and power as they are passed on from generation to generation as hearsay or proverbs or common sense. Few philosophers or other authors would permit themselves to base their writing on such diluted insights into the human condition. We need to get better at drawing on the life learning of our forebears. It is surely one of the best things human beings achieve in this world: to struggle with the trials and tribulations of the human condition, transcend them and pass on this learning to the next generation. And this is traditionally the territory of the arts and philosophy: to observe, comment on, highlight and illustrate the human condition so that others may benefit and live it more fully. But this is not about seeking happiness *per se*, it is about the whole complex business of life which can never be exclusively about happiness.

Philosophy as an alternative

It is only recently that scientists have begun to take over this field of study in a more objective and factual manner. Cognitive scientists now claim that human well being and happiness can be measured, cultivated and taught as a skill to those who are unhappy. Such claims are based on a materialistic worldview that considers human existence as something that can and should be controlled. It is not surprising that such a view can take hold, when academic philosophy has become increasingly enamoured of the scientific tradition and emphasizes its own analytic role. Over the past decades it has often narrowed its field of study to linguistic observations and scientific debate, detaching itself from its original mission of existential and human understanding. Of course there are still some philosophers who remain committed to the radical ethical and moral brief, but they are increasingly in the minority.

So, the task of understanding the vagaries of everyday reality has been up for grabs. And it is psychologists, therapists and counsellors who have become the applied philosophers of our age. It is they who have stepped into the breach of the vacuum of meaning. Since they deal with people's daily problems and preoccupations they have become cast in the role of spiritual and moral mentors, even without realizing it and even though they did not apply for the job. Invariably they do so without any training in philosophy and their moral guidance is not to everyone's taste and is often implicit in their work rather than explicitly stated. They work mainly with psychological theories and apply these to their clients' dilemmas without openly acknowledging that it is often moral, spiritual and philosophical problems that people are struggling with.

It is high time that therapists ask themselves how to take seriously their new role as existential guides. Where should they place themselves in this respect? Should they follow and even emulate the scientists and apply simple evidence-based cognitive and behavioural principles? Is therapy to become a scientific endeavour with the very clear objective of making human beings act and think in line with established facts and values? Is it right that it should aim for normality and adjustment and that it should eliminate sadness and pain and provide a shortcut to happiness?

Undoubtedly there is much to learn from the scientific input in this field. New understanding of brain and cognitive processes can help us get a clearer picture of what goes on in the mind. New social science and psychological research can guide our explorations and provide important insights into mental illness or social isolation that are directly relevant to therapy. We need to take all these new sources of knowledge into our stride. But none of these can prevent human misery or cure mental illness or eliminate the predictable difficulties of existence once and for all. The new cognitive science only touches the tip of an iceberg that philosophers, artists and therapists alike have respectfully circumnavigated since the beginning of time.

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Of course a hard scientific approach can provide a useful new angle on the old debates about how to help people. But it will be only one angle and it will leave a lot of human experience out and in the shadows of its hard glare. It seems somewhat ironic that an evidenced based scientific approach ignores the evidence of the reality of people's everyday lives. What price will people have to pay for focusing so much on living by the quantitative standards defining their well being? It seems peculiar that those who are scientifically minded have not noticed that in the great meta-analysis of life it has been shown over and over again that we can conjure up new ideas and new products, but that neither of these can guarantee a happier life or eliminate hardship, dissatisfaction or mortality.

All the evidence shows that every time we acquire a new commodity or a new advantage in life this comes at a price. Our appreciation of life goes up momentarily and briefly, but soon goes back to the same level as it was before. New possessions or gimmicks may enchant us but they do not guarantee happiness. In the longer term they may also have undesirable side-effects and noxious and harmful consequences. We have long known that money can not buy love, life, happiness or meaning; it can merely provide greater comfort and ease. It is a resource, a means to an end, but not a final answer. The same applies to science. It can enable our explorations of the universe, but it cannot alter the elemental course of nature or prevent the fundamental pain of human living and human dying. Even if for instance we achieved the elimination of senescence so that humans could survive for several centuries, this would only magnify the problem of dealing with a massively expanding world population, which would require us to introduce some other form of population control and selection. We may be able to make our difficulties more tolerable or learn to work with them in new ways, but we can not remove them all together. They are part and parcel of our existence and though we may alter them we will continue to falter and fail in getting rid of them completely.

There is a real irony in all that. In the mid twentieth century we were predicted a technological future of long happy and idle lives as it was believed that by the beginning of the twenty first century our work would be performed by machines and we would need to expand our capacity for leisure with earlier and earlier retirements and shorter working weeks. The reality as we know it now is rather different. The greater the feats of our technological society, the more we rush around to try and keep up the pace of our ever expanding lives in a faster and more demanding global village. The greater our productivity, and the more we have to work to keep quenching our thirst for new gadgets. We cannot stop running on the big treadmill, lest we lose our momentum and fall off the edge of the world. People's lives have become more and more busy and stressful. We seem increasingly taken over by work and worry. We are less securely based in our communities and families, for we are more mobile and more independent. In consequence our personal values are often determined by necessity or by default. They are also increasingly regulated by socio-cultural

and media images of what it is to live a good life. But it doesn't satisfy us and it doesn't feel right. More and more of us are realizing that it is time to look again, weigh up the past and take stock of the present and find a new and better direction before it is too late. We know that we have to take charge of our future and build a better world, somehow. But we feel daunted by the prospect of what this involves and we cannot do it on our own. In the middle of our great successes we feel like a failure, for we have become isolated, alienated from ourselves, our ideals, each other and from life itself.

Making sense of life

We know we need to establish a new collaboration, for we are all bound together and ahead of us is the Gargantuan task of making sense of life again, creating a new code for human living that can satisfy us more than the superficial values we seem to have settled for in the interim. The question is whether we want to slump into the moral vacuum or make this effort. And if the latter, how should we go about it?

If we want to keep pace with human progress we cannot simply return to the make believe of the old religions, though some will continue to do so with fanaticism and wishful thinking. The old religions are outdated and out of synch with the world we have created. They need to be reviewed if they are to be credible. For starters we cannot afford religions that go against the facts science has brought us. We cannot be asked to believe things that are an insult to our intelligence. We can not go backwards. Scientific rationalism alone may not be a satisfactory option, but irrationality is not a viable alternative. The world religions are limited by the fact that they are by definition sectarian and necessarily dogmatic (Dawkins, 2006). They take position. Each holds on to a superior claim to divine truth, which makes them contradictory with each other and unfortunately often intolerant of alternative views. The last thing we need is to increase this competition for religious dominance, which is so conducive to warfare and lack of tolerance. Yet we cannot just discard our religions as Dawkins would have us do. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism and other religions all have good and interesting ideas, beliefs, principles and practices on offer and many people continue to value these traditions. Human beings have a deep need to belong, not just with each other but also to something beyond themselves. They will always reach for the stars and for metaphysical principles that hold them safely together. Science has not yet provided us with a connectivity that sounds true and inspires confidence.

Therefore those who abandon religion and call themselves atheists often fall back into the realm of spirituality by the back door of superstition, for they no longer have satisfactory explanations for the things that matter to them. We

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have not yet arrived at a scientific theory that provides a satisfactory alternative to religious practice and belief, though some scientists do espouse science as a kind of minimalist religion. Science is not a viable substitute for our transcendental cravings, even though it requires a similarly religious commitment and devotion to a particular worldview (McGrath and McGrath, 2007). One of the problems is that the scientific view is an intellectual and rational one and does not address deeper layers of existence. Science also lacks a satisfactory meta-theory and gets easily caught up in specialist explanations that are then generalized in a rather cavalier way that defies the imagination. Individual scientific disciplines certainly have strong claims to elements of factual truth and provide the building blocks from which philosophers of science can speculate about the earth and the material universe. Philosophers of mind similarly generate theories out of the building blocks of cognitive science. But this kind of theorizing remains specialized and abstract and rarely attempts to relate to experiential and existential factors. It bears little relation to people's personal experience of their emotions or their interests in art and religion. Such theories curiously fail to address our need for meaning, myth and morality (Midgley, 2004). When thinking about the big questions we seem to exclude the big question of why human beings are capable of consciousness and why we crave purpose, understanding and transcendence. These issues, with a few notable exceptions, are rarely addressed head on by physicists, biologists and cosmologists (Davies, 2007; Dennett, 2003; Martin, 2006).

Science provides us with an intellectual discipline, but it does not really satisfy our spiritual and moral aspirations. For science to come up with a truly credible theory of everything it would have to take our feelings and longings for meaning into account as well as our struggles with the big issues of existence such as time and death and our experience of suffering. It would also have to consider our need for community, belonging, love and intimacy rather than speaking in terms of competition and survival of the fittest. It will also have to account for our deeply engrained sense of purpose in life.

But as this is not happening it is not really surprising that so many of us are dabbling in alternative forms of spirituality during these times of confusion and loss of faith. We thirst for mystery and we crave the sacred so much that we grasp at straws. We need something to believe in and we do not know where to find it. The ecological path seems to satisfy our urge for meaning to some extent and going green can easily become a quasi religious commitment, but it is at the end of the day a material préoccupation with the earth and does not satisfy our more personal aspirations for a wider meaning. Meanwhile the old esoteric pursuits of astrology, divination and mysticism of all sorts have never been so popular. It is tempting to go for these quick solutions that promise spectacular results and sure-footed guidance in our everyday quandaries. How desperate we are to find respite from the tawdriness of our desacralized existence. In the long run though, such superficial options do not satisfy our need for deeper understanding and may well leave us more lost

and confused. We are only too aware of their ephemeral nature and the superstition they involve us in. We cannot simply turn our backs on our own progress and hide in the explanations of a generation that lived in other times, in other circumstances and on other continents. We may have lost the divine, but divination is no substitute.

If we want more reality and more understanding we cannot stick our heads in the sand and remain stranded in a world devoid of scientific knowledge. We cannot just pretend we don't know what we know. There can be no easy or magical solutions anymore, much as we would like to think there are. We have to think things through carefully. We have to stick to what makes sense; we have to be able to account for ourselves. Our values and beliefs cannot be random or passive or we go right back to the dark ages where people were ruled by fear and make believe. In order to avoid this fate (which some people seem to flirt with recklessly), our thinking has to be sound and our ideas have to be tested and tried over and over again. We have to pursue our own quest for truth and right living and cannot start from the assumption that human happiness is the only goal and the Holy Grail. We cannot afford to pursue the objective of maximum pleasure with the naivety of children who want to dine, live and sleep in the sweetshop and be happy ever after. If we do try to take a short cut to salvation, we are certain to go down the wrong path. Addictions of all sorts are rife and illustrate this point emphatically. There are no short cuts that work. We have to take the long laborious way instead and be responsible for our actions, thoughts and ways of life.

Asking new questions

The question we then need to start by asking ourselves is: where do we want to get to? What is our goal and destination in life? What is our task in human existence if it is not to simply obey a god? Is it simply to procreate or to favour the evolutionary principles? Is it to be as happy as possible? Or is there more to it? When people come to therapy they often indicate that all they really want is the achievement of happiness in their lives. Should we consider happiness to be a desirable goal for life and therefore for therapy as well? Or is there a better path to follow? This book will ask all those questions and seek to answer them in many different ways. These are fundamental issues for psychotherapists and counsellors. Is happiness possible? Should we actively pursue it? And if so, what role, if any, do the professions of counselling and psychotherapy have to play in this respect? Are these professions designed to enhance people's well being? Is their mission mainly to overcome symptoms of depression and anxiety? Should they try to eliminate unhappiness at all costs? Or should they make people think about their lives and how they live without focusing exclusively on the objective of happiness or even without trying to eliminate their ordinary human misery? Clearly counselling has come

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a long way from its beginnings in pastoral and educational guidance and advice. It has become medicalized and professionally organized and after a period of rampant growth it is now being cut back sharply by evidence-based practice standards. But are we satisfied with the kind of evidence this new regulation is based upon? Do we want counselling and therapy to be reframed as a method of improving mental health and emotional well being? Do we want it to be a brief intervention that targets happiness? Or has the world gone mad and are we losing touch with our understanding of the complexity of the human condition? Traditionally counsellors and therapists never saw themselves as the providers of bliss and they have usually vigorously denied that their function was to make people happy. Why should we forget that now?

We need to settle this matter once and for all. What is the role that therapy and counselling play in relation to human well being and happiness? To answer that question we will need to address a number of other questions first. What is happiness? Do we all have different notions of happiness? Is happiness ever a suitable goal for psychotherapy? Is therapy a cure for lack of happiness or merely a temporary cover up for it? Is unhappiness an illness? Are people meant to be happy and should therapy follow in the footsteps of the positive psychologists? We will seek answers to all these questions but we will also consider whether the opposite may be true and whether unhappiness may be an essential part of every human life and perhaps even a good part, in the same way in which labour and pain play a central part in living. Should we just get better at tolerating unhappiness or should we perhaps find ways of perfecting our capacity for misery and deal with unhappiness more effectively? Should therapists teach people how to be happy or how to be unhappy or maybe both? Or should they be neutral about these matters and merely allow people to come to their own conclusions? Therapists of different persuasions have different views about the objectives of their profession. Their clients however rarely know this. It seems important therefore to clarify this basic issue what is the therapist's role in the human quest for happiness?

The function of the book

This book will propose a philosophical exploration of what therapy and counselling can offer clients who seek to understand their own life better. It will consider why it is that therapists so easily fall into the trap of aiming to make people more happy even when they believe that this should not be the case. It will investigate the possibility that therapeutic culture is not really anything new and that for many millennia human beings have sought to improve their situation not just by finding out how to control nature, or create beautiful things, but also by understanding themselves and each other better and most importantly by trying to understand what it means to live a good human life.

This is what is usually referred to as the search for wisdom and those who practised the art of wisdom were called philosophers not therapists.

So we shall consider whether philosophy has a part to play in redefining psychotherapy and whether doing so helps or hinders the quest for happiness. These are important and timely questions to address as governments jump on the bandwagon of brief evidence-based therapeutic interventions and positive psychology. Before we all forget what psychotherapy and counselling are about in the first place let us remember the well established human evidence that existential misery persists regardless of our attempts at getting rid of unhappiness. There is nothing sure and simple about trying to make someone happier. Do we really want mechanical and manualized forms of therapy to instruct people in how to live? This smacks of a prescriptive approach which takes us into a dogmatic direction. There are resonances of Huxley's *Brave New World* in there. The solution is not social engineering either by widespread popping of happiness pills or powders, be they anti-depressants, tranquillizers, amphetamines, cocaine, heroin, marihuana or alcohol. Nor is the only solution to be taught how to keep one's mind under control by cognitive means.

As our scientific knowledge expands it is high time that a new wisdom is reintroduced into the equation of human living. And therapists now have a central role to play in this. At the moment they seem to fall into two camps. There are those who are opting to go along with the cognitive revolution, either because they believe in it or in the hope they can make it work and that perhaps, whilst no one is watching they can smuggle some messy humanity back into the therapeutic process anyway. They rightly argue that doing something is better than doing nothing and that the evidence-based brief interventions at least have the merit of being democratic and funded. And there are others who are staunchly fighting to maintain the old status quo of longer term dynamic or humanistic therapies, based on insight or catharsis. This book will promote a third option, which is to move beyond both these ways of approaching the predicament and rethink therapy in a more radical fashion. After a century of therapy most therapists accept that they can learn from all the different approaches and methods and that some amount of integration is a good thing. But most of us are also aware that we have to be disciplined in our understanding and evaluation of what we are trying to achieve when doing so. We just need to take that reflection to a higher level and link it with a reflection on life itself.

The purpose of the book

This book sets out to enable such reflection. It does not propose any particular therapeutic methods, skills or technique. It proposes philosophical clarity and logical thinking instead. It appeals to mental health professionals and therapists and counsellors of all orientations to dare to stop and think again, not just with

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clients, professionally, but also in our own lives and in a personal capacity. This book sets out a path for those who are interested in the evolution of therapy in a radical and more philosophical direction. It neither condones nor sets itself against the CBT revolution. It neither favours the old psychodynamic or humanistic approaches, nor rejects them. It simply proposes that we learn from all these therapies and integrate their understanding of the human condition by taking the widest possible perspective. It sets out to reunite therapy with its own horizon. That is the horizon of human existence and the purpose of being a person. A disciplined therapeutic integration requires philosophical clarity and that is precisely what we will set out to achieve.

So, if you have been wondering how to live your life more fully and more truly and help your clients to do the same, this book is for you. It will get you thinking about the old issues in a new way, though it will not provide any easy answers. It will lead you right back to your human roots and from there to your personal and professional aspirations and your desire to recalibrate your life and your work on a more solid and robust, more real foundation. It will start by looking in Chapter 1 at the role of beliefs and values in psychotherapy and how human beings arrive at their beliefs. Then in Chapter 2 it will consider what the quest for happiness is actually about and what it means to live a good life. This will take us to a survey of positive psychology and its insistence on happiness and subjective well being in Chapter 3. This will lead us to revisit the predictable human difficulties that get in the way of a blissful existence in Chapter 4 and in Chapter 5 the unpredictable crises that make things even harder. From there, in Chapter 6 we shall put happiness back in context with other emotions and states of mind, whilst considering the therapeutic communication that is needed to work with such, often unspoken, emotions. Chapter 7 will consider what life is about if happiness is not enough. Throughout the book we will challenge the role and current status of the psychotherapy profession. Throughout the book the idea of happiness is dealt with as a potential goal, whilst it is being contrasted and compared with other objectives, such as that of well being, meaning, understanding, purpose or transcendence. After all our explorations we may discover that we return full circle to the values we started out with but had forgotten. But this time we should have some solid ground under our feet, since we will have gone round the houses before settling down. We can already put forward the hypothesis that after all our thinking and debating we will be no further ahead in finding happiness. For, it would be surprising if a few pages of writing and some reflections afford us what so many lives have not been able to obtain: a secure base of bliss. But we may discover why happiness is and will remain elusive and why in spite of all our new knowledge, insight and technology, there is still no magic fix for life. The path we are on then is not one that will lead us to a happy life somewhere over a sunrise horizon, but rather one that will allow us to get a sense of the map of human living, enabling us to find our own direction towards a right way to live.