

Franklin, Samuel S. (2010). *The Psychology of Happiness: A Good Human Life*. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.
<http://www.cambridge.org/>

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According to its publisher, this book is the first work to synthesize psychological, philosophical, and physiological research and theory in support of Aristotle's concept of happiness, or *eudaimonia*. The book's author is Professor Emeritus of Psychology at California State University, Fresno, and Professor Franklin's life's work has focused on the psychology of happiness, especially as it relates to the development of virtue and human potential.

The book is divided into seventeen chapters and begins with an examination of "What is happiness?" and some of the alternative meanings of happiness. From Franklin's point of view, happiness is not simply pleasure, nor is it necessarily related to the accumulation of wealth. Rather, happiness according to the author "is a way of living that enables us to fulfill potentials and move toward a good human life" (p. 12).

After reviewing the theories of Maslow, Rogers, and Erickson and their concepts of fulfillment (or self-realization or actualization), Franklin argues that much of humanistic psychology is based on Aristotle's idea of actualization, and that Aristotle was the originator of the notion of happiness as fulfillment. In fact, according to Franklin, his book was actually inspired by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. It should be noted that for the Classical Greeks, ethics meant

something very different than it does today. According to Franklin, for the ancient Greeks, ethics was concerned with the problem of how to live a good human life, and far less concerned with rules of conduct that governed social behavior or professions.

The Psychology of Happiness is highly recommended for those readers interested in making connections between Aristotle and the evolution of modern psychological theories, and for those individuals wanting a better understanding of Aristotle's notions of moral virtues essential to happiness. The author clearly has a passion for and a deep understanding of Aristotelian thought and he elaborates the complexities of Aristotle's concepts and ideas in an engaging, logical, and fairly understandable way by using examples from everyday life.

Professionals in the fields of social work and ethics will appreciate the thoroughness to which the relevant philosophic and scientific literature is reviewed. Readers too who are interested in moral philosophy, the history of psychology, and psychological views of virtue development will find this work very useful and fascinating to read.

Despite its title, this book is not intended for the general public who will likely find this volume difficult to read. And for those readers who are looking for

a readily accessible practical guide to happiness, this book may not be for them, either. Having an understanding of Aristotle's notion of moral values, and his premise that virtue is a means of self-fulfillment and a prerequisite for happiness, may or may not contribute to individual happiness if one does not have an understanding and knowledge of concrete practices for creating happiness in one's life. Although Franklin has an excellent grasp of Aristotle and his

philosophy, this book offers little in the way of actual practices and exercises for cultivating happiness in one's personal or professional life.

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