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# Positive PSYCHOLOGY

The Science of Happiness and Flourishing



William C. Compton • Edward Hoffman



# **Positive Psychology**

**Third Edition**

*To Barbara, friend and companion for over 38 years. To you, for more reasons than I can say.*  
(W.C.)

*To Elaine, who has quietly taught me about flourishing.*  
(E.H.)

# Positive Psychology

The Science of Happiness  
and Flourishing

**Third Edition**

**William C. Compton**

*Middle Tennessee State University*

**Edward Hoffman**

*Yeshiva University*



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Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne



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SAGE Publications, Inc.  
2455 Teller Road  
Thousand Oaks, California 91320  
E-mail: [order@sagepub.com](mailto:order@sagepub.com)

SAGE Publications Ltd.  
1 Oliver's Yard  
55 City Road  
London, EC1Y 1SP  
United Kingdom

SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.  
B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area  
Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044  
India

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte. Ltd.  
18 Cross Street #10-10/11/12  
China Square Central  
Singapore 048423

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Printed in the United States of America

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Compton, William C., author. | Hoffman, Edward, author. | Compton, William C. Introduction to positive psychology.

Title: Positive psychology : the science of happiness and flourishing/William C. Compton, Middle Tennessee State University, Edward Hoffman, Yeshiva University.

Description: Third Edition. | Thousand Oaks : SAGE Publications, [2018] | Revised edition of the authors' Positive psychology, 2012. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018033572 | ISBN 9781544322926 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Positive psychology.

Classification: LCC BF204.6 .C66 2018 | DDC 150.19/88—dc23 LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018033572>

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

19 20 21 22 23 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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# PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

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Around the world today, the field of positive psychology is booming. Since being launched nearly 20 years ago, it has gained thousands of professional adherents in diverse countries, inspired countless college students, and achieved widespread media attention. Initially dubbed rather simplistically as *the science of happiness*, positive psychology is increasingly recognized as both more encompassing—and more important—than merely helping people put a daily grin on their faces. For example, topics such as empathy, flow, gratitude, humor, resilience, positive families, zestful work, and wellness have all gained increased interest. Even newer topics such as the role of social contagion in the spread of happiness, moral elation (the uplift we feel in witnessing an act of goodness), and the importance of mindfulness to well-being are creating fresh concepts and possible interventions.

When the first edition of this book, written solely by Dr. William Compton, was released by Cengage in 2004, positive psychology had been rapidly gaining momentum since its initial launch in 1998. Due to the tremendous growth of the field over the next few years, a second edition was clearly necessary, and our collaborative work was published by Cengage in 2013. Reflecting the continuing international surge of positive psychology, we were recently invited by editorial staff at SAGE Publications to create a third edition; the task has been most enjoyable. We have not only expanded many sections of the second edition to encompass the newest research but added many new sections representing the rapid progress of positive psychology.

We both have been active in our field for more than 30 years, as both educators and researchers. Our interest in optimal well-being goes back even further than our professional careers. We are convinced that positive psychology is among the most exciting scientific developments of today, for science is about understanding not only the mechanistic aspects of the universe but human emotions, hopes, aspirations, skills, talents, and creative impulses as well. The more precise and articulate psychologists can be in delineating these aspects of personal and social life, the greater the likelihood of creating a more harmonious and peaceful world.

For the third edition, it will be quite obvious that all chapters of the book have been rewritten to reflect the newest research. Therefore, the following list of changes for each chapter reflects the addition of new material and changes to the organization of material found in the second edition that go beyond the mere updating of studies.

**Chapter 1:** New material was added on the continuing popularity of positive psychology and the spread of positive psychology around the world.

**Chapter 2:** We expanded material on (a) the biology of positive emotions, (b) character strengths, (c) Zimbardo's time perspective, (d) emotional intelligence, and (e) updates on Fredrickson's positivity ratio. The "Multidimensional Models of Well-Being" section has been simplified to reflect the core theoretical perspectives found in positive psychology research.

**Chapter 3:** The “Cautionary Tales” section was expanded to reflect the growing recognition that negative emotions are a necessary part of a full and rich life. Much of this material was transferred from the section on negative emotions in Chapter 12. Most of the section on age and well-being was moved to Chapter 8, so that all research on this topic could be in the same chapter. An expanded section on SWB (subjective well-being) and all types of discrimination was added. A separate section on SWB and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) issues was added.

**Chapter 4:** We expanded material on flow that includes the “dark side” of flow and a more nuanced view of the original formulation. The section on mindfulness was expanded. Some of the material on mindfulness was transferred from Chapter 6 on positive health.

**Chapter 5:** We expanded the section on romantic love, what induces it, and what sustains it. A new section has been added on Barbara Fredrickson’s theory of love 2.0.

**Chapter 6:** We expanded the section on nature and SWB (i.e., “Restorative Nature Experiences”). The discussion of mindfulness was condensed so that it now examines only research on mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and health (see the note for Chapter 4).

**Chapter 7:** We expanded coverage of the following: passion, grit, and how music is related to SWB.

**Chapter 8:** We added new material on Erikson’s psychosocial theory of ego development and the Harvard Study of Adult Development, as well as expanded sections of flourishing in adolescence, midlife, and old age.

**Chapter 9:** We added new sections on both Paul Wong’s existential positive psychology theory and purpose in life (both sections were transferred and revised from Chapter 12), as well as a new section on Jack Bauer’s theory of the “quiet ego.” The section on Maslow’s model of self-actualization was expanded.

**Chapter 10:** We expanded sections on gratitude and meaning in life (some of this material was transferred from Chapter 12). We made changes to the section on “Mindfulness Meditation” in order to reflect a more general discussion of meditation in contemplative traditions, although the section still discusses mindfulness.

**Chapter 11:** We expanded material in the section on “Careers that Use Positive Psychology.” We also added new sections titled “Social Entrepreneurs” and “Academic Programs in Positive Psychology.” We expanded coverage of the following sections: “Flourishing Communities” and “Cross-Cultural Subjective Well-Being.”

**Chapter 12:** We added a new “Qualitative Research” section. New material was added to the “Systems Theory” section (e.g., biopsychosocial model, family systems). This material includes the section on Jules Seeman’s theory that was transferred from Chapter 9, so that all the material on systems theory could be in the same chapter. We also expanded material on how findings from cross-cultural psychology may impact the positive psychology of the future.

## ANCILLARIES

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***Positive Psychology: A Workbook for Personal Growth and Well-Being*** is a new companion workbook designed to accompany this textbook. The workbook aligns active learning and critical thinking applications with the 12 chapters, and it offers hands-on materials centered on personal growth, well-being, and mindfulness.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We would like to thank the researchers who generously shared their photographs and assessment scales with us for this edition. We also thank Dr. David G. Myers for allowing us to use tables and graphs that appear in the book. In addition, we thank Kathleen Olson for her work as photo researcher for the book. Appreciation is extended to several students who helped with various research tasks for the third edition: John Holloway, Talia Korn, Jonathan Mintz, and Mai Tanjitpiyanond. Thank you to David Compton for his proofreading of the book. Thanks are also extended to Richard Tillman and George Oeser for Figure 2.1. We would also like to extend our deep appreciation to the students who have taken our courses in positive psychology over the years. We thank them for their interest, questions, and enthusiasm for a positive approach to psychology.

Finally, for their help and careful attention to the quality of this book, we are grateful to Lara Parra, Emma Newsom, Leah Sorini, and Laureen Gleason at SAGE Publications and to the many others who worked on the production of this book.

SAGE gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following reviewers:

Robin Belamaric, *The George Washington University*

John Gasparini, *University of Baltimore*

Julie Kuchnel, *California Lutheran University*

Caitlin O. Mahoney, *Metropolitan State University*

Rebecca E. Shepherd, *College of the Canyons*

Elizabeth Stroot, *Lakeland University*

Marie Thomas, *California State University, San Marcos*

Barbara Walker, *University of Cincinnati*



# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Source: Courtesy of William C. Compton.



**William C. Compton** has been passionate about well-being for over 50 years. In 1966, he began his life-long investigations into optimal well-being in a somewhat unusual place for a future psychologist—as a Far Eastern Studies major at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He later sought a more pragmatic approach to the study of well-being through the study of psychology. He received his doctorate in clinical psychology from George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University in 1987. He joined the psychology faculty at Middle Tennessee State University in 1989 and also maintained a private practice in psychotherapy. In 1992, Compton

created a course on the psychology of well-being, at that time one of the only courses of its kind offered in colleges and universities around the world. Six years later, Martin E. P. Seligman and others placed much of the same material offered in this course under a new research heading called positive psychology. Throughout his career, Compton's research has focused on positive mental health, optimal well-being, and meditation. His research has appeared in many journal publications and conference presentations. Compton is also the author of *Eastern Psychology: Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism* (2012). Compton is now professor emeritus at Middle Tennessee State University. He has studied Zen Buddhist meditation and tai chi chuan for many years. Outside of these pursuits, he plays music, enjoys gardening, and makes time for “forest bathing.”

Source: Courtesy of Edward Hoffman.



**Edward Hoffman** is a leading scholar in humanistic psychology and has been writing and lecturing on topics relating to well-being, higher motivation, and spirituality for more than 30 years. He is an adjunct associate psychology professor at Yeshiva University in New York City, where he created its popular course on positive psychology. For more than 30 years, he has also maintained a private practice as a licensed clinical psychologist. He is the author of more than 15 books in psychology and related fields, including award-winning biographies of Alfred Adler and Abraham Maslow and an anthology of Maslow's unpublished papers titled

*Future Visions* (Sage). Dr. Hoffman has also written several books relating Jewish thought to contemporary interests in psychology. These include *The Way of Splendor*, *The Wisdom of Maimonides*, and *The Kabbalah Reader*. A senior editor of the *Journal of Humanistic*



*Psychology*, Dr. Hoffman received his degrees from Cornell University and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He lectures widely throughout the United States and abroad, and in 2009, he served as a visiting scholar at the University of Tokyo. Dr. Hoffman lives in New York City with his wife and their two children. His hobbies include travel, swimming, and playing the flute.