Since we wrote this book, the need for it has become steadily more apparent. More and more policy makers now believe that the aim of policy should be to improve the well-being of the people. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which first published the internationally comparable measures of GDP, advocates in its June 2016 meeting report, Strategic Orientations of the Secretary-General: For 2016 and Beyond (https://www.oecd.org/mcm/documents/strategic-orientations-of-the-secretary-general-2016.pdf), that we should “put people’s well-being at the centre of governments’ efforts.” And in October 2019, the OECD will hold a major conference of governments interested in making subjective well-being an operational target of their policies.

Meantime, New Zealand has already become the first industrial country to make well-being its objective and to launch a well-being budget. Other countries are moving in that direction. In France and Sweden, budget measures are now analyzed to show their effects on subjective well-being. And in Britain, the new version of the Treasury’s manual for policy evaluation has been rewritten to make “social well-being” the objective of public policy and to encourage the use of direct measures of well-being along with the traditional measures based on willingness-to-pay.

All of this is part of a new worldwide movement of opinion. For some years, the United Nations has hosted the annual
launch of the World Happiness Report. But there is also now a Global Happiness Council, which produces each year a Global Happiness and Wellbeing Policy Report to promote the use of subjective well-being in policy making around the world. In addition, the World Happiness Summit runs not only a vibrant annual conference in Miami but also a day-long meeting of governments (mainly from Africa) called H20, promoting happiness as the goal of policy.

None of this can hope to succeed without a solid knowledge base, nor without a workforce of analysts able to deploy the knowledge. We like to think that this book provides an initial body of knowledge and a suitable handbook for the expanding army of analysts who will be needed to bring about this happiness revolution.

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THE ORIGINS OF HAPPINESS
"I can’t wait to grow up and be happy."