



# **Finding True Happiness: Satisfying Our Restless Hearts: Volume One of the Quartet: Happiness, Suffering, and Transcendence: 1**

*Robert J. Spitzer*

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One of the hottest topics in contemporary culture is happiness—so much so that the United Nations declared an International Happiness Day in response to the immense popularity of Pharrell Williams’ song “Happy”. The explanation for this current fixation seems to lie in the contrary phenomenon—unhappiness. Despite the fact that we have tremendous access to every imaginable form of entertainment, we experience a pervading sense of insecurity, emptiness, and malaise amid sporadic peak experiences.

The problem seems to lie less in the external environment than in the internal one. We seem, in the words of Viktor Frankl, to be suffering from an absence of meaning that pervades both individuals and societies, giving rise to a collective emptiness, loneliness, and alienation.

*Finding True Happiness* attempts to provide a way out of this personal and cultural vacuum by helping people to identify and then reach for happiness. As Aristotle noted 2,400 years ago, happiness is the one thing we can choose for its own sake—everything else is chosen for the sake of happiness.

After an exhaustive investigation of philosophical, psychological, and theological systems of happiness, author Fr. Spitzer developed the “Four Levels of Happiness”, which he based on the classical thinkers Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas; the contemporary philosophers Marcel, Scheler, Buber, Ricoeur, and Jaspers; and the modern psychologists Maslow, Frankl, Erikson, Seligman, Kohlberg and Gilligan.

*Finding True Happiness* is both a philosophical itinerary and a practical guidebook for life’s most important journey—from the mundane and the meaningless to transcendent fulfillment. No other book currently available combines such breadth of practical advice and such depth of philosophical, psychological, and spiritual wisdom.

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