Part 1
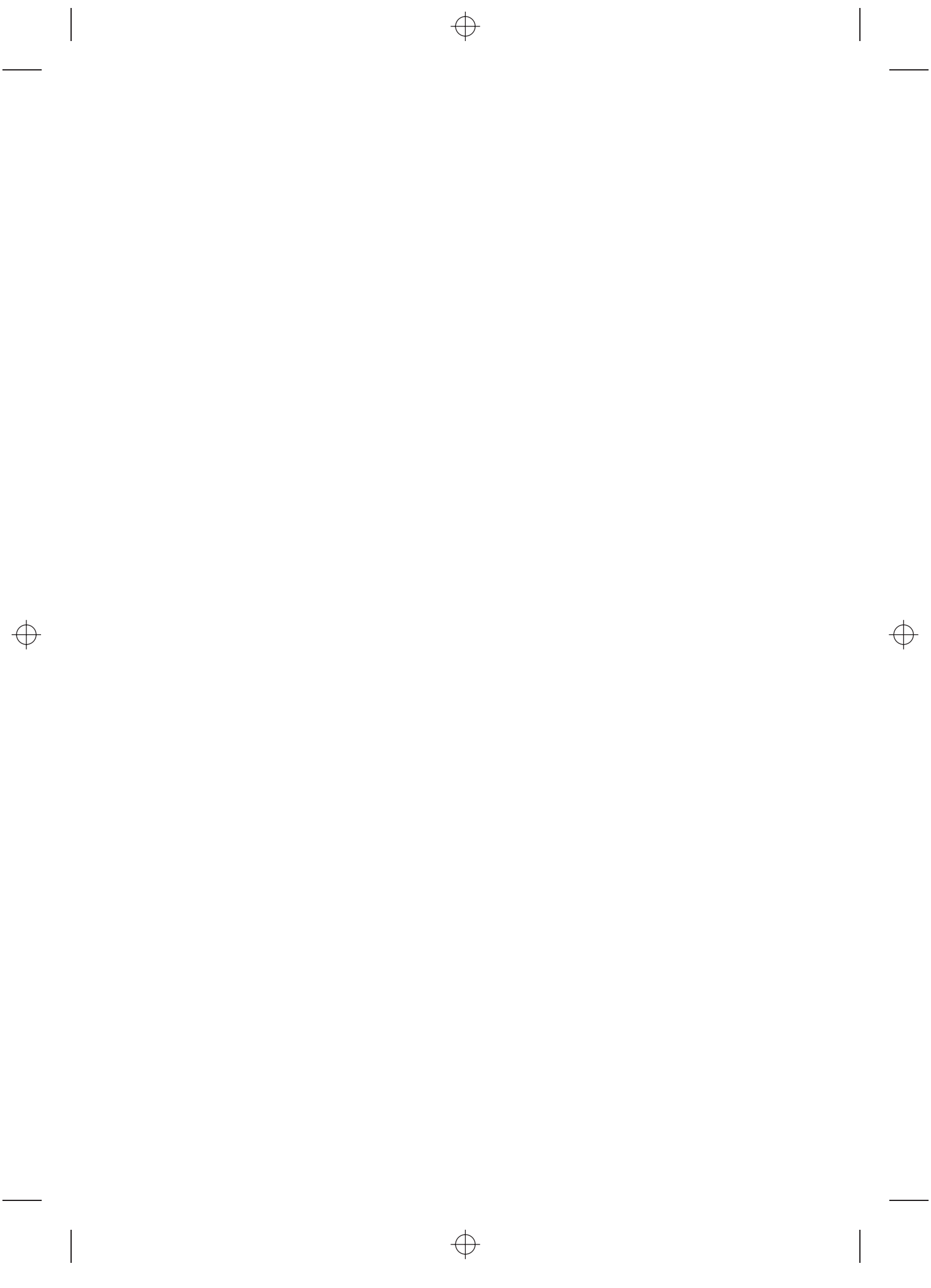# Introduction

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Introduction

From Stress to Happiness

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Prior to the collapse of the dot-com bubble in the United States, a company the first author worked for had a bigger plan to grow. In a fall afternoon of 1999, one of his colleagues, called John, sent a message to say that he would be late for an appointment because of a meeting request from the VP. After he came back from the meeting, John revealed that his position had just been terminated after more than 20 years of service. Understandably, his disbelief, anger, and worry were evident—and about 30 minutes later he experienced a bad stomachache (Chen, 2007).

Occupational stressors and job strains experienced by workers, such as what John went through, are not foreign to us. We have witnessed workers who have suffered from depression and humiliation while being abused or harassed (Barling, Dupre, & Kelloway, 2009; Leiter, Laschinger, Day, & Gilin-Oore, 2011), some who have lost their lives at work (Gittleman et al., 2010) or who have developed cardiovascular illness in demanding jobs without much personal control (De Lange, Taris, Kompier, Houtman, & Bongers, 2003).

The grim reality we face today, as described above, is not new, and the focus on workers' wellbeing has not improved significantly in recent decades (Ilgen, 1990). Wellbeing at work has been a major concern since the turn

of the last century. Hugo Münsterberg, 1898 President of the American Psychological Association, researched accident prevention and safety promotion and published his work in *Psychology and industrial efficiency* (1913). The author of the first textbook on the subject of industrial and organizational psychology (Viteles, 1932) spent almost half of the book covering topics such as industrial accidents, fatigue, and safety. Ilgen (1990) voiced a similar concern, and reminded organizational researchers that occupational health is a timeless concern for humanitarian and utilitarian reasons, as well as obvious economic reasons.

There are numerous job stressors at work, with different levels of severity and frequency. Some of them are inherent in the job, and some of them may not easily be eliminated or isolated. Although we are not immune from exposure to these psychosocial hazards, there are venues for governments, societies, organizations, management, as well as individual workers to build and sustain healthy workplaces in which workers utilize their talents to achieve high performance as well as pursue happiness (Quick, 1999).

Over the past decade, positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) has stimulated our thinking to consider taking a balanced approach in job stress research and practice. There is considerable evidence suggesting the benefit of focusing on positive aspects of work contexts and activities, and beliefs and attitudes to build a healthy workplace, as well as to improve workers' wellbeing. Following the World Health Organization's (1948) definition of health, we believe that a lack of negative aspects in a workplace does not constitute a sufficient condition of having a happy and healthy workplace. To follow this line of thinking, we have planned this volume by inviting world-renowned scholars and rising stars to explore ways of addressing workplace stress from the perspectives of positive psychology.

In Chapter 2, Fisher provides an in-depth and thorough review of a family of wellbeing constructs and operationalizations, and recommends ways of reaching a consensus of defining and conceptualizing wellbeing at work. Then, in Chapter 3, Bakker and Demerouti present a refined job demands–resources theory that integrates past job design and job stress theories. This refined theory undoubtedly advances research in job demand and resources, and clearly offers actionable approaches to reduce job demands and increase job and personal resources.

In Chapter 4, Dewe leads us to consider how the positive psychology movement affects research in work-related coping, and how coping through positive emotion and appraisals leads to success and positive

outcomes. Eatough and Spector (Chapter 5) articulate how job control contributes to positive health and wellbeing by providing an insightful synthesis pertaining to the nature of job control from both subjective and objective perspectives.

Hosie and ElRakhawy (Chapter 6) and Simmons (Chapter 7) explore characteristics of happy workers and happy organizations, respectively. They also review the factors that facilitate being happy workers and organizations, and provide convincing arguments why these characteristics would provide competitive advantages for organizations to succeed and be sustainable in the current fast-moving environment.

In the next two chapters, attention is turned to the role of person characters and experience to counter work stress, and pathways of pursuing happiness. Wright and Lauer (Chapter 8) eloquently articulate how characters are conceptualized, what are important characters in different work occupations, and how characters serve the foundation of wellbeing at work. In Chapter 9, Quick, Bennett, and Hargrove offer insights into how one can build strong leadership and promote a healthy workplace via five positive pathways: strength of character, self-awareness, socialized power motivation, requisite self-reliance, and diverse professional supports.

The focus of the next eight chapters is on organizational strategies that promote wellbeing at work. Cox, MacLennan, and N'Dow (Chapter 10) present a very timely topic faced in workplaces that has not been adequately addressed in the management and applied psychology literature. They introduce approaches that organizations can use to assist workers with cancer to maintain quality of working life and wellbeing. Simple things to most people's minds, such as toilet facilities and access, could make huge differences in improving workers' wellbeing at work. Robertson and Barling (Chapter 11) review the leadership literature and discuss the distinctions between poor and positive leadership, and how positive leadership behaviors can enhance workers' wellbeing. Tinline and Smeed (Chapter 12) suggest practical strategies at both organizational and individual level that can not only assist workers to cope with job stressors, but also increase workers' wellbeing and health, motivation, as well as productivity. Hanrahan and Leiter (Chapter 13) provide a review about workplace incivility, which is considered to be a common psychosocial hazard routinely faced by workers around the globe. They summarize recent theoretical developments, and suggest ways of reducing incivility based on their recent work on incivility intervention.

Kossek, Valcour, and Lirio (Chapter 14) discuss the connections among sustainable workforce, work–life balance, and wellbeing, and propose three human resources strategies to develop sustainable workforces by strengthening work–life balance and wellbeing. In Chapter 15, Kath and Magley review the literature of sexual harassment awareness training, which has been understudied in the sexual harassment literature. They further propose a comprehensive sexual harassment awareness training model that captures key factors to be considered by organizations, including design issues, individual factors such as attitude and motivation, organizational factors such as workgroups' cynicism about organizational change and training transfer climate, as well as proximal and distal training outcomes. Francis, Cameron, Kelloway, Catano, Day, and Hepburn (Chapter 16) bring our attention to challenges faced by injured workers after they return to work. Adverse consequences of stigmatization on injured workers after they return to work have profound impacts on workers, organizations, and societies. The authors provide insightful recommendations to organizations about how management can alleviate and counter the stressful stigmatization faced by injured workers. Winefield in Chapter 17 documents the rising stress experienced by academic staff members over the past three decades. He provides ways of reducing stress and improving wellbeing based on his research in Australian tertiary institutions.

To improve wellbeing in the workplace with sound evidence cannot be achieved without adequate methodology. Brusso, Cigularov, and Callan (Chapter 18) discuss and recommend approaches of investigating causal processes of occupational stress and wellbeing. Finally, to reflect and extend Fisher's essay in Chapter 2 of this volume, Allin (Chapter 19) highlights the role of governments in promoting the happiness of citizens, sharing with us his unique insight into the U.K. Government's policy and measurement program of wellbeing. He points out that knowing the level of national wellbeing and its impacts not only informs policy makers about what really matters to the citizens they work for, but also offers directions and actions to address barriers to improved wellbeing.

In contrast to focusing on the dark side of job stress in past stress research, this volume provides an array of essays that outline how governments, organizations, as well as individual workers are striving for wellbeing and happiness, as well as building and sustaining healthy workplaces by taking positive and proactive approaches with solid evidence. It is our belief that absence of job stress is not sufficient for pursuing wellbeing and happiness.

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