

## SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOK

Life events often lead to unhappiness simply because we interpret them through limited mental processes. However, while we are perfectly willing to invest much effort into correcting our physical posture or even our diction, we rarely take steps to redress faulty thinking patterns. Too often, our distorted interpretation undermines our well-being and our relationships, sabotaging our ability to be happy. How do these mental processes function? Can we correct them? Is there a way to reason with more accuracy and to foster more fulfilling relationships? Through an exploration of these questions, we will see how it is possible to create lifelong happiness for oneself.

**The book's original reference is:** *Petit traité antidéprime: Quatre saisons dans le bonheur*, Montréal, Éditions de l'Homme, 2005, 368 p.

## SUMMARY OF THE BOOK'S FOUR SECTION

### **Section One – Brain and Meaning: The Foundation of Life**

The first part of the book presents the evolution of the human brain and surveys its various psychological processes. It shows how the brain uses these natural processes and, through the integrative process of interpretation, constructs its understanding of reality. Interpretation indeed gives meaning to all events. These chapters hence introduce the central question: How our interpretation of everyday events can lead to unhappiness.

### **Section Two – The Pitfalls of Thinking**

The second part of the book focuses on the limitations of our psychological processes. Those limitations are called “cognitive distortions” and can cause numerous unpleasant situations, such as poor self-esteem, interpersonal conflicts or depression. The chapters in this second part introduce the relationships between cognitive distortions, destructive beliefs and emotional states. The chapters also provide numerous exercises to help readers identify and suppress their own cognitive distortions.

### **Section Three – On the Way to Happiness**

We hold a fantastic tool inside our brain: metacognition. This is the ability to understand our own psychological processes and to control them. Unfortunately, we frequently underuse our metacognitive capacities simply because we do not know how they function. The third part of the book explains how metacognition works and, especially, how to use it against cognitive distortions. Several chapters provide detailed exercises and tables designed to help readers become increasingly comfortable using metacognition to cope with daily difficulties.

### **Section Four – Four Seasons in Happiness**

The final part of the book provides several examples to contextualize cognitive distortions and metacognition in everyday life. The goal is to help readers accurately and promptly recognize their own cognitive distortions and to make a proactive, effective use of metacognition against them ... to live four seasons in happiness.