Over the course of a few years, I had conversations with various colleagues about a sense that the field of neuropsychology could do more to promote cognitive health in those with whom we work. Through these discussions, some questions—not necessarily with answers—began to emerge. Are neuropsychologists primarily focused on documenting cognitive dysfunction, promoting cognitive health, or both? Beyond the at times contentious debates regarding use of flexible versus fixed test batteries, are there overarching orientations to neuropsychological work, similar to therapeutic orientations among those providing psychotherapy? What is the future of neuropsychology?

While answers to these questions are as elusive as they are debatable and controversial, they seemed worthy of exploration. It appeared that promoting cognitive health was an area of interest for many neuropsychologists and students, but there were few if any resources that contained evidence-based perspectives on a broader approach to cognitive wellness. While there are many excellent volumes on cognitive rehabilitation, for example, content related to the impact of lifestyle factors on cognition was scarce. Ideas related to promoting cognitive health through prevention or educational efforts were important but infrequently seen in the literature. Enhancing cognitive skills in non-clinical settings, such as in the general public or in the corporate world, was being discussed by the popular media but rarely in scientific publications. It was also curious that positive psychology had influenced some subfields of psychology but had yet to have a meaningful impact on neuropsychology.

The present work serves as an early attempt to consider these and other ideas related to cognitive health in one source. This volume aims to incorporate various areas within neuropsychology, draw ideas from the positive psychology literature, and serve as a reference for researchers and clinicians interested in moving beyond cognitive deficit characterization in their clinical work and research and toward promotion of cognitive health. This work also taps into the broader public interest on wellness, prevention, and health promotion that will likely continue in the years
ahead, particularly as the baby boomers move into older adulthood and seek tangible strategies to age well.

I would like to acknowledge the support and efforts of colleagues, friends, and family for helping this project come to fruition directly or indirectly. First, I am very grateful to Peter Arnett for his guidance, encouragement, friendship, and stimulating conversations related to ideas in this book, and also for instilling a passion for helping patients and clients live more satisfying, productive, and emotionally enriched lives. I am also indebted to my other mentors over the years, including Ben Dykman, Cecile McAninch, Jeff Webster, Reda Scott, Heather Wishart, Andrew Saykin, Robert Roth, Tina Trudel, Robert Fergusson, James Grubman, and Everett Moitoza, for their support, guidance, and effectiveness as exemplary role models who embody the scientist-practitioner approach.

In addition, I would like to thank friends and colleagues for productive discussions about positive neuropsychology and related ideas, support in various forms with this project, and a hearty dose of humor when I needed it most: Peter Arnett, Michael Campos, Chris Higginson, Laura Rabin, Robert Roth, Michael Santa Maria, Kate Saylor, Treenen Sturman, and Paul Wager. Collaborating with James Randolph (my space physicist father) was an unexpected pleasure. I am particularly grateful to all of the contributing authors for their expertise and willingness to share their knowledge here.

Special thanks go to Janice Stern for believing in this project from the beginning, being a supportive and nurturing editor, and for shepherding this volume from inception to completion.

My deepest gratitude goes to my wonderful and loving wife, Jen, for assisting with and tolerating this process with grace, kindness, and unwavering support, all while emphasizing the importance of a good work-life balance. I also thank our children, Kaia, Sarah, Josh, and Margot, my mother and father, and my extended family for helping me remember and appreciate what matters most in life.

Lebanon, NH, USA

John J. Randolph
Positive Neuropsychology
Evidence-Based Perspectives on Promoting Cognitive Health
Randolph, J.J. (Ed.)
2013, XIV, 178 p., Hardcover
ISBN: 978-1-4614-6604-8