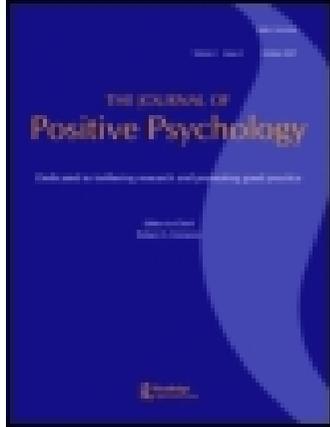


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Publisher: Routledge

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## The Journal of Positive Psychology: Dedicated to furthering research and promoting good practice

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rpos20>

### Reconsidering happiness: a eudaimonist's perspective

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Published online: 18 Oct 2008.

To cite this article: Alan S. Waterman (2008) Reconsidering happiness: a eudaimonist's perspective, The Journal of Positive Psychology: Dedicated to furthering research and promoting good practice, 3:4, 234-252, DOI: [10.1080/17439760802303002](https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760802303002)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760802303002>

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## Reconsidering happiness: a eudaimonist's perspective

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*(Received 23 June 2008; final version received 25 June 2008)*

Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, and King (2008) provide a wide-ranging critique of eudaimonic theory and research. In this paper, I question whether the timing of their analysis is appropriate given that work on eudaimonic constructs has begun only recently. In an effort to increase the clarity regarding points at issue, both conceptual and operational definitions of hedonia and eudaimonia as two conceptions of happiness are analyzed along with definitions of four conceptions of well-being (subjective, hedonic, psychological, and eudaimonic), and both hedonism and eudaimonism as ethical philosophies. Responses are provided to numerous points in the Kashdan et al. (2008) critique including their claims that work from a eudaimonic perspective (1) does not fully capture the philosophical roots of eudaimonia, (2) is overly abstract, (3) lacks clarity at the point of operationalization and measurement, (4) is overly complex thus preventing meaningful scientific inquiry, (5) provides evidence only for quantitative, not qualitative, differences, (6) is potentially elitist, and (7) misrepresents the moral standing of hedonia and eudaimonia. Evidence is presented in support of the view that hedonia and eudaimonia represent inter-related but reliably distinguishable and qualitatively distinct conceptions of happiness making independent contributions to an array of outcome variables. A set of recommendations is advanced as to how theory-building and empirical research can be strengthened in light of the multiple conceptualizations of happiness and well-being now current in the literature.

**Keywords:** happiness; eudaimonia; hedonia; subjective well-being; psychological well-being; eudaimonic well-being

### Introduction

Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, and King (2008) are to be commended for bringing attention to the need for increased clarity regarding the role that work on eudaimonics can play in expanding understanding of the nature of happiness and well-being. As someone clearly identified with eudaimonist theory and research, I was disappointed that in their title they saw fit to focus attention only on the costs of work from this perspective. In the body of the article, their tone is relatively balanced, praising some aspects of work in the field while advancing a significant number of criticisms regarding the current state of our theory-building and research endeavors. However, my overall assessment is that Kashdan's et al. (2008) efforts toward 'Reconsidering Happiness' represent a missed opportunity to constructively critique the emerging body of theoretical and empirical work in psychology employing eudaimonistic concepts.

I will organize this essay around four themes. First to be addressed is the question as to whether this is an appropriate time to attempt a summary judgment as to the costs and benefits regarding a line of investigation so recently begun. Second, since I believe Kashdan et al. (2008) devoted too little attention to providing

careful definitions of key constructs in the field, I will endeavor to fill that gap. Third, I will analyze and respond to the principal objections to eudaimonic theory and research presented in Kashdan's et al. (2008) critique. Finally, building upon the analysis of Kashdan et al. (2008), I will offer a critique of the field of happiness research. Kashdan et al. (2008) are correct that research employing a eudaimonic perspective warrants careful scrutiny so as to clarify our theoretical foundations, better focus our research questions, improve our methodologies, and more perceptively interpret our research findings. If, as I see it, the work of Kashdan et al. (2008) constitutes a missed opportunity in this regard, I will strive to do better.

### Is this a good time to reconsider work from a eudaimonic perspective?

It is appropriate to introduce some history here pertaining to work in psychology on happiness and well-being in general and eudaimonic constructs in particular. A set of PsycINFO reviews conducted in February 2008 revealed over 6000 entries for happiness and over 2500 for other hedonic related terms. There were over 1700 entries for subjective well-being (SWB).

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In contrast, there were only 64 entries for eudaimonia and related terms and another 12 for eudaemonic constructs (the alternative spelling). Considering contemporary citations, the earliest appearance of the term ‘eudaimonia’ was in 1981 (Waterman, 1981).<sup>1</sup> The first empirical attempt to distinguish hedonia and eudaimonia was the study I published in 1993 (Waterman, 1993b). The term ‘eudaimonic well-being’ was introduced by Ryan and Deci (2001) and it was not until their Annual Review article that use of eudaimonic terms started in earnest. Compare this to Diener’s (1984) review of literature on SWB going back to work published since 1969. A substantial portion of Kashdan’s et al. (2008) critique is devoted to contrasting the success that the SWB perspective has had in advancing our understanding of happiness through having established a consistent set of operational definitions and research methodologies. I fully concur that work on SWB is far more advanced than work on eudaimonic constructs and that the many empirical contributions made by those working with that paradigm have been invaluable. My focus in this article will be on how work on eudaimonic constructs should be viewed rather than on considering the SWB and eudaimonic perspectives as competing approaches to the understanding of happiness and well-being.

Clearly, research on eudaimonic-related constructs is still in its early stages and it should not be surprising that we are still sorting out our definitions of terms, research questions, instrumentation, and methodologies. Give us three decades of active theory development and empirical research, or about 1000 PsycINFO entries, and then we will be in a better position to assess the cost–benefit ratio of making the distinction between eudaimonia and hedonia. The bottom-line is that while this emerging field of research should not be immune from criticism, it is far too early to make definitive claims regarding the costs of pursuing our research objectives.

### Definitions of hedonic and eudaimonic terminology

One important respect in which the article by Kashdan et al. (2008) represents a missed opportunity is the failure on their part to devote systematic attention to the definitions of key terms in the field. Unless we can be relatively clear that we are engaging in a debate with a common set of meanings for the terms being employed, there is a serious risk that we will be talking past each other, rather than meaningfully engaging the issues on which we differ.

### Two conceptions of happiness

The starting point for achieving clarity with respect to terminology in the field of happiness and well-being

research is to make the distinction between (1) hedonia and (2) eudaimonia.

### Hedonia

Hedonia, or hedonic happiness, is a subjective experience of pleasure defined by the philosopher Kraut (1979) as ‘the belief that one is getting the important things one wants, as well as certain pleasant affects that normally go along with this belief’ (p. 178). There is a wide range of events and/or activities that may give rise to hedonia as pleasure may be an expected concomitant whenever there is a satisfaction of personal needs, whether physiologically, intellectually, or socially based. The range of possible sources of pleasure is extremely broad and varies extensively from person to person. Even activities or events that most people would experience as aversive will give rise to experiences of pleasures for others, e.g., thrill-seeking, masochism. While the presence of negative affects has been viewed as incompatible with the experiences of hedonia, as demonstrated by Bradburn (1969) and others, reports of positive and negative affects are often independent of each other and both can be present simultaneously. Hedonia is often linked with philosophical hedonism as a conception of A Good Life,<sup>2</sup> but as I will discuss below, this linkage is not a necessary one.

There have been numerous instruments created for use as operational definitions of hedonia including the Affect Balance Scale (Bradburn, 1969), the Happiness Measure (Fordyce, 1988), and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1999). All of these are self-report measures in which respondents can provide personal assessments of the extent to which subjective experiences associated with happiness are present either (1) at the time the instrument is being completed, (2) for a specified time frame such as the past day, week, month, or in general, or (3) when engaged in particular types of activities.

### Eudaimonia

Eudaimonia is a construct that can be traced back at least as far as classical Hellenic philosophy where it received its most notable treatment in the works of Aristotle, particularly the *Nicomachean ethics* (Aristotle, 4th Century BCE/1985). Like hedonia, the traditional definition of eudaimonia is ‘happiness,’ though eudaimonia was, and is, typically contrasted with hedonia in philosophical analyses. Aristotle took the position that eudaimonia was an objective condition associated with living a life of contemplation and virtue, where virtue may be variously considered to be the best thing, the best within us, or excellence (Ackrill, 1973; McDowell, 1980). Eudaimonia was seen as a consequence of ‘living in truth to one’s daimon’ or

'true self' (Norton, 1976), when an individual strives toward excellence in fulfilling his or her personal potentials (self-realization). In contrast to hedonia, eudaimonia is seen as arising in connection with a quite specific set of circumstances. As discussed below, it is the specificity of the sources of eudaimonia that serves to link it firmly to philosophical eudaimonism as an ethical theory of A Good Life.

As an objective statement about the quality of a person's life, for Aristotle, eudaimonia did not entail an associated body of subjective experiences. However, numerous modern eudaimonist philosophers including Kraut (1979) and Norton (1976) are explicit in viewing eudaimonia as involving a set of distinctive subjective experiences. For example, Norton (1976) wrote of eudaimonia as the feeling of 'being where one wants to be, doing what one wants to do' (p. 216) where what is wanted is to be taken as being something worth doing. Eudaimonia includes a constellation of subjective experiences including feelings of rightness and centeredness in one's actions, identity, strength of purpose, and competence. May (1969) refers to the intensity that is typical for experiences of eudaimonia as having 'the power to take over the whole person' (p. 121). In my own theory building and empirical work I have focused on the subjective experiences that typically accompany efforts at self-realization, including the sense that one is acting in such a way that one is truly being oneself. I have labeled these 'feelings of personal expressiveness' and use this term as a synonym for eudaimonia (Waterman, 1990, 1993b). In sum, eudaimonia, as a set of subjective experiences, is a highly positive affective condition.

Philosophers and psychologists seeking to continue the Aristotelian tradition of viewing eudaimonia as an objective, rather than subjective, condition have

preferred to translate the term as *flourishing* rather than as *happiness* (see Cooper, 1975; Hinchliffe, 2004; Keyes & Haidt, 2002; Rasmussen, 1999). A number of the problems in Kashdan's et al. (2008) critique stem from their failure to recognize that there is more than one contemporary line of philosophical thought with respect to the understanding of eudaimonia and that these have differing implications for the conduct of empirical investigations pertaining to happiness and well-being.

There is at present no instrument designed to measure eudaimonia as an objective condition corresponding to Aristotle's criteria of living a life of contemplation and virtue. There is at least one instrument, the Scales for Psychological Well-Being that constitutes an instrument for the assessment of flourishing. Since the focus here is on eudaimonia as a subjective condition, a description of that instrument will be provided below in the context of defining psychological well-being.

Operational definitions of eudaimonia in terms of a set of subjective experiences can more readily be achieved. The principal instrument I have developed for assessing experiences of eudaimonia is the Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire (PEAQ) (Waterman 1998). The instructions for the standard version of the PEAQ call for respondents to identify five activities of personal importance that they would use to describe themselves to another person. Each activity is then rated on a series of scales pertaining to the subjective states present during the activity, specifically, interest, flow experiences, feelings of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia), and hedonic enjoyment (hedonia). The items on the scales for eudaimonia and hedonia are presented in Table 1. Another series of scales in the PEAQ is used to assess

Table 1. Items on the feelings of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment (hedonia) scales of the Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire (PEAQ).

The first step in administering the PEAQ is to have respondents identify five personally salient activities that they would use to describe themselves to another person. These activities are then rated on a variety of scales including those for eudaimonia and hedonia.

#### Feelings of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) items

1. This activity gives me my greatest feeling of really being alive.
2. When I engage in this activity I feel more intensely involved than I do when engaged in most other activities.
3. This activity gives me my strongest feeling that this is who I really am.
4. When I engage in this activity I feel that this is what I was meant to do.
5. I feel more complete or fulfilled when engaging in this activity than I do when engaged in most other activities.
6. I feel a special fit or meshing when engaging in this activity.

#### Hedonic enjoyment (hedonia) items

1. When I engage in this activity I feel more satisfied than I do when engaged in most other activities.
2. This activity gives me my strongest sense of enjoyment.
3. When I engage in this activity I feel good.
4. This activity gives me my greatest pleasure.
5. When I engage in this activity I feel a warm glow.
6. When I engage in this activity I feel happier than I do when engaged in most other activities.

variables that serve as theoretical predictors for those states, specifically, self-determination, the balance of challenges and skills, self-realization values, and effort. With respect to levels of analysis, the PEAQ has been used primarily with the activity as the unit of analysis. In such studies the research questions involve trying to understand the particular circumstances when eudaimonia is present, and when it is not, with particular application to the analysis of intrinsic motivation (Waterman, 1993b; Waterman et al., 2008; Waterman et al., 2003).

It has been proposed that flow experiences, as first described by Csikszentmihalyi (1975, 1988, 1990), constitute an expression of eudaimonia. In addition to the flow items on the checklist used in Experience Sampling Method (ESM) research (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988), several other measures have been created. The PEAQ contains an 8-item scale for Flow Experiences (Waterman, 1998). Jackson and Eklund (2002) created the Flow State Scale-2 to assess flow experiences within a particular event and the Dispositional Flow Scale-2 to assess the frequency of flow experiences across a broader array of activities.

#### ***The relationship between hedonia and eudaimonia: a theoretical interlude***

Whereas hedonia will arise from getting those things a person wants from *any* source, eudaimonia will be experienced only in connection with a limited set of specific sources, such as activities associated with self-realization and expressions of virtue. Since self-realization and expressing virtue may be among the things that a person wants, it follows that there will be an asymmetrical relationship between hedonia and eudaimonia. Elizabeth Telfer (1990), a contemporary eudaimonist philosopher, observed that eudaimonia is a sufficient, but not a necessary, condition for hedonic happiness; there will be many activities that give rise to hedonia but not eudaimonia. Logically, this means that there will be three categories of circumstances with respect to simultaneous experiences of eudaimonia and hedonia: (1) occasions on which both eudaimonia and hedonia are present; (2) occasions on which hedonia, but not eudaimonia, is present; and (3) occasions on which neither hedonia nor eudaimonia are present. From the standpoint of philosophy, occasions on which eudaimonia, but not hedonia, is present should be a null category.

Two hypotheses emerge from the philosophical analysis of this relationship between eudaimonia and hedonia. First, given independent operational definitions of the two sets of subjective states, there should be a very strong positive correlation between them. Using PEAQ measures for feelings of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment

(hedonia) experienced in connection with personally salient activities, this hypothesis has been amply confirmed with correlations typically ranging from 0.75 to 0.85 (Waterman, 1993b; Waterman et al., 2008). Second, the correlation between eudaimonia and hedonia should be characterized by a marked asymmetry, such that there should be many activities found in the quadrant characterized as high on hedonia and low on eudaimonia, but few in the quadrant characterized as high on eudaimonia but low on hedonia. Again, research involving use of the PEAQ has consistently found statistically significant asymmetries, confirming this expectation. (The category of activities high on eudaimonia and low on hedonia is not a perfect null, though this is understandable given measurement error within the data set.)

Normally when correlations between two scales are in the range observed here, there is an understandable presumption that they constitute measures of the same construct, with very high concurrent validity used as support for such a conclusion. In this instance, however, there are strong theoretical and empirical grounds to question such a presumption. The determination to be made in this regard is whether or not it is possible to demonstrate consistent evidence of discriminant validity between the scales in a manner consistent with theoretical expectations. If two scales, however strongly correlated, can be shown to account for significant independent portions of variability in a set of outcome measures, it would be in error to conclude that they are measuring the same construct. I will summarize such evidence later in this article. Kashdan et al. (2008) wrestle with the question as to whether 'eudaimonic variables cause hedonic well-being' (p. 227) or whether the reverse may be equally true. At least with respect to eudaimonia and hedonia as subjective conditions, Telfer's (1990) analysis leads to the conclusion that, under relevant circumstances, eudaimonia and hedonia co-occur, that is, the conditions causing one are simultaneously causing the other.

#### ***Four conceptualizations of well-being***

Next to be considered are four terms that apply to the understanding of well-being. These are (1) subjective well-being, (2) hedonic well-being, (3) psychological well-being, and (4) eudaimonic well-being.

##### *Subjective Well-Being (SWB)*

The field of research that has come to be labeled SWB has centered the conception of A Good Life on happiness, with the understanding that each person has the right to form the judgment as whether a good life is being lived (Diener, 2000). When endeavoring to locate work on SWB within the varying philosophical understandings of happiness,

Diener, Scollon, and Lucas (2003) draw upon the writings of Democritus, emphasizing happiness as a disposition. Dispositional happiness refers to the way in which a person characteristically reacts to life circumstances with respect to the level of happiness experienced. They also point out that ‘the term subjective well-being emphasizes an individual’s own assessment of his or her own life—not the judgment of “experts”—and includes satisfaction (both in general and satisfaction with specific domains), pleasant affect, and low negative affect’ (Diener et al., 2003, p. 189).

The operational definitions for SWB generally fall into two broad categories: (1) measures of the presence or frequency of positive and negative emotions over some specified period of time, ranging from the particular occasion to a period of several weeks, and (2) a more global, cognitive assessment of life satisfaction. A variety of paper-and-pencil measures are available to tap the presence or frequency of positive and negative emotions and several have already been listed in the section defining hedonia. Measures of life satisfaction include the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), the Quality of Life Scale (Flanagan, 1978), and the Life Satisfaction Index (Neugarten, Havighurst, & Tobin, 1961). Another instrument used as an operational definition of SWB is the Life Orientation Test (Scheier & Carver, 1985), a scale designed to tap feelings of optimism about one’s life.

With respect to methods of assessment, researchers in some studies have used ratings obtained from external observers. While it is recognized by SWB researchers that each person is in the best position to know his or her own level of happiness, the assessments of external observers can be used as a check on the likely veracity of the first-person reports. It is recognized within the field that individuals might, under some conditions, wish to falsify their reports due to defensive self-deception, evaluation apprehension, social desirability response set, or other reasons. The SWB perspective has been used to address a broad array of research questions including (1) the predictors of SWB, including a wide variety of sociodemographic, personality, and societal variables, (2) cross-national comparisons in overall level of SWB, (3) the physiological concomitants of SWB, (4) adaptation over time to events affecting SWB, (5) the consequences of SWB for physical and mental health and other behaviors, and (6) intervention techniques for promoting and sustaining higher levels of SWB (see Diener, 1984; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999, for reviews).

#### *Hedonic Well-Being (HWB)*

A PsycINFO search of the term ‘hedonic well-being’ turned up only five instances of its usage and thus its

conceptual definition has not been clearly established. On those occasions on which it has been used, it appears to be functioning as a synonym for SWB. From my perspective, I would discourage its use in either theoretical discussions or empirical research. SWB has a clear conceptual definition and a well-established set of operational definitions. Further, the connotations associated with SWB are clearly positive. (Happiness is considered a positive state by philosophers and psychologists alike.) However, the linguistic association of HWB with philosophical hedonism (defined below) invites a conceptual confusion that Kashdan et al. (2008) are rightly concerned could taint our understanding of SWB.

#### *Psychological Well-Being (PWB)*

Ryff (1989; Ryff & Singer, 2008) responding to the focus on affective aspects of well-being in the work on SWB, and particularly to what was perceived as a largely atheoretical stance with respect to what constitutes A Good Life, developed an alternative perspective with explicit roots in psychological theories regarding positive functioning. The principal influences in the development of the PWB approach were major personality theorists including Allport (1961); Buhler (1935); Erikson (1959); Frankl (1992); Jahoda (1958); Jung (1933); Maslow (1968); Neugarten (1968); and Rogers (1961). With respect to philosophical underpinnings, Ryff (1989; Ryff & Singer, 2008) identified Aristotle’s *Nicomachean ethics* (1985) as shaping the perspective developed. Because the focus here is on the elements of functioning that make for A Good Life, the work of Ryff and her colleagues is more in line with the translation of eudaimonia as flourishing rather than happiness. On the basis of a theoretical analysis of psychological theories, Ryff (1989) identified six core dimensions deemed essential for quality in life: (1) autonomy, (2) environmental mastery, (3) personal growth, (4) positive relations with others, (5) purpose in life, and (6) self-acceptance. She did not, however, endeavor to tie these particular dimensions back to the writings of either classical or contemporary eudaimonist philosophers.

The paper-and-pencil questionnaire developed to assess these six core dimensions, the Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB) (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) exists in formats of varying lengths ranging from 3 to 14 items per scale. All involve a respondent using a 6-alternative Likert-type scale to evaluate the extent of agreement with various statements reflective of their current functioning. Almost all statements are written in the present tense, though some include references to prior functioning. Factor analyses of the SPWB have indicated that a 6-factor structure to the instrument best fits the data (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), though not all studies have led to that

conclusion (van Dierendonck, 2004). In contrast with the various measures of SWB, none of the SPWB scales are designed to assess affect, that is, whether or not the person is happy. Thus responses on the SPWB do not convey any information regarding the levels of the subjective experiences of either hedonia or eudaimonia.

As with research conducted on SWB, researchers studying PWB may make use of the reports of key behaviors made by external observers. However, unlike the study of affective states, there is no need to assume that respondents are in the best position to assess the quality of their own psychological functioning. Research on both 'Pollyanna effects' and depression make it clear that people do not necessarily look at their functioning or their lives objectively (Allen, Woolfolk, Gara, & Apter, 1996; Goodheart, 1985; Ingram, 1989; Taylor, 1989).

PWB is a variable operating exclusively at the level of the individual. While it is entirely plausible that levels of PWB could change over time, change in core personality dimensions would normally be expected to occur quite slowly (though a traumatic event such as an accident or illness might occasion more rapid change). Like the work on SWB, the PWB perspective has been used to address a wide array of research questions including sociodemographic and psychosocial correlates, developmental changes, particularly during aging, and biological and health differences between individuals functioning at differing levels of PWB (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

### *Eudaimonic Well-Being (EWB)*

The term EWB has only recently been introduced into the literature (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008). Following the lead of contemporary eudaimonist philosophers, I define EWB as a construct focused on the subjective aspects of eudaimonia.<sup>3</sup> As a construct operating on the level of the individual, similar to the level at which SWB and PWB are studied, it must represent an average of the extent to which the person has been experiencing eudaimonia over time. Given that eudaimonia is seen as a sufficient but not a necessary condition for the experience of hedonia, it would appear to follow that a similar relationship should exist with respect to the relationship of EWB to SWB. Individuals who report high levels of EWB would be expected to report high levels of SWB as well, but the parallel asymmetry should also exist such that there may be many people who report high levels of SWB who do not report correspondingly high levels of EWB. To date there have been very few studies that have investigated that relationship and in those that have been conducted only a very weak association of EWB to SWB has been reported (Waterman, 2007a).

The assessment of EWB would appear to be somewhat more complex than assessing SWB since eudaimonia, as a distinctive subjective state, is seen arising from particular sources, that is, the pursuit of virtue, excellence, and/or self-realization. It follows that EWB could be defined either by averaging across reports of the relevant subjective experiences or across reports of the extent to which the person is striving to goals associated with the specifiable sources for eudaimonia. A measure of EWB using the first approach can be obtained from the PEAQ (Waterman, 1993b, 1998) by averaging eudaimonia scores across the five self-selected, personally salient activities rated on the instrument. This procedure has been used to address questions pertaining to the sociodemographic and psychological correlates of EWB and the role of eudaimonistic choices in identity formation (Schwartz, Mullis, Waterman, & Dunham, 2000; Waterman, 2004).<sup>4</sup>

The second approach to studying EWB has been adopted by Ryan and his colleagues (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996; Ryan et al., 1999; Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, & Deci, 1996) and involves assessing the relative importance of intrinsic and extrinsic goals in the lives of research respondents. The Aspiration Index, which exists in several forms (Grouzet et al., 2005; Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996) is used to assess the extent to which respondents endorse a variety of both intrinsic and extrinsic goals, with those ratings used to determine relative importance of goals in both categories. The Aspiration Index can be used either at the level of particular goals to investigate the extent to which pursuit of any particular type of goal is associated with eudaimonia, hedonia, SWB, and/or PWB or at the level of the individual in comparisons of the well-being of respondents for whom intrinsic goals predominate with that of individuals for whom extrinsic goals are dominant. (The Aspiration Index does not contain measures of either hedonia or eudaimonia and therefore by itself cannot be used to distinguish these as differing sets of subjective experiences.)

### *Two philosophical perspectives on A Good Life*

The final group of terms to be defined includes two alternative ethical philosophies: (1) hedonism and (2) eudaimonism. They are introduced here primarily for the purpose of considering the ways in which the approach of psychological science to dealing with questions pertaining to A Good Life differs from that of philosophy.

#### *Hedonism*

Hedonism as an ethical theory posits that the pursuit of pleasure is the greatest good. Its most thorough

expression was advanced by Aristippus of Cyrene in the third Century BC. He held 'that pleasure is the *sole* good, but also that only one's own physical, positive, momentary pleasure is a good, and is so regardless of its cause' (Tatarkiewicz, 1976, p. 317). For Aristippus, virtue was seen as least important of all possible contributors to A Good Life. Similarly, Bentham (1789/1962), a utilitarian philosopher, did not make qualitative distinctions based on the source of pleasures, though he did create a complex calculus for quantitative comparisons.

A distinction should be made between hedonia (as happiness or pleasure) and hedonism as the pursuit of pleasure as the ultimate good. That hedonia is a positive affective condition is tautological; it is a label attached to a certain class of subjective experiences. In itself, the fact that happiness is a positive subjective state does not carry any moral implication that it should, or should not, be pursued. Proponents of hedonism as an ethical philosophy elect to attach greater moral significance to these positive experiences than to other candidates for determining the quality of life, such as virtue. Egoist philosophers such as Aristippus and Stirner were concerned only with one's own personal pleasure, whereas utilitarian philosophers such as John Stuart Mill were advocating the greatest totality of happiness across populations. Criticisms of hedonism as an ethical theory, in any of its forms, should not automatically be extended to hedonia as a subjective experience. Keep in mind that the same circumstances giving rise to eudaimonia are simultaneously giving rise to hedonia. If eudaimonia is seen as a moral good, then at least under the circumstances specified it would be appear inappropriate to condemn the hedonia also present. To the contrary, it is more plausible to conclude that the simultaneous presence of two forms of happiness is preferable to one alone.

### *Eudaimonism*

Eudaimonism is an ethical theory that one *ought* to pursue a life of virtue or excellence. According to philosophical eudaimonism as an ethical theory, there is a responsibility to recognize and live in accordance with one's true self (the daimon), that is, to act upon those potentialities of the person, the realization of which represent the greatest fulfillment in living of which the person is capable (Norton, 1976). The potentialities constituting the daimon include both those that are shared by all humans by virtue of our common specieshood and those that are unique, distinguishing each individual from all others. The daimon is an ideal, in the sense of being an excellence, a perfection toward which one strives and, hence, it can give meaning and direction to one's life. The efforts a person makes to live in accordance with the daimon,

to realize those potentials, can be said to be personally expressive. Thus, the concept of self-realization is central to eudaimonistic philosophy.

To speak of the daimon as personal potentialities capable of guiding action in the direction of self-fulfillment seems to invite granting it reified status. In part, this is a carryover of its classical Hellenic philosophical origins. Like the Roman *genii*, or tutelary gods, the daimon was conceived as originating externally to the individual as a kind of guiding spirit provided at birth. The concept was later internalized, as reflected in the view of Heraclitus that 'man's character is his daimon' (May, 1969, p. 133). To be consistent with the standards of contemporary theories, the daimon should be interpreted as a number of interrelated psychological processes. If it is accepted that individuals, by virtue of their physiology, possess particular potentialities in terms of those ways of functioning that can be conducted with greater excellence than other things they could do, then the daimon is constituted by those processes, both intuitive and reasoned, by which such potentialities are recognized, attain the status of purposes to which one's life is to be directed, and are then enacted and improved.

Norton (1976) identifies two great Greek imperatives as expressing the central elements of eudaimonist philosophy: (1) 'know thyself' (the inscription on the temple of Apollo at Delphi), and (2) 'choose yourself' or in the words of Pindar, 'become what you are.' Thus, self-discovery is but the first step in pursuit of A Good Life. It must be followed by the choice to dedicate one's life to actualizing those potentials constituting one's daimon. Norton (1976) also wrote of the principle of *the complementarity of excellences*. Since each individual's daimon is constituted of excellences that are unique, as well as those that are universal, it follows that how A Good Life is to be lived must be different for each person. Since no individual can embody all excellences that would make a life good, 'the best within every person calls upon and requires the best within every other person' (Norton, 1976, p. 10). In this way, eudaimonism as an ethical philosophy transcends the apparent, but false, dichotomy between living for oneself and living for the benefit of others. Eudaimonism is a philosophy that recognizes and embodies the simultaneous moral values of independence and interdependence (Waterman, 1981).

### ***Reconsidering 'reconsidering happiness': responses to Kashdan's et al. critique***

#### *Studying Aristotle's view of eudaimonia*

The most striking aspect of these different definitions and operational terms [for eudaimonic constructs] is that none of them fully capture the philosophical roots

of eudaimonia as described by Aristotle (which is cited in nearly all papers that mention the word) (p. 222).

It is certainly true that psychologists working with eudaimonic constructs place their work in the context of Aristotle's contributions regarding eudaimonia. However, the research being conducted today has greater connections with philosophical perspectives of contemporary eudaimonist philosophers than with Aristotle's original contributions. It is a misplaced criticism to contend that we have not succeeded in operationally defining a perspective that was never our objective to study.

While Kashdan et al. (2008) devote space to a description of Aristotle's views on the nature of eudaimonia, they provide only very brief citations to contemporary eudaimonist philosophers. I would direct their attention, and that of psychologists concerned with the nature of happiness and well-being, to the contributions of Annas (1993, 2004); Cooper (1975); Dybikowski (1981); Kraut (1979); Norton (1976); and Telfer (1990) among others. This is not the place for an extended discussion of the problems in Aristotle's presentation that have been identified by contemporary eudaimonist philosophers, nor for a detailed presentation of modern versions of the philosophy. I will, however, briefly summarize the departures I made from Aristotelian philosophy when I began developing Eudaimonic Identity Theory (Waterman, 1990; 1992; 1993a). Working from a foundation in contemporary eudaimonist philosophy, it was my objective to render eudaimonic concepts and principles in a form more congenial to psychological theorizing and empirical research. Readers are referred to Waterman (1990) for the rationales for the choices made:

- Whereas Aristotle took an objective view, defining eudaimonia in terms of a life of reason, virtue, and excellence, consistent with modern eudaimonist philosophy, I consider eudaimonia as also having a subjective component embodying the experiences that flow from efforts to live in truth to one's daimon by striving to develop one's skills and talents for purposes deemed worth pursuing in life.
- Whereas Aristotle viewed eudaimonia in terms of a person's life as a whole, I along with contemporary eudaimonist philosophers, have taken the position that the subjective experience of eudaimonia could be studied as a function of discrete aspects of one's life, rather than one's life as a whole.
- Whereas Aristotle limited the range of the constituents of eudaimonia to contemplation and moral virtue, building on the work of modern eudaimonists I broadened consideration of the construct to include efforts directed at the development of one's skills and talents and the furthering of one's purposes in living, as these are consistent with the daimon.
- Whereas, Aristotle restricted the possibility of eudaimonia to adult males (and possibly only to dead adult males at that), I along with modern eudaimonist philosophers, have adopted the position that given a broader definition of eudaimonia including a subjective component, such experiences are available to virtually everyone from early childhood on.

Now it is possible for Kashdan et al. to claim that we have so extensively changed the meaning of the term from Aristotle's that a new word should be invented to convey its meaning. However, in each instance the alternative views advanced are grounded in elements of contemporary eudaimonist philosophy. What is most important for advancing the field of happiness theory and research is for writers to be clear about what is, and what is not, included within their usage of the construct of eudaimonia. Readers can then determine for themselves whether different writers are referring to the same, convergent, or divergent constructs.

### *The use of abstract terminology*

The study of well-being may be hampered by abstract language (p. 228)... Instead of using hedonia and eudaimonia labels, we feel there is a greater empirical support for (and scientific precision in) referring to the exact constructs being studied (e.g., activated positive emotions or work satisfaction instead of SWB and personal expressiveness or purpose in life instead of eudaimonia) (p. 226).

In the context of empirical investigations the specification of precise constructs through operational definitions should be paramount. Precise operational definitions are not a substitute for conceptual definitions. When psychologists are engaged in theory building conceptual definitions must be utilized. Theory building can proceed both inductively and deductively. Inductively the findings from a myriad of individual research studies, using a variety of operational definitions, are synthesized into a set of principles of increasing levels of abstraction. Deductively, a set of hypothesized principles involving concepts at varying levels of abstraction must be translated into operational definitions for use in empirical investigations. Terms on the level of abstraction of happiness, hedonia, eudaimonia, subjective well-being, psychological well-being, etc., are essential to the development of any coherent theory of well-being. Which terms survive, and which do not, will be a function not of their level of abstraction but of the development of operational definitions that

correspond adequately to their conceptual meaning and research outcomes involving the use of those operational definitions consistent with the principles embodied in the emerging theory. There are individual differences in the levels of abstraction that psychologists feel comfortable working at, and it is appropriate for each to work within his or her personal comfort zone. It is not appropriate, however, to critique the work of others on the basis that the level of abstraction involved falls outside of the comfort zone of the critic.

### *A plethora of eudaimonic constructs*

In contrast to the work on SWB, there is . . . no single theory or approach that captures the essence of eudaimonic happiness. Rather, it appears that most of those that do not rely on an explicit affective component seem to fall into the eudaimonic well-being category (p. 221). . . . Though arguably more theory-driven than the SWB tradition, research on eudaimonia possesses less clarity at the entry point of operationalization and measurement (p. 222).

Kashdan et al. (2008) provide a list of numerous programs of research that have been identified as involving eudaimonic constructs including work on (1) self-determination theory, (2) psychological well-being, (3) intrinsic motivation and goal congruency, (4) eudaimonic identity theory, (5) purpose in life, (6) curiosity and personal growth, (7) vitality, and (8) flow. At this point in the development of eudaimonic understandings of happiness and well-being there are indeed a plethora of constructs, principles, and theories bidding for consideration as organizing foci for work in the field. Far from seeing this as a problem, I view this as a healthy state of affairs at the current stage of our work. It took decades of effort, and many hundreds if not thousands of theoretical and empirical articles on happiness, for the field to coalesce around a coherent and consistent set of conceptual and operational definitions of SWB. Arguably, the construct of eudaimonia is more complex than SWB and it may take us even longer to arrive at a comparable level of consensus. I concur with Kashan and his colleagues that the task we have set for ourselves is complex and difficult when trying to translate classical or contemporary philosophical constructs into meaningful scientific language and research programs. Difficult and demanding tasks are typically the one's most likely to be the most rewarding. The question, as Csikszentmihalyi (1988) might ask it is: are our skills commensurate with the challenges of the task? As I suggested at the opening of this article, let's see where we are when there have been 1000 articles exploring eudaimonic constructs rather than less than 100.

### *Complexity can prevent meaningful scientific inquiry*

The lack of a unified definition of eudaimonia can prevent meaningful scientific inquiry for two important reasons. First, multiple definitions interfere with valuable inquiry into the relation between these various concepts themselves. . . . Second, defining eudaimonia as Aristotle does conflates the phenomenological experience of happiness with the sources of that happiness. . . . Defining eudaimonia this way actually interferes with scientific inquiry into the nature of well-being as it becomes increasingly difficult to disentangle antecedents, correlates, and consequences (p. 224).

This concern of Kashdan et al. (2008) appears to be without foundation. While it is certainly true that a considerable array of constructs has become associated with eudaimonics (including variables pertaining to the sources of happiness and to subjective experiences), the mere theoretical association of constructs is no bar to the study of their interrelationships. I will provide a concrete example from my program of research evaluating those elements of eudaimonistic identity theory associated with intrinsic motivation. A central principle in the theory concerns the role that intrinsic motivation plays in identifying domains of activity that a person will find personally expressive, thus making it a useful criterion when making identity-related decisions. This led to a series of studies on intrinsic motivation building on a foundation of prior work on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and the teleonomic theory of the self (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; 1988). In that research, I examined four subjective experience variables associated with intrinsic motivation: (1) interest, (2) flow experiences, (3) feelings of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia), and (4) hedonic enjoyment (hedonia). I also looked at four variables identified as predictors of intrinsic motivation: (5) self-determination, (6) the balance of challenges and skills, (7) self-realization values, and (8) level of effort. In various reports derived from this set of studies (Waterman, 2005; Waterman et al., 2003, 2008), I reported the interrelationships among subjective experience measures, the interrelationships among predictor measures, as well as the relationships of each of the predictors with each of the subjective experience variables. I was particularly interested in identifying which predictors made the greatest contributions to explaining variance in which of the subjective experience measures. In a longitudinal study, Schwartz and Waterman (2006) reported evidence pertaining to sequential changes in various components of intrinsic motivation in an effort to begin to untangle antecedents and consequences. The point here is that a careful examination of the components embodied in a eudemonic theory can promote the very outcomes that Kashdan et al. (2008) are seeking to promote.

### ***Quantitative, not qualitative, differences in happiness are being demonstrated***

Rather than demonstrating that eudaimonic pursuits are central to a *qualitatively* different kind of happiness, this work has demonstrated that variables thought to be eudaimonic lead to *quantitatively higher* levels of hedonic well-being. Again and again, such research shows that eudaimonic variables are potent predictors of hedonic functioning (Kasser & Ryan, 1993, 1996; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sheldon, 2002). Importantly, these results demonstrate that eudaimonic pursuits are associated not with a 'better' form of happiness but simply a higher level of happiness (p. 223).

In the passage just quoted, Kashdan et al. (2008) are attributing to the researchers the goal of trying to distinguish eudaimonia and hedonia as qualitatively different forms of happiness, when this was not a part of their research objectives. Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) and Sheldon (2002) set out to demonstrate that the *types of goals* one pursues make a difference in the *quantitative level* of happiness experienced. They succeeded in demonstrating that goals associated with self-fulfillment and self-concordance (those presumably associated with both eudaimonia and hedonia) yielded greater overall enjoyment than the pursuit of goals associated with materialist and less self-concordant outcomes (those presumably associated with hedonia alone). This is fully consistent with eudaimonist theory. Their use of overall enjoyment as a subjective experience outcome measure meant that it was never possible to determine that eudaimonia and hedonia, as subjective experiences, were qualitatively different. Since there is an inherent association of eudaimonia with hedonia, research to make qualitative distinctions between the two conceptions of happiness requires use of separate measures of eudaimonia and hedonia *as subjective states being experienced*, not as goals being pursued. It is to that research that I now turn.

### ***Waterman's research on qualitative differences regarding two conceptions of happiness is unconvincing***

Waterman (1993[b], 2007) compared personal expressiveness (a proposed proxy for eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment (a proposed proxy for SWB) in terms of their associations with other relevant appraisals made during activities...[and] found significant differences in the degree to which these two factors relate to perceived opportunities to develop one's best potentials [and other variables]... Re-examining these results we remain unconvinced that they provide support for two qualitatively different types of well-being (p. 225). Personal expressiveness and hedonic enjoyment correlate with self-realization in a parallel fashion. Furthermore, personal expressiveness and self-realization are both considered aspects of eudaimonia, as such the fact that they are strongly

correlated should not be surprising... We are unsure what is gained by comparing two indices of qualitatively different types of well-being, when one of these indices is, conceptually, part of the definition of the criterion (p. 226).

Kashdan's et al. (2008) critique of my work is complex and not particularly well-focused. I will start by noting that in my research contrasting personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment (hedonia) (Waterman, 1993b; Waterman et al., 2008); I do not make reference to any constructs at the level of well-being. Personal expressiveness and hedonic enjoyment are operationally defined in terms of differing kinds of subjective experiences arising in connection with engaging in particular activities identified by respondents as personally salient. Kashdan et al. (2008) do not take into consideration the point made earlier that experiences of eudaimonia are always accompanied by experiences of hedonia, but that the reverse is not true. The implications of this relationship are important on methodological grounds as well as for theoretical reasons. If when eudaimonia is high hedonia will also be high, then significant positive correlations for eudaimonia with various outcome indices should be accompanied by corresponding positive correlations for hedonia as well. However, since there are many sources of hedonia that do not give rise to eudaimonia, it should also be expected that the correlations with hedonia will not be as strong as those for eudaimonia. Conversely, when there are significant positive correlations with hedonia, there is no corresponding expectation that there will be corresponding correlations with eudaimonia as well. (Such corresponding correlations should be present when the outcome indices are theoretically related to eudaimonism and not present for unrelated variables.) Thus, the fact that hedonic enjoyment was found to be related to self-realization (paralleling the relationship of feelings of personal expressiveness with self-realization) is only to be expected. What is central to the point being demonstrated in these studies is the significant differences in the relative strength of the correlations involved of eudaimonia and hedonia with a set of variables derived from eudaimonic thought.

I made the point in the preceding section that, in order to demonstrate qualitative differences between two conceptions of subjective happiness, separate measures of the alternatives must be used. It is a complexity in happiness research that eudaimonia and hedonia cannot be studied as independent constructs since there are, theoretically, only three (not four) categories of their experience (1) occasions on which both are present, (2) occasions on which hedonia is present but not eudaimonia, and (3) occasions on which neither are present. Therefore, when seeking to determine whether there are qualitative differences between eudaimonia and hedonia, it is necessary to

control statistically for the level of hedonia present when associations with eudaimonia are being investigated. There are several means by which this can be accomplished. One involves the use of partial correlations, in which the level of hedonia present is factored out of the relationship eudaimonia has with an outcome variable. Any significant variance explained by the partial correlation can be attributed to the presence of eudaimonia, over and above any contribution made by hedonia. A second, and essentially equivalent, procedure is to compare statistically the relative strength of the correlations that eudaimonia and hedonia have with the outcome variable. This is the procedure I have typically employed as it allows for reporting of parallel correlations for eudaimonia and hedonia. When a difference is observed that is significantly larger for eudaimonia than for hedonia, the conclusion to be reached is that eudaimonia is explaining a larger proportion of variance in the outcome variable and therefore that it represents something that is not also represented in hedonia. In other words, there is a qualitative difference between the two conceptions of happiness as predictor variables. A third methodological procedure that can be used is to generate samples of activities for which the level of hedonia is correspondingly high, but for which there is a difference in the level of the eudaimonia present. In other words, a contrast would be made between groups of activities that are High—High with activities that are High—Low. Again, any significant differences can be attributed to eudaimonia since the level of hedonia has been controlled (Waterman et al., 2008).

Another element of Kashdan's et al. (2008) critique of my research is the claim that one of these indices is, conceptually, part of the definition of the criterion. Here the claim being made is that eudaimonia as a subjective experience and self-realization values are both integral elements in the philosophy of eudaimonism and therefore one cannot serve as a criterion for the other. To accept that premise would be equivalent to the claim that one cannot test a theory by looking at the relationship between any two constructs drawn from that theory. Eudaimonia is a variable pertaining to the subjective experiences present when engaged in an activity. Self-realization values is a variable pertaining to the goals or objectives sought when engaging in the activity, that is, the development of personal potentials and the furthering of purposes in living. The real issue that should be considered here is what, if any, is the content overlap of items on the measures that serve as operational definitions of eudaimonia and self-realization values. When developing the scales I sought to minimize such overlap in operational definitions, but it is for each reader to decide the extent to which I was successful to that end. Table 1 contains the items for the measures of feelings

Table 2. A partial listing of variables for which correlations with eudaimonia and hedonia were found to be significantly different.

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Variables for which correlations were significantly stronger with eudaimonia

From Waterman (1993b):

- Level of effort (2 of 2 samples)
- Having clear goals (2 of 2 samples)
- Feeling challenged (2 of 2 samples)
- Feeling competent (1 of 2 samples)
- Feeling assertive (2 of 2 samples)

From Waterman, Schwartz, and Conti (2008):

- Self-realization values (3 of 3 samples)
- Balance of challenges and skills (3 of 3 samples)
- Level of effort (3 of 3 samples)
- Flow experiences (1 of 3 samples)
- Importance (3 of 3 samples)

Variables for which correlations were significantly stronger with hedonia

From Waterman (1993b):

- Feeling relaxed (2 of 2 samples)
- Losing track of time (2 of 2 samples)
- Forgetting personal problems (2 of 2 samples)
- Feeling in harmony with one's surroundings (1 of 2 samples)
- Feeling angry (reversed) (2 of 2 samples)
- Feeling restless (reversed) (2 of 2 samples)

From Waterman, Schwartz, and Conti (2008):

- Self-determination (3 of 3 samples)
  - Level of interest (3 of 3 samples)
- 

of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) and hedonic enjoyment (hedonia). Table 2 contains a partial listing of items and scales for which significantly stronger correlations were found for eudaimonia and those for which significantly stronger correlations were found for hedonia. Again, it is for the reader to judge the extent of item overlap between the subjective experience measures and the outcome measures on which eudaimonia and hedonia are compared.

From this research I draw two conclusions. First, that eudaimonia and hedonia are related but reliably distinguishable positive subjective conditions that warrant being included under the label 'happiness.' Second, the observed pattern of associations for eudaimonia as a subjective condition is consistent with theoretical expectations drawn from contemporary eudaimonist philosophy. Selnes, Marthinsen and Vitterso (2004) reached similar conclusions when making comparisons of EWB and SWB at the level of the individual rather than the activity.

### *Eudaimonism and potential elitism*

The search for something 'better' than SWB or a 'better' form of happiness connotes a potential elitism, that the Good Life is an experience reserved for

individuals who have attained some transcendence from everyday life. In fact, Aristotle is explicit about eudaimonia being an objective state that might arise only after achieving one's best potential and then acting on it (p. 227).

Again while the concern expressed by Kashdan et al. (2008) may be valid with respect to Aristotle's conception of eudaimonia, the work of contemporary eudaimonist philosophers render this concern moot. Norton (1976) is particularly clear in this regard. The comparisons that should be made are not across people in that one person's potentials are better than the potentials of another, but within each person regarding which among the array of potentials present represent the best for that individual. Eudaimonia as a set of subjective experiences arise in connection with striving for excellence with respect to one's best potentials, not the attainment of some particular excellent outcome. The same is true for efforts to further one's purposes in living. This renders experiences of eudaimonia available to everyone seeking to do the best they can in their lives.

I have taken the position that virtually everyone experiences eudaimonia during their formative years (Waterman, 1990). The earliest experiences of feelings of personal expressiveness are for the development of potentials that are universal (or nearly so), for example to grasp, to crawl, to walk, to talk. Later in childhood, the potentials that the child strives to realize are more individual, but still not unique, for example, to play baseball, to dance, to relate to animals. Simultaneous with the emergence of the self is the emergence of the desire not just to do the activity but to do it as well as it is possible for the child to do it. Thus, during childhood the link between competence and feelings of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) emerges and is particularly strong. As individuals move from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood, the challenges with respect to experiencing eudaimonia become more complex. Starting in adolescence, the task of identity formation comes to the fore, as it is now necessary to identify which set of personal potentials represent the best talents for the person to develop and to connect those talents with one's purposes in living (Waterman, 1990, 1992). Not everyone will succeed in this regard, but everyone has the potential to do so. Through the development of better pedagogical techniques, parenting practices, and other intervention strategies, there is reason to believe the numbers of individuals who experience eudaimonia can be expanded further.

### ***The moral standing of eudaimonia and hedonia***

We...see certain dangers in treating this intriguing conceptual distinction as if it is a proven fact. Foremost among these is the implicit (and sometimes

explicit) argument that there is a moral hierarchy to be found in happiness, with eudaimonic happiness being viewed as more objective, comprehensive, and morally valid than hedonic well-being (e.g., Annas, 2004; Waterman, 2007b, p. 219).

It is this idea that there are qualitative differences between eudaimonia and hedonia with the former being considered the 'better' experience that appears to be most unsettling to Kashdan et al. (2008). They have quite positive statements to make about programs of research that have been cited as evidence for eudaimonic functioning including work on self-determination, psychological well-being, and personal expressiveness. It is only when it is suggested that there is an implication of a moral hierarchy among the conceptions of happiness that they demur. Their concerns in this regard are misplaced, reflecting a failure to appropriately distinguish our work as psychologists from the work of moral philosophers. Ironically, this is the very criticism that Kashdan et al. (2008) direct toward those of us working from a eudaimonic perspective. A number of years ago, I had occasion to address the question: what are the appropriate uses of psychological theory and research in the process of ethical inquiry? (Waterman, 1988). I will briefly summarize relevant points here. (Readers can consult the earlier article for a more detailed analysis of the issues involved in addressing this question.)

Claims within the realm of moral philosophy regarding how one *ought* to act are advanced in either of two forms. Deontological analyses are advanced on strictly logical terms leading to absolute conclusions concerning what is right and wrong. Actions are moral or immoral in themselves, not because of any consequences they produce. Such analyses can be judged only by philosophical criteria; empirical evidence can play no role in this process. In contrast, teleological analyses involve two types of assertions: (1) that a given behavior has certain specifiable consequences and (2) those consequences are to be valued. The former is an issue of fact and is open to empirical confirmation or disconfirmation. The latter is not an empirical matter but rather is criteriological. The adequacy of any statement that some types of consequences constitute a better criteria of moral value than do other types of outcomes can be judged only in philosophical terms.

Eudaimonist philosophers (e.g., Aristotle, Norton, Annas) are advancing claims that actions embodying virtue, excellence, and self-realization are indeed a 'better' source of happiness than are some other types of actions such as those directed to maximizing pleasure derived from consumatory or materialist sources. Consider the following quotation from Aristotle's *Nicomachean ethics* that both

I (Waterman, 1993b) and Steger, Kashdan and Oishi (2008) had occasion to cite:

The many, the most vulgar, seemingly conceive the good and happiness as pleasure, and hence they also like the life of gratification. Here they appear completely slavish, since the life they decide on is a life for grazing animals (Aristotle, 4th Century BCE/1985, p. 7).

This statement appears to be a strong criticism of pleasure in the form of hedonia. On careful consideration, it is not hedonia per se that is being criticized but hedonism, that is, the exclusive pursuit of pleasure for its own sake. Aristotle is making the moral claim that humans, as compared to grazing animals, should aspire to something 'higher' or 'better' than mere pleasure, however intense. In doing so, he is making a deontological moral claim, something that psychologists may wish to cite, but a claim that is beyond the scope of our scientific tools to validate or disprove.

There is a second element in the philosophical eudaimonist's analysis. This element is the teleological claim that when pursuing 'higher' or 'better' goals, such as virtue, excellence, or self-realization, there is an experience not only of hedonia but also eudaimonia, a subjective state distinguishable from hedonia (Norton, 1976; Telfer, 1990). This is indeed an empirical question to which psychologists' research tools can be brought to bear. The results of our studies cannot demonstrate that eudaimonia is 'better' than hedonia, but rather that the eudaimonist philosophers are either correct or incorrect with respect to what types of goals or actions result in what types of subjective experiences. If eudaimonia and hedonia can be reliably distinguished, it can then be determined (1) what sources of happiness produce which types of happiness with what intensities, (2) whether the two conceptions of happiness differ in their sustainability, and (3) what types of interventions are the most effective in promoting each form of happiness and a host of similar questions can also be addressed. What can emerge from the many projects conducted from the eudaimonic perspective is an empirical picture of the strengths and the limitations of each conception of happiness. That picture can then be compared to the claims of proponents of eudaimonism, hedonism, and other moral philosophies. If the research fails to validate the teleological claims of a particular moral philosophy, this would constitute prima facie grounds on which to question the philosophical analysis advanced. If the research does validate the teleological claims made, that is certainly information worth knowing. It still would not validate any underlying deontological philosophical claims about how one ought to act. If the psychologists working from a eudaimonic perspective are correct in their research expectations, then someone wishing to experience sustainable happiness in both its eudaimonic and

hedonic forms would be well advised to seek it from sources such as virtue, excellence, and self-realization. Similarly, interventionists seeking to promote the happiness and well-being of others would also be well advised to design their programs with these elements at the foreground.

#### **A eudaimonist's critique of eudaimonic research**

To this point, I have endeavored to counter points made by Kashdan et al. (2008) in their critique. They do, however, make a number of points that are worth building on to improve and strengthen research being conducted using eudaimonic concepts.

#### ***Bracket-creep***

A careful analysis of the literature on well-being shows that over time, there has been extensive 'bracket-creep' in defining and measuring happiness, particularly in the case of eudaimonia... Dozens of studies have examined the role of flow states on well-being but recently flow has been absorbed into the definition of eudaimonia... Similar issues arise with absorption of vitality, intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and feelings of competence, belonging, and autonomy into the definition of eudaimonia (p. 228).

Kashdan et al. (2008) are quite correct that an increasing number of constructs are being integrated into the nomological net of variables identified as associated with eudaimonia. There is a risk here that eudaimonia could become a virtual synonym for positive psychology. Researchers are not always sufficiently precise in making distinctions between those constructs that are central to eudaimonic theories and variables that are correlates of eudaimonic constructs but are not, in themselves, eudaimonic variables. For example, in the catalogue of variables included in the quoted passage above, I would draw the following distinctions based on philosophical eudaimonism. Making progress in the development of one's best potentials and acting on the basis of one's purposes in living are posited to be defining sources for eudaimonia. 'Intrinsic motivation' would appear to be integral to those variables since activities toward such ends are engaged in for their own sake rather than for any extrinsic benefits that might accrue. It is also true that feelings of competence should be present when individuals are having success in such endeavors, but feelings of competence will also be present when individuals are having success at most any undertaking, including those that are not relevant to either individuals' potentials or purposes in living. This leads to the conclusion that feelings of competence, while part of the constellation of subjective experiences of eudaimonia, should be viewed as a correlate rather than as a central and essential defining element of

eudaimonic functioning. I would place self-esteem and feelings of autonomy in the same category. It is relatively easy to imagine circumstances unrelated to eudaimonia that could result in high levels of self-esteem (e.g., receiving praise from others, receiving a pay raise). Similarly, a person could report a high level of autonomy due to successfully resisting pressures from parents or peers or for other reasons unrelated to eudaimonic constructs.

'Vitality' and 'flow' appear to share a variety of subjective experience elements in common with 'feelings of personal expressiveness,' a term I have used as a synonym for eudaimonia. However, how close the linkage is remains to be determined. Csikszentmihalyi (1988) viewed flow as occurring whenever a person engages in an activity for which there is a balance of challenges and skills. If this is, true irrespective of whether an activity is associated with the development of one's best potentials or purposes in living, then I would place flow in the category of a correlate of eudaimonia but not a defining element. However, if flow experiences reliably occur primarily in conjunction with activities associated with the development of one's potentials and furtherance of one's purposes in living, and not otherwise, then it should be included among the central subjective eudaimonic constructs. Similarly, it is an empirical research question, as is how best to understand vitality in the context of eudaimonic theory.

Finally, I do not see 'feelings of belonging' as a construct integral to eudaimonic functioning. It is certainly true that for some people, the potentials and purposes they most desire to develop are one's associated with love, belonging, and caring for others. On average, I would expect that those with high levels of eudaimonic well-being will have better, more successful social relationships than are the norm. Those who are enjoying self-fulfillment in their lives have more to give to others and will be less needy and demanding of others. However, there are those with poor social skills who, nevertheless, are enjoying considerable success in the development of other potentials and are fulfilling other purposes in living. Such individuals would weaken the association between eudaimonic constructs and feelings of well-being in the social sphere.

Such considerations raise questions for me regarding whether PWB should be included under the umbrella of eudaimonic constructs. The two SPWB scales (Ryff, 1989) with the closest links to eudaimonic constructs are Personal Growth and Purpose in Life, though the items on those scales do not specify whether either personal growth or purposes are tied to self-realization. A person whose goal is 'becoming a millionaire before the age of 30' might well score high on the measure of purpose in life, but would not be seen as engaged in eudaimonic functioning.

For the reasons discussed above, I view the scales for Autonomy, Environmental Mastery (competence), Self-Acceptance (self-esteem) and Positive Relations with Others (feelings of belonging) as correlates of eudaimonic functioning, not as defining elements of such functioning.

None of the observations made above are intended as a criticism of the SPWB scales as measures of PWB or flourishing. The various scales appear well designed to assess an array of positive psychological functioning qualities essential to a life well lived. I am, however, raising a question regarding how close Ryff's (1989) and Keyes and Haidt's (2002) concept of flourishing corresponds to that set forth by Aristotle or by contemporary eudaimonist philosophers, given that the concepts of virtue and self-realization are central to the philosophy. The critique here supports the view that PWB and EWB, while related and overlapping, are not synonymous. Research with the SPWB and PEAQ (Waterman, 2007a) provides empirical evidence on this point. Correlations of measures from the two instruments, while positive, and often statistically significant, never exceeded 0.33. At the present time, it appears preferable to pursue research on PWB and EWB as relatively independent lines of investigation.

### *Frameworks for the study of well-being*

In terms of time frame, affect and life satisfaction can be measured at the (1) global level-broad assessments across time and context, (2) intermediate level-capturing mood and thoughts over durable time spans such as days, weeks, months, or meaningful periods (e.g., semester of college, pregnancy, fiscal year) and (3) momentary level- immediate events and experiences as they naturally occur (p. 222).

The scheme proposed by Kashdan et al. (2008) for considering timeframes appears to be a very useful framework for examining similarities and differences in the causes and effects of various conceptions of happiness across time. To this point, researchers working from a eudaimonic perspective have devoted too little attention to the role that timeframe plays in the origins of eudaimonic functioning and its sustainability. I want to note here that there are other frameworks that should be incorporated into the study of happiness and well-being, as well. One of the potentially important elements in determining eudaimonic functioning is the nature of the activities engaged in. In diary studies, ESM research, and in PEAQ research, information is acquired both about the types of activities engaged in and the subjective experiences present at the time. Activities can be characterized according to domain (e.g., work, study, recreation, socializing, maintenance), setting (e.g., alone vs. with family or friends, home vs. away from home, indoors vs. outdoors), and motivation

(e.g., achievement, approval, self-realization), among other possible categorical frameworks. The idiographic-to-nomothetic methods described by Emmons (1999) are particularly well-suited to research on the linkages of eudaimonia with other variables as specific activities within a given category may be allowed to vary from person to person while still permitting comparisons across categories.

### *Considering the sources of happiness*

...the objectivist tradition might be characterized as being not so much about whether a person is happy but why the person is happy, a distinction that is somewhat more in keeping with the translation of this philosophical debate to the science of psychology (p. 220)... Unfortunately, relatively few studies measure SWB across various life domains and, therefore, there is much to be learned about the correlates and consequences of particular response patterns across domains (p. 222).

Arguably the most important point to be derived from the eudaimonic perspective on happiness and well-being is that the types of activities in which a person engages are a critical element in the quality of subjective experiences to be derived when participating in them. If one takes seriously the idea that happiness is most likely to be derived from self-realization, and that individuals differ in the potentials through which self-realization is to be achieved, then it follows that they will likely differ not only in the specific activities but also the domains of activity that should be engaged in if eudaimonia is to be experienced. The question that should be asked then concerns what are the aspects of an activity that account for experiences of eudaimonia. In other words, if something makes you happy, why does it make you happy? This is the question that is at the center for understanding the sources of happiness and it is a question that is equally valid when applied to hedonia as it is to eudaimonia.

There have been numerous lines of investigation addressing this question, many of them identified with the eudaimonic perspective. Deci and Ryan (1985) have emphasized the role played by autonomous choice/self-determination. Ryan, Huta and Deci (2008) discuss the pursuit of intrinsic, first-order goals as central to eudaimonic functioning, that is, pursuing outcomes that are valued for their own-sake rather than being instrumental to some other end. Csikszentmihalyi (1988) has stressed the role of a balance of challenges and skills. I have added self-realization values (Waterman, 1993b, 2004) and effort (Waterman, 2005) to the list of variables to consider. These possibilities are not mutually exclusive and I have endeavored to demonstrate not only their inter-relationships but the extent to which they contribute

in concert to positive subjective experiences (Waterman et al., 2004).

It should be recognized, however, that the ways in which to characterize and study the possible sources of happiness is almost inexhaustible. One of the greater challenges facing researchers on happiness and well-being will be identifying the most productive ways in which to consider such variables. Psychologists working from a eudaimonic perspective have a particular theoretical system to call upon in this regard, but to restrict oneself to just one framework may result in missed opportunities.

### *Considering the qualities of happiness*

...researchers have discovered that not all sources are equal in contributing to the frequency, intensity, and durability of a person's SWB (p. 224).

If differing sources of happiness yield qualitatively different subjective experiences of happiness, then it becomes meaningful to return to the question: are some forms of happiness 'better' than others? As indicated above, if better in this context is based on some deontological, a priori, criteria, psychological research cannot contribute to an answer. If 'better' means that happiness from differing sources can be compared with respect to measurable variables then there is indeed a place for empirical research in addressing this question. The first step in this process is to ask what variables are available to us when making comparisons with respect to happiness outcomes from varying sources. Kashdan et al. (2008) list comparisons on the basis of frequency, intensity, and durability. That list should be expanded:

- (1) Descriptive elements regarding what is subjectively experienced;
- (2) Intensity of happiness on a given occasion;
- (3) Frequency of the occasions on which happiness is experienced for a given source;
- (4) Duration of happiness on each occasion;
- (5) Sustainability across repeated occasions/Resistance to adaptation;
- (6) Reliability of the source-outcome relationship/Predictability;
- (7) Tendency to monopolize attention/Addictive quality; and
- (8) Impact upon others in a person's immediate social network and more broadly.

The bulk of the studies conducted by researchers working from both a SWB and eudaimonic perspective have been concerned primarily with demonstrating that sources make a difference either in descriptive elements of the happiness experience or in the intensity reported on generic measures of happiness. As research in the field of well-being in its various forms moves

forward, greater attention should be devoted to a broader array of variables regarding how happiness is experienced. There is a second step in the process of considering whether happiness from some sources is 'better' than others. There will be little controversy over the idea that happiness that is more intense, of longer duration, more sustainable across repeated occasions, more predictable, less addictive, and which yields greater benefits to others is to be preferred to its alternatives, other things being equal. While it is an empirical question as to whether all of these elements of happiness experiences co-occur, it is likely that they will not. If that is indeed the case then how can it be determined whether more intense, shorter duration happiness is 'better' than less intense, longer duration experiences of happiness? The same can be asked about any arrangement of contrasting combinations. We can employ the methods of psychological science to ask people which they prefer and observe their behavior with regard to what they actually choose in experimental situations. This will tell us only what people prefer, or what they do, not whether one choice is 'better' in the sense of being what people *ought to do* in order to live A Good Life. On this, reasonable people can reasonably differ.

### Concluding recommendations

I will conclude this essay, as did Kashdan et al. (2008) did theirs, with a series of recommendations to help guide future research exploring the nature of happiness and well-being:

#### **(1) Greater attention should be paid to the philosophical foundations underlying psychological research on happiness and well-being**

Whereas Kashdan et al. (2008) would have us abandon the language of eudaimonia hedonia, and other terms derived from philosophy, I support the hope expressed by Kesebir and Diener (2008) that with respect to research on happiness 'the fields of philosophy and psychology will continue to inspire and enrich each other' (p. 123). It is certainly not incumbent upon psychologists to ground their studies in philosophical discussions concerning the nature of A Good Life. The field of research concerning happiness and well-being has made great strides through the work of investigators who have not sought inspiration in philosophy. Those psychologists who do wish to bring the tools of science to the study of philosophical constructs and questions should provide more than just citations of the philosophical origins to their research questions. They should provide a careful delineation of the philosophical contentions under investigation and the implications that would follow from findings of

empirical support, or the lack thereof. We should be mindful that our contributions to philosophical debates are limited to the evaluation of teleological claims and that the evaluation of deontological arguments is beyond the scope of science.

#### **(2) Greater care should be taken with regard to identifying the role played by the level of analysis in our findings pertaining to happiness and well-being and to the exploration of the generalizability of findings across levels**

Happiness, whether in the form of hedonia or eudaimonia, is a term pertaining to the subjective experiences present on a given occasion or in a given context (e.g., a type of event, goal, or activity). Well-being, whether in the form of SWB, PWB, or EWB, is a variable at the level of the individual averaged over time. (Kashdan's et al., 2008, repeated juxtaposition of eudaimonia with SWB crosses levels and is interpretable only if eudaimonia is thought of as a set of experiences averaged over time, that is, as EWB.) It is possible to study the relationships among comparable sets of variables at both levels. For example, according to self-determination theory, choice or autonomy plays a major role in intrinsic motivation. At the level of the occasion, experimental studies have demonstrated that choice is an important predictor of the enjoyment experienced when engaged in an activity and the willingness to continue with it beyond the time ostensibly called for in the research study (Deci & Ryan, 1985). At the level of the individual, respondents who report high levels of autonomy in their lives similarly score higher on measures on intrinsic motivation. In this instance, the relationship generalizes across levels. There is no certainty however that such generalizability will always obtain. It is therefore incumbent upon us, whatever conceptions of happiness are being investigated, to attend to whether the relationships we find are level specific or of wider applicability.

#### **(3) Greater attention should be paid to comparing the consequences of different potential sources of happiness**

The debate over hedonia and eudaimonia as distinguishable conceptions of happiness has focused attention on the importance of the source of happiness for a qualitative understanding of the resulting subjective experiences. We have traditionally studied how particular events (e.g., marriage, winning a lottery, serious injury), or particular goals or strivings (e.g., achieving better grades, becoming famous, getting rich), or particular types of activities (e.g., work, recreation, social relationships) affect happiness

and well-being. Different people experiencing the same event, choosing the same goal or striving, or participating in the same activity, may do so because they wish to derive very different things from it. Research on happiness and well-being will likely be more productive if we take into consideration not only what people do and how they feel as a result of what they do, but also what people are seeking in their lives and why. In other words, we should be asking not only whether some event or goal or activity results in happiness and, if so, how strongly, but also what it is about the event, or goal, or activity that accounts for the subjective experiences derived from it. If those of us working with a eudaimonic perspective are correct, we will find that why we seek to be happy makes an important difference in both the qualitative and quantitative experiences of happiness we obtain.

**(4) Researchers should move beyond the use of only global, undifferentiated assessments of happiness to the simultaneous measurement of both hedonia and eudaimonia**

As I indicated earlier, we are still in the relatively early stages of investigating similarities and differences associated with these subjective conditions. Progress in the field is likely to advance more rapidly if researchers administer measures of both sets of constructs than if instruments tapping only one or the other constructs are employed. To this point, the focus of attention has been on hedonia and eudaimonia as potentially different qualitative experiences of happiness. Just as it is thought that eudaimonia is a form of happiness specifically related to self-realization and the pursuit of excellence, it is possible that other conceptions of happiness will be identified with other sources. If so, we will need to expand the instrumentation regularly employed in our research to accommodate the increased differentiation achieved.

**(5) Greater attention should be paid to the various possible quantitative outcome measures on which happiness can be compared, such as intensity, duration, sustainability, predictability, etc.**

Researchers studying happiness and well-being have typically been concerned only with measuring quantitative levels pertaining to the strength or intensity of happiness, whether on a given occasion, in a given context, or over a lifetime. Since intensity is not the only dimension on which experiences of happiness or well-being can vary, a more complete understanding of these phenomena requires the study of other dimensions as well. In doing so, we can move beyond the easy, but superficial assumption that 'more' is 'better'.

Despite the very different conclusions that Kashdan et al. (2008) and I reach regarding the value of continuing efforts to make distinctions between hedonia and eudaimonia, and between SWB, PWB, and EWB, there is, nevertheless, a considerable degree of overlap in the recommendations for future research we are advancing. We share the view that as we go forward in our various research endeavors, our understanding of happiness and well-being will benefit from taking into consideration a broader array of sources and outcomes, and that this should be done across differing levels of assessment. Most importantly, we share as well the goal of improving our understanding of what makes for a life well lived. It is in that spirit that I hope we will come to see work from the SWB and eudaimonic perspectives (and other perspectives in the field as well), not as competitors in a zero-sum game but as complementary endeavors capable of enhancing and strengthening each others' efforts at theory building and research.

#### Notes

1. The only earlier PsycINFO entry occurred in 1864 in a book review on Aristotelian ethics. It should also be mentioned here that Rollo May (1969) in *Love and will* discussed eudaimonist philosophy, though this work was not noted in PsycINFO.
2. Kashdan et al. (2008) consistently use the phrase 'The Good Life.' In this essay I use the phrase 'A Good Life' instead. The difference is that the former phrase suggests that there is a single form a good life should take. The latter carries an implication that there may be a multitude of alternative paths one may take in pursuit of a good life. This is a philosophical debate that is beyond the scope of material I wish to address here.
3. Defining EWB in terms of the objective conditions associated with well-being, that is, flourishing, would render the construct equivalent to PWB. Rather than have EWB refer to both the subjective and objective conceptualizations of eudaimonic functioning, I have elected to restrict my usage of the term to the former as there is a well-established term for the latter.
4. I am currently in the process of developing and validating a Scale for Eudaimonic Well-Being that contains global items pertaining to both the subjective experiences of eudaimonia and the extent to which respondents believe they have identified their best potentials and established their purposes in life.

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