

## Eudaimonic Growth: The Development of the Goods in Personhood (or: Cultivating a Good Life Story)

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That eudaimonia develops is hardly debated. No one is born with eudaimonic well-being. However, eudaimonic models of a good life, from Aristotle to the present day, in both philosophy and psychology, typically do not examine the processes and contexts of development. Eudaimonic models must assume that eudaimonia develops somehow, but in the end most models define and measure eudaimonia by whether a person's life, at one point in time, has eudaimonic qualities or not, without much regard to the developmental factors that yield such a life. This chapter is about how the goods in life develop. I call this process *eudaimonic growth*.

One might ask: Who cares? What does it matter *how* the person comes to a good life, so long as he or she does? Even I agree that, for the purpose of this or that research study, the processes of eudaimonic growth may be of no legitimate concern. But such an approach, as a model of a good life, is likely to neglect key factors in both what might constitute a good life and what makes a good life possible in the first place. Without considering the dynamic ways in which a life unfolds over time, we can be easily misled into thinking that the good in life can and should be

modeled in simple ways—perhaps more for the desire of parsimonious modeling than for the endeavor to understand individuals' lives.

The term *good life* has two words. Almost all the debate on the topic revolves around the first word, good. The question of what makes a good life is almost always interpreted to mean, "What is the good?" But I prefer to start with the second word, life. "What is life?" asks George Kelly in laying the groundwork for his theory of personal constructs (1955, p. 7). "There are some parts of the universe which make a good deal of sense even when they are not viewed in the perspective of *time*. But there are other parts which make sense only when they are plotted along a time line. Life is one of the latter. ...[L]ife has to be seen in the perspective of time if it is to make any sense at all" (emphasis added). Similarly, I take a good life to mean more than just an evaluation of the person at a single point in time, and certainly more than just an evaluation of one or two features of the person (say, pleasure or meaning) at a single point in time. As I see it, a claim about a good *life* is a claim about the individual person over time, about personhood over time, and about the goods within personhood that develop over time.

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## 10.1 Overview of this Chapter

This chapter addresses two primary questions. The first section of the chapter asks: What is the good of personhood? The second and third chapters ask: How does it develop?

The first section of the chapter outlines a model of the varied goods of personhood—a personological model of eudaimonia. This model integrates eudaimonics and hedonics; I argue that meaning and pleasure are two, irreducible goods of personhood. Furthermore, I provide a framework of philosophically subjectivist and objectivist approaches to the good in which just about every measure of eudaimonia and hedonia can be mapped. Again, the aim here is to understand personhood in terms of the good. From this perspective, well-being becomes a matter not of simply either pleasure or meaningfulness but rather of the *wellness of one's being*. One's being surely includes pleasure but not exclusively or ultimately. Wisdom, moral virtues, meaningfulness, and growth all obtain as well.

Following from that model, the second section of the chapter examines the idea of eudaimonic growth. Of particular focus is the distinction between eudaimonic, humanistic, and organismic perspectives on growth. Also of focus is the distinction between growth attained and growth valued, both of which are essential considerations.

The third section of the chapter considers the relation between eudaimonic growth and self-identity. The person who identifies with the idea of eudaimonic growth has what I call a *transformative self* (Bauer, 2016). The idea of growth serves as a central feature of this person's mental

model of self—and as a central theme in this person's life story. I focus on *narrative* self-identity, an approach that is especially well suited for studying self-identity in relation to cultural concepts of a good life. Life stories and a good life shed light on each other, theoretically and empirically. A life story is an attempt to construct a story of a good life (Taylor, 1989). Conversely, the features of a good life gain their meaning—indeed, become good—in the context of stories. The words “good life story” in the title of this chapter refer to a story of a good life. The person with a transformative self draws on cultural master narratives of a good life.

To give an overview of the various concepts in this chapter, Table 10.1 shows how the varied goods in life can be divided into five umbrella categories and how these five categories map reasonably well onto five features of life stories, respectively. The five umbrella categories of the goods in life are hedonic happiness, love (which includes communal love for others, agentic love for activities, and a sense of meaningfulness), wisdom, and growth. The five narrative features are affective tone, motivational theme, organizational structure, and temporal development. This chapter is an exercise in explaining this table. By way of introduction, this table compares concepts that focus on similar kinds of goods in life. For example, affective tones in a personal narrative deal with the positive or negative assessments in a narrative, but not the specific value orientations or motivations of the narrative. Similarly, hedonia as a model of a good life deals with the positive or negative assessments of a life, but not the specific value orientations or motivations in the

**Table 10.1** How theoretical features of narrative self-identity and a good life reflect each other to form a model of personhood and its goods

Features of narrative self-identity	Features of meaning-making	The good in life/personhood	Model of a good life
Plot	Facts	Basic needs	Assumed conditions for a good life
Tone	Affective valence	Happiness	Hedonia
Theme	Value and motive	Love	Eudaimonia
Structure	Perspectivity	Wisdom	
Time	Development	Growth	

person's life. In contrast, the narrative features of value-laden themes, structural perspectivity, and development over time all map onto primary goods in eudaimonic models of a good life.

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## 10.2 The Big Umbrella of Eudaimonia

One of the problems of eudaimonia is that it means so many things (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008; Ward & King, Chap. 35, this volume). Each eudaimonist has his or her own list of candidate goods in life. Furthermore, many if not most measures of eudaimonic well-being correlate with measures of hedonic happiness, most notably subjective well-being as defined by pleasure and satisfaction (Diener, Lucas, & Scollon, 2006; Haybron, 2008, this volume; Sheldon, 2013, this volume). As a result, some have claimed that it makes sense to drop the term *eudaimonia* altogether and simply focus on subjective well-being and the many correlates and contributors of it. However, I advocate using the terms *eudaimonia* and *eudaimonic well-being* if only because they remind us that well-being can mean something broader than merely pleasure and satisfaction (while simultaneously acknowledging their importance). Hedonic happiness is not the only worthwhile good. Furthermore, it is not the ultimate outcome; hedonic judgments of good or bad only seem to be the “bottom line,” and then only from subjectivist and non-organismic perspectives on personhood.

If I had to choose a single word to represent the many facets of eudaimonia as it is typically studied, I would choose *meaning*. Naturally a single term is unsatisfactory. But meaning serves as a handy contrast to the term *pleasure*, which is commonly used as a defining characteristic of hedonia (even if hedonia is more aptly summarized as the combination of pleasurable experience and satisfaction—Haybron, 2008). The term *meaning*, as I interpret it, refers to all qualities of the good in life besides hedonic pleasure and satisfaction, such as wisdom, moral virtues, self-actualizing, a sense of meaningfulness or

fulfillment, and other canonical qualities of eudaimonia.

In this section of the chapter we first consider how pleasure and meaning are two, irreducible goods of personhood. Then we examine subjectivist and objectivist approaches to the measurement of the goods of personhood, the combination of which offers a more comprehensive model of a good life. Finally I organize all those measures into five umbrella categories of a good life—basic-need fulfillment, happiness, love, wisdom, and growth—that I view as helpful to the study of well-being generally and to the study of it in relation to self-identity.

### 10.2.1 How Eudaimonia Can Encompass Pleasure and Meaning

Eudaimonia is typically contrasted with hedonia, but several models allow for a more compatibilist view (e.g., Bauer & McAdams, 2010; Huta, 2013, this volume; Keyes, Schmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Sheldon, 2013). What matters for hedonic theories of a good life is the focus on pleasure and satisfaction (Haybron, 2008). In contrast, what matters for eudaimonic theories is a focus on meaning (Wolf, 2010), by which is meant an umbrella term for any of the kinds of things that might bring about enduring pleasures or enduring satisfaction—and that might be valuable for other purposes as well. Meaning in this broad sense is well-suited as an overarching, single term to capture the qualities of eudaimonia that can be differentiated from hedonia (Steger, Yeon Shin, Shim, & Fitch-Martin, 2013; Steger, Chap. 11, this volume). In this section I wish to present the case that pleasure and meaning are two, irreducible goods in life. Between hedonia and eudaimonia, only eudaimonia allows for such a view, since the hedonic argument is one of exclusivity. To the question, “What makes a good life?” the hedonist answers, “Pleasure, period.” The eudaimonist typically answers, “Meaning, period.” I wish to argue that the eudaimonist answer can be “Pleasure plus meaning.” Put another way, plea-

sure is necessary but not sufficient *as a candidate good* for a good life.<sup>1</sup>

### **Is Pleasure Necessary as a Candidate Good? Yes**

Pleasure is important on its own. No, pleasure is not a uniquely human quality and is certainly not virtuous in itself. But yes, pleasure is universally (or nearly universally) desired. Soon into this discussion we see that pleasure can have several meanings, e.g., as an experience, an attitude, or a positive feeling that has more to do with the feeling of knowing that one acted virtuously or even experienced virtue (Vittersø, 2013, this volume). Still, I am claiming that pleasure in the hedonic sense can be valued in its own sake. Now, intrinsically motivated activities—that is, actions done for the pleasure of doing them—have specifically eudaimonic qualities (Waterman, Schwartz, & Conti, 2008; Schwartz & Wrzesniewski, Chap. 8, this volume). But it is a strong argument that pleasure or satisfaction (either for oneself or someone else, either intense or subtle) is the ultimate aim for action (Sheldon, 2013). On a more simplistic level, the word good can mean “pleasurable” or “virtuous.” A life with pleasure is more full and simply better in subjectively experienced ways than a life without pleasure, other things equal. A person whose life has virtue but lacks pleasure may certainly be said to have a good life, but try asking that person who lacks pleasure whether something significant in life is missing. For these reasons I view pleasure, on its own, to be a candidate good in life (and thereby claim that moral goods are not the only goods worth considering in a good life). However, arguments for the universality and even primacy of pleasure do not legitimize the argument for the exclusivity of pleasure.

<sup>1</sup>Here I am presenting a case for what goods (like pleasure and meaning) are on the list for a good life. A good life may have pleasure but not virtuous meaning. A good life may have virtuous meaning but not pleasure. A good life need not have both.

### **Is Pleasure Sufficient as a Candidate Good? No**

I have three problems with the purely hedonic position. First is that it is too selfish. Hedonists have always had to battle this criticism. Their solutions, short of collapsing into solipsism, invariably involve the qualification of pleasures. Few models of hedonia claim that any form of pleasure counts for a good life (Flanagan, 2011). Selfishness and hurtful hedonic activity are generally out of bounds. Hedonic models of a good life often include *some* consideration of others, as in Bentham’s notion of the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Problems of overindulgence are tempered by beliefs in balance, such as Aristotle’s golden mean, Buddha’s middle way, or (from a more hedonic perspective) Epicurus’ equanimity, which derives from an equilibrium between excess and deficiency (Warren, 2009). The perils of advocating “pleasure, period” have also been tempered by qualifications that hedonic happiness be grounded in authenticity (Sumner, 1996), which is in most cases a eudaimonist concern and requires elaborate contortions to be rendered hedonic. In any case, it is clear that pleasure needs to be qualified in some context—which is to say, by this or that source of meaning.

My second reason why pleasure is not sufficient has to do with what I call the “negativity paradox.” If pleasure is good and pain is bad, then it is impossible to explain a great deal of research showing that there is such a thing as too much pleasure. For instance, when adjusting to difficult life circumstances, the exclusive, subjective focus on positive experiences actually predicts poorer adjustment than a “mostly positive, some negative” focus, or a ratio of 3:1 or 5:1 positive-to-negative evaluations (Bauer & Bonanno, 2001; Fredrickson, 2013; Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999). When considering life in general, cultural ideals for a good life story are not exclusively positive but instead call for a transition from bad to good, which Dan McAdams (2006) calls “the redemptive self.” As the old saying in journalism goes, no one wants to read a headline like “Millions Happy in Kansas Sunshine.”

Third, hedonia is too simple. Valerie Tiberius (2013) notes that hedonists criticize eudaimonists for having too variable and too long a list of “ingredients” for a good life (see also Tiberius, Chap. 38, this volume). But she criticizes hedonists for having too short a list—a list of one item, which is to say, pleasure. Subjectively, most people value both pleasure and meaning (Baumeister, Vohs, Aaker, & Garbinsky, 2013; King & Napa, 1998). People do not want simply to feel good. The philosopher Robert Nozick’s (1983) experience machine gets at this question: If you could be hooked up to a machine that makes you feel good no matter what suffering might otherwise surround you, would you choose to be hooked up? (Or, would you take the blue pill in *The Matrix*?) The fact is that truth matters for people, and the search for truth is not all roses. Then there are the evolutionary arguments for our basic need for a concern for others, which is to say, that moral behavior is an inherent good for persons (Keltner, 2010). Hedonic models simply exclude too much of what makes a life good.

### **Pleasurable Experience and the Slippery Slope Toward Eudaimonia**

Pleasurable experience is generally the domain of hedonists. Yet intrinsically motivated activities—those done for the sheer pleasure or enjoyment of the activity itself—are closely tied to self-realization, flow experiences, and other sources of eudaimonic meaning in life (Waterman et al., 2008). Experiential rather than material purchases yield enduring effects of happiness—which is to say, *meaningful* effects (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). Experiential purchases foster reminiscence, particularly of experiences shared with close others, and guard against the rumination and counterfactual thinking that come with material purchases (Carter & Gilovich, 2010). The link between experiences of pure pleasure and meaning is important. The hedonist might argue that pleasure is what makes the experience important, and the eudaimonist might argue for the meaning of that pleasurable event. The pleasure of pursuing virtuous activities, as distinct from purely hedonic experience (which is to say,

non-eudaimonic), plays a critical role in understanding pleasure and eudaimonia (Vittersø, 2013). However, I wish to take things a bit further to claim that hedonic pleasure on its own, regardless of whether it is tied to a virtuous context (either by the individual subjectively or by objective assessment), should serve as a candidate good in the eudaimonic list. What makes this position eudaimonic rather than hedonic is that I am also claiming that hedonic pleasure is not enough. It must be balanced, as must all candidate goods—for the same reason that any one virtuous act can do harm to someone—within the broader context of the person, in the context of situations, within the broader context of the person’s development over time within a social ecology. In other words, I’m targeting the wellness of one’s being, broadly construed. As for the rationale, I look to the meeting of pleasure and meaning in the concept of value.

### **10.2.2 Value as the Nexus of Pleasure and Meaning**

Value has facets of thinking and feeling. Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) define a value as a concept or belief that has a desirable end state or behavior (note the implication of pleasure) and that endures beyond the immediate moment, among other qualities. Values represent what people (with an emphasis on persons) feel and think are important or meaningful over time. Here I argue that values are an *enduring pleasure* that is defined in terms of the specific context of that pleasure, which is to say, a *meaning*.

Any one meaning involves a sense of desirability or pleasure at its core. Yet a fleeting pleasure is itself not meaningful unless a set of fleeting pleasures are strung together conceptually into a meaning—and unless a person finds the strung-together meaning pleasing. Value is *felt* as the pleasure of a specific source or context of a pleasing or satisfying experience. Value is *thought* as the specific meaning or context of that pleasing or satisfying experience. In other words, values link together conceptual meanings and felt affects. Thus values are at the heart of meaning;

they make a conceptual meaning *meaningful*. But as to whether felt pleasure or conceptual meaning takes center stage, I am hard pressed to say. Value exists as pleasure and meaning co-arise in a context of persons, situations, personal development, and the social ecology of each.

In the context of a good life, a meaning is a conceptual knowledge structure that holds personal value; it is personally *meaningful*. Such meanings come in many forms, such as wisdom, virtue, friendship, etc. Meaning from this perspective is a *context* (Baumeister, 1991). For instance, a pleasurable experience becomes meaningful upon thinking about the experience in terms of its context: Watching a sunset, playing with a friend, or enduring a hardship becomes meaningful upon thinking about the activity in terms of the people in it (who are personally meaningful and endure over time; this might include the self), the place (which is personally meaningful and endures over time), particular ideals or values themselves (such as fairness or care), and the like.

### 10.2.3 Orientations, Fulfillments, and Structures of Value

Values are measured in psychology in three general ways, in terms of their orientation, fulfillment, and structure. Psychological measures of value orientation include measures that assess whether or how much a person is oriented toward particular *types* of meaning. Measures of values and motivation—but not motivation fulfillment—fall into this category (e.g., growth motivation—Bauer, Park, Montoya, & Wayment, 2015; achievement motives of mastery, performance, approach, and avoidance—Elliot & McGregor, 2001; moral foundations of justice, care, authority, loyalty, and purity—Graham et al., 2011; eudaimonic and hedonic motives—Huta & Ryan, 2010; self-determined and controlled motives—Deci & Ryan, 2000; various values like universalism, benevolence, power, security, and stimulation—Schwartz, 2007).

Measures of value fulfillment assess any form of meaningfulness, whether in general or in a specific context or domain of life. The term *meaningfulness* is the evaluation and experience that a particular value or meaning has been fulfilled. By meaningfulness I mean a value fulfillment (Baumeister, 1991; Tiberius, 2014; Wolf, 2010), which, when studied as central values to one's selfhood can include self-fulfillment (Haybron, 2008). When one assesses one's own life as meaningful, one is likely drawing on the feeling that a particular meaning or value orientation has been fulfilled to a personally satisfying degree—that a need for meaning (Baumeister, 1991) has been met. Here we see the primary difference between hedonia and eudaimonia. From the perspective of meaningfulness just described, life satisfaction can be viewed as a form of meaningfulness. Because life satisfaction does not take into consideration a specific context of meaning but rather one's life in general, life satisfaction is among the most general and abstract forms of meaningfulness, having much more in common with the context-free assessments of affectivity and global self-esteem than with the context-specific assessments of various forms of meaning in life (e.g., meaningful relationships or a sense or environmental mastery—Ryff & Singer, 2008). Life satisfaction correlates with meaningfulness in life (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006), but life satisfaction itself is a global assessment that a life is satisfying, without reference to the varied sources (that is, the context, the meaning) of that satisfaction. It is the source or context of an assessment of pleasure or satisfaction that reflects meaningfulness and is of concern for eudaimonists (e.g., Wolf, 2010; not that meaningfulness is of universal concern for eudaimonists). As soon as an assessment involves the consideration of specific sources of meaning—love, work, personal mastery, etc.—we have an assessment of meaningfulness. Thus I have claimed that Ryff's measure of psychological well-being is a measure of meaningfulness: It assesses six domains of meaning in life, with an emphasis on the degree to which one feels that

those values in life have been satisfied or fulfilled (Bauer et al., 2015; Bauer, McAdams, & Pals, 2008). Similarly, the Meaning in Life Questionnaire—Presence subscale (Steger et al., 2006) measures the degree to which a person claims to “have” meaning in life, which is to say, to have certain valued meanings relatively fulfilled in life. However, unlike Ryff’s measure, Steger’s measure targets meaningfulness in general, rather than specific contexts of it.

Finally, measures of value structure focus on neither the type nor the fulfillment of values but rather on the *organizational structure* of the meanings of those values. Value structure is measured as degrees of integrative complexity, perspective-taking, or differentiation and integration in a research participant’s thinking about the self and others (Kegan, 1982; Labouvie-Vief, 2006; Loevinger, 1976; Suedfeld & Bluck, 1993; Tadmor, Tetlock, & Peng, 2007). Whereas most psychological measures of value orientations and value fulfillments are subjectively assessed (via self-report), measures of value structure are more objectivist: External researchers identify the degree of complexity, integration, or perspectivity of a person’s subjective responses to an open-ended question. Many of (though not all) these measures derive from developmental theory—and a Piagetian, structural-developmental theory in particular. Higher capacities to take multiple perspectives are characterized by higher degrees of psychosocial maturity and wisdom (Staudinger, Dörner, & Mickler, 2005; Law & Staudinger, Chap. 9, this volume).

### 10.2.4 Subjective and Objective: How We Measure Personhood and a Good Life

I am especially interested in the idea of a reasonably comprehensive model of eudaimonia that is empirically measurable, even if its measurement is not possible in a single set of studies. One of the more divisive issues deals with how we know the good: subjectively or objectively. I see no compelling reason why we cannot study eudaimonia from both subjectivist and objectivist perspectives. I start from the perspective that a good life—if we consider the whole person and indeed the varieties of personhood that might be good—is multifaceted, some of it known to the individual person and some of it not known to the person, or at least not reliably so. The pluralist, radical empiricism of William James (1907, 1909) strikes me as the sensible course if our objective is to come to as comprehensive understanding as possible of a good life. To map out the territory without taking up much space, we can consider the subjectivist–objectivist debate in a 2 × 4 table that maps the individual person and others onto qualities of the good, such as its beneficiary, criteria, and evaluations (see Table 10.2).

#### Whose Well-Being? Internalist Versus Externalist Perspectives

One form of the subjectivist-objectivist debate is more precisely about internalist versus externalist perspectives (Haybron, 2008). These perspectives belong to Source 1 in Table 10.2 and address

**Table 10.2** Internalist, externalist, subjectivist, and objectivist assumptions in any measure of personhood and its goods

	Sources of information in measuring a person’s well-being			
	Source 1	Source 2	Source 3	Source 4
	Beneficiary of the good	Criterion of the good	Description of the Person/well-being	Evaluation of the Person/well-being
	Whose well-being?	Who sets criteria for well-being?	Who describes the person?	Who evaluates the person?
<b>Individual</b>	Internalist participant	Subjectivist participant	Subjectivist participant	Subjectivist participant
<b>Other(s)</b>	Externalist other people	Objectivist researcher(s)	Objectivist other person(s) <sup>a</sup>	Objectivist other person(s)

<sup>a</sup>The other person may be the researcher, a team of researchers, or other research participants

the question: Whose welfare is being taken into consideration—other people’s (externalism) or just the individual’s (internalism)? Measures that include concern for others’ welfare are externalist (e.g., Keyes, 1998; Ryff & Keyes, 1995), noting (and this is important) that they may also include concerns for the individual’s own welfare (Haybron, 2008). Measures that include concern for the individual’s own welfare (and not explicit concern for others’ welfare) are internalist, whether hedonic or (e.g., subjective well-being—Diener et al., 2006) or eudaimonic (meaning in life—Steger et al., 2006). Notably, externalist models of the good may be measured by either subjective (Keyes, 1998; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) or objective assessments (Labouvie-Vief, 2006; Loewinger, 1976). What matters is whether the measure asks the assessor to consider the welfare of others.

### Whose Criteria for Well-Being?

The question for Source 2 is: Who sets the criteria on which the participants will be measured? I mention Source 2 only for pedagogical purposes, because it is not an issue for scientific measures (and because sometimes this source is mistaken for the other sources). Virtually no scientific research allows the research participants themselves to *define the criteria* of the good for any particular measure. Only the researcher designs the measure. Of course participants can assess themselves in scientific measures via self-report, thereby determining whether a particular characteristic of self is relatively good or bad. But that deals with Sources 3 and 4, not 2.

### Who Assesses Well-Being? Subjectivist Versus Objectivist Perspectives

The next two questions are more relevant for scientific measures—particularly Source 4, which is the one that deals with the production of most data in psychological research on well-being, namely self-report. Sources 3 and 4 deal with the description (Source 3) and evaluation (Source 4) of the person’s well-being, characteristics, or other qualities. For most research on well-being, which is self-report, Sources 3 and 4 are the same: the individual person who makes the sub-

jective self-report. However, some research methods distinguish the two. For example, narrative research often involves subjective descriptions of the self (Source 3) that are only converted into data by objective (i.e., researcher-rated or computer-rated) assessments of those subjective descriptions (Source 4). Almost always, Source 4 refers to the numerical data of well-being that are used in statistical analyses.

### Considering the Combinations

Let’s consider how these categories can be used to organize just about any measure of personhood or well-being. Table 10.3 draws on the framework of Table 10.2 to organize measures of hedonia and eudaimonia, including measures of well-being (as typically studied) and measures of motives and values. Measures are first classified by subjectivist versus objectivist evaluations (Source 4) in the top and bottom halves of the table, respectively. Measures are then classified in terms of whose welfare is to be considered (individuals or others too), as defined by the measure that instructs those people in the research study who are making the evaluations of the person. Internalist measures consider the welfare of the individual person alone, whereas externalist measures consider the welfare of other people as well as the individual person (definition of internalism versus externalism from Haybron, 2008). Sources 2 and 3 in Table 10.2 are not considered here. Table 10.3 further differentiates measures according to what they measure: value orientations, value fulfillments, value structure, or time. Finally, Table 10.3 shows how these measures align with umbrella categories of the good in life (happiness, love, wisdom, growth), which is explained in the next section.

To start wading through Table 10.3, let’s consider as an example hedonic measures of subjective well-being (e.g., Diener et al., 2006) as well as eudaimonic measures of value orientations (e.g., values—Schwartz, 2007; self-determination theory motives—Deci & Ryan, 2000) and value fulfillments (e.g., presence of meaning in life—Steger et al., 2006; psychological well-being—Ryff & Keyes, 1995). For any of these measures, Source 1 is expressly internalist, because the



**Table 10.3** Sample measures of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, as organized according to internalist, externalist, subjectivist, and objectivist measures

		Source 4: subjectivist evaluation ( <i>all are self-report measures</i> )					
			Hedonic pleasure	Eudaimonic meaning			
			Happiness	Love		Wisdom	Growth
		Basic needs	VO & VF <sup>a</sup>	Value orientation	Value fulfillment	Value structure	Time
<b>Source 1: beneficiary of the Good</b>	<b>Internalist</b>	Self-report on food, survival, health, etc.	Positive and negative affect	Explicit agentic motives and values	Psychological well-being—all but positive relations	Self-described coherence of self, goals, etc.	Self-described improvement in self or agentic concerns
			Life satisfaction	Intrinsic/extrinsic motivation	Presence of meaning in life		
			Self-esteem	Self-rated agentic narrative themes	Satisfaction of agentic needs		
			Hedonic motives	Identity status–exploration	Authenticity (indiv.)		
				Curiosity	Flow experienced		
				Savoring anticipated	Savoring done		
				Eudaimonic motives	Self-efficacy Self-Concept Clarity		
	<b>Externalist</b>		Explicit communal motives and values	Psychological well-being–positive relations	Self-described positioning of self and others	Self-reported improvement in relationships or communal concerns	
			Generativity	Social well-being			
			Growth motivation	Flourishing			
			Prejudice/group identity	Satisfaction of communal needs			
			Self-actualization	Authenticity (incl. others welfare)			
			Moral foundations	Adult attachment			
			Explicit motives Self-rated comm. narrative themes	Identity status–commitment			

(continued)

**Table 10.3** (continued)

		Source 4: objectivist evaluation ( <i>all are non-self-report measures</i> )					
			Hedonic pleasure	Eudaimonic meaning			
			Happiness	Love		Wisdom	Growth
		Basic needs	VO & VF <sup>a</sup>	Value orientation	Value fulfillment	Value structure	Time
<b>Source 1: beneficiary of the good</b>	<b>Internalist</b>	Medical records	Physiological stress etc.	Implicit agentic motives and values	Researcher-rated, agentic fulfillment	Self-rated coherence of self, goals, etc.	Objective changes over time, agentic
			Targeted marketing in business	Researcher-rated agency-motive themes in narratives <sup>b</sup>	Clinician-rated agentic, healthy functioning	Narrative integrative complexity	Researcher-rated growth attained
				Targeted marketing			
	<b>Externalist</b>	Socio-economic status	Implicit communal motives and values	Researcher-rated relatedness or communal fulfillment	Narrative positioning analysis	Changes over time, communal	
				Researcher-rated communion-motive themes in narratives <sup>b</sup>			Clinician-rated, communally healthy functioning
						Kegan subject-object dev't	

<sup>a</sup>VO & VF: Value orientation and value fulfillment. Measures of pleasure (and satisfaction) may be either value orientations or fulfillments. Most measures deal with fulfillment, i.e., *having* pleasurable experiences or satisfaction in life. Some measures deal with value orientations for seeking pleasure (e.g., hedonic motives) or seeking specific forms of it (e.g., others' approval, social status, power, money, etc.). I compressed what should be two columns (for value orientations and fulfillments) into one for the sake of space.

<sup>b</sup>Narrative measures: When coded by researchers or software, narrative measures are objective assessments, not subjective. When participants code their own narrative measures, it's subjective. Coded narratives are more common, at least when it comes to studying value and meaning. However, just as participants may rate their own personal strivings in terms of value (e.g., intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995), narratives may also be rated in this way. Typically, however, one strength of narrative measures is that they are not mere self-reports.

measures do not ask one to rate one's life in terms of the welfare of others. As with all scientific measures, Source 2 is expressly objective: The measure by design forces the person to define the good in terms of pleasure and satisfaction. Sources 3 and 4 are both subjective: In taking the questionnaires, the participant mentally generates a description of his or her life (Source 3) and then also generates an evaluative assessment (e.g., a series of 1–7 ratings) of that description (Source 4). Now consider a measure that is subjectivist for Sources 3 and 4 but is externalist, not internalist, for Source 1: Any measure that asks participants to rate how much they are concerned for others (e.g., social well-being—Keyes, 1998; generative concern—McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). As for narratives, we have already considered research-rated personal narratives, which may be either internalist or externalist for Source 1, subjectivist for Source 3, but objectivist for Source 4. Finally, some measures in Table 10.3 have subscales that appear in different cells. Within a measure, one subscale may assess value orientation or motivation (e.g., the anticipation subscale of savoring—Bryant, 2003), while another may assess value fulfillment (e.g., routine savoring experienced in life). As another example, one subscale may assess internalist concerns (e.g., five of the six subscales of psychological well-being—Ryff & Keyes, 1995), while another subscale may assess externalist concerns (e.g., the positive relations subscale of psychological well-being). Still other measurement constructs have both subjective and objective approaches, as with explicit and implicit motives (Schultheiss, Yankova, Dirlikov, & Schad, 2009; Thrash, Elliot, & Schultheiss, 2007), where explicit motives are self-reported and implicit motives are researcher-assessed.

When it comes to measuring personhood and its goods, we might employ any of these approaches: internalist subjective (e.g., Subjective Well-Being—Diener; Meaning in Life Questionnaire), internalist objective (e.g., heart rate; narrative coding of personal achievements), externalist subjective (e.g., Psychological Well-Being or the Loyola Generativity Scale), or externalist objective (e.g., Ego Development or the

narrative coding of generativity). Is a subjective or objective definition of the good in life better? I reject the question; both are helpful in our collective project of understanding the fullness of personhood and flourishing. We turn now to that fullness—and the myriad measures of it.

### 10.2.5 Umbrella Categories: Happiness, Love, Wisdom, Growth

This model of measuring personhood and its goods is complex. Yet all those measures fit more or less squarely within five umbrella categories of a good life.

#### Basic Needs and Other Constraints to Flourishing

The development of a good life requires a fertile ground of leisure and luck, as Aristotle put it. Leisure is shorthand for the resources that allow a person both not to worry about basic needs like food and shelter and to have enough time to think deeply about life. These are questions about one's life in the context of biological affordances and resources available in one's social ecology. The important empirical issue as I see it is whether leisure makes eudaimonia more likely. As a survey of more than 60,000 people from more than 120 countries has shown, personal concerns for things like one's sense of competence and relatedness are significantly (and overwhelmingly) less likely if one's basic needs for food and the preservation of one's life are in question (Tay & Diener, 2011). Nussbaum's (1998, 2011) model of a good life in philosophy, the Capabilities Approach, is greatly concerned with the role of basic-need satisfaction in the development of human flourishing. It is no coincidence that her model takes a decidedly developmental approach. The following goods (below) are more akin to psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and largely rest on the satisfaction of more basic needs. As for limitati, life in the margins of society poses significant threats to the very possibility of living out one's cultural ideals for eudaimonic growth. The margins are set in vari-

ous ways, owing to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender (Bhatia, 2007; DesAutels, 2009; Hammack, Thompson, & Pilecki, 2009).

### Happiness

By happiness I mean appraisals of self or of a person as satisfied or fulfilled (either by subjective or objective appraisals). Hedonic appraisals of happiness or subjective well-being (Diener et al., 2006) are viewed in terms of cognitive appraisals of either satisfaction or pleasure in life as well as in terms of pleasurable experience itself, i.e., the experiencing of pleasure rather than mere appraisals of pleasurable experience (Haybron, 2008). Happiness is a form of fulfillment. What distinguishes happiness from meaningfulness is simply a matter of whether one considers only the affective evaluation or one also considers the contexts of meaning in which affective evaluations are made. (Again, just because affective evaluations coincide with all assessments of meaningfulness does not mean that pleasure is primary.) The umbrella of eudaimonia can cover important qualities of hedonia as they are—without reducing them to meaning. However, the term *happiness* can also involve more enduring or deeper forms of happiness, which I call *meaningfulness* and categorize under “love,” which is next. However, following Haybron (2008), I use the term *happiness* to mean *hedonic happiness*, and well-being to mean the wellness of one’s being, including happiness but much more besides.

### Love

The umbrella category of love captures elements of eudaimonia that do not easily fit into the categories of either happiness or wisdom but that deal with the enactment of personally meaningful passions. These passions may be directed communally or agentially: Love for another person is communal (“I love you”); love for an activity is agentic (“I love to do...”). Furthermore, measures of love can be value orientations or value fulfillments (see Table 10.4). Communal *values* of love include the interests and capacities for friendship and intimacy (McAdams, 1993), generativity (i.e., concern for the welfare of future

**Table 10.4** Expressions of love as communal and agentic orientations and fulfillments of value

	Love as value orientation (love desired)	Love as value fulfillment (love attained)
<b>Communal</b>	“I love you”	“Our relationship is good”
<b>Agentic</b>	“I love to play baseball”	“I’m a good baseball player”

generations; Erikson, 1950; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992), and compassion (Crocker & Canevello, 2008). Agentic values of love include capacities for activities about which one is passionate—activities that one loves to do—such as harmonious passion (Vallerand, 2008, this volume), vitality and vital engagement (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Ryan & Frederick, 1997), and various humanistically or intrinsically motivated activities (Kasser, 2002; Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Communal and agentic *fulfillments* of love include any communal and agentic forms of well-being as commonly measured (e.g., Diener et al., 2006; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). To feel good about (i.e., happiness or well-being about) one’s interpersonal relationships is a form of fulfillment of the communal value of love. To feel good about one’s personally meaningful activities (versus just valuing or wanting to do them) is a form of fulfillment of the agentic value of love.

### Wisdom

By wisdom I mean a heightened capacity for thinking about the self and others, along the lines of Aristotle’s practical wisdom, or psychosocial wisdom (Staudinger et al., 2005), or wisdom defined by the capacity to think complexly and integratively about the self and others. Forms of this kind of wisdom deal with reflective or conceptual understandings of how the self and others function in terms of values and virtues, including empirically measurable terms like expert reasoning, psychosocial maturity, ego development, integrative complexity, perspective-taking, and self-actualization (e.g., Ardel, 2003; Labouvie-Vief, 2003; Loevinger, 1976; Maslow, 1968; Staudinger et al., 2005; Tiberius, 2008). To no small degree, wisdom is a matter of value struc-

ture—the organizational framing and perspective than one brings to bear on any one thought about the self and others. Thus I argue that other, more experiential forms of wisdom (e.g., affective in Ardel, 2003) are more precisely value orientations (or sometimes fulfillments, to the degree the measure taps into “wisdom demonstrated”) overlaid with value structure.

This kind of wisdom is squarely on canonical lists of virtues in a good life. In fact, I argue that wisdom in this sense is more in line with Aristotle’s criterion of *arete* or excellence in practical wisdom, because these measures of wisdom are largely objectivist (see Table 10.3). Still, some subjective measures fit the category of wisdom, provided that they do not in fact assess the participant’s sense of “feeling wise” or “feeling self-actualized,” which I argue is more about fulfillment than about the capacity to exercise wisdom. The view that wisdom means heightened capacities for perspectivity is of course a limited view of wisdom. But it also helps differentiate objective and subjective facets of the good, when both are legitimate approaches to defining the good. Furthermore, this view of wisdom is not typically viewed as a component of well-being. Indeed, this kind of wisdom (e.g., Loewinger’s ego development) does not even correlate with hedonic happiness, let alone reduce to it (Flanagan, 1991; for a review, see Bauer, & McAdams, 2004a).<sup>2</sup> However, if we define well-being as the wellness of one’s being, certainly the capacity to take others’ perspectives is one among the many markers of wellness.

### Growth

The fifth umbrella category of eudaimonia—growth—cuts across the other three. Where eudaimonic growth is attained, that growth comes in the form of patterned increases in happiness, love, or wisdom over time. The other three are

<sup>2</sup>I wish to thank Jeff Webster for his insightful remarks about the breadth of the construct of wisdom, some conceptions of which do correspond to subjective well-being, such as those dealing with what I am calling qualities of “meaningfulness.” For an empirical measure of cognitive, affective, and reflective dimensions of wisdom, see Ardel (2003).

about the feeling and thinking of the self—measured subjectively and objectively—but without regard to time. Growth is about time. Growth may also be measured subjectively or objectively—and then as an attainment or as a value (Bauer & McAdams, 2010). Subjectively, growth may be measured as an attainment (i.e., *growth attained*; e.g., as self-assessments that one has grown) or as a desire, value, or motive (i.e., *growth valued*; e.g., as self-reported motives to grow). Objectively, growth may be measured as growth attained (e.g., demonstrated increases in eudaimonic measures over time) or as growth valued (e.g., as researcher-rated, implicit motives for growth). We will cover this topic in more depth next. For now it is important to note that growth has many meanings and forms that involve different mechanisms, principles, and paths of development (Bauer & McAdams, 2004a, 2010; Bauer, McAdams, & Sakaeda, 2005). Thus the project of eudaimonic growth is expansive.

## 10.3 Eudaimonic Growth

The idea of growth is central to eudaimonia, as noted earlier. In this section, we first differentiate three value orientations of eudaimonic growth and then differentiate the value (and motive) of growth from the attainment of growth.

### 10.3.1 Growth as Eudaimonic, Humanistic, and Organismic

Growth can mean many things—anything from mere gain across two points in time to the development over long spans of time of personally meaningful characteristics, and from purely self-focused improvements to generative concern for the development of future generations. Eudaimonic growth is, to start, eudaimonic rather than hedonic (but including some hedonic concerns, as outlined earlier). In a nutshell, eudaimonic growth is about the development of happiness, love, and wisdom. Cutting across these types of growth are three value orienta-

tions: eudaimonic, humanistic, and organismic. These three are generally grouped together, but I wish to elaborate on their non-overlapping qualities.

Humanistic concerns focus on personally meaningful, internally motivated, subjective *experiences*, whereas materialistic or egoistic concerns focus on concerns like self-image, social status, and appearances (Kasser, 2002). Whereas humanistic concerns place value on the self as a person who experiences, materialistic concerns place value on the self more as a product or commodity to be evaluated, whose value is determined in terms of those external evaluations rather than the person's experiences. Humanistic concerns also focus on the development of the person and his or her experiences (Rogers, 1961), but we return to that idea in terms of the organismic perspective.

Eudaimonic concerns are generally considered to be humanistic, but there is a sense of humanistic concern that focuses on personal, subjective experience that is not necessarily the case with all eudaimonic concerns, especially from an objectivist, Aristotelian perspective. For example, eudaimonic concerns (e.g., for wisdom and virtue) can be framed in materialistic context of social status or notions of psychological perfectionism.<sup>3</sup> As an example of materialistic eudaimonia, merely consider the academic's pride in his or her C.V., which is more likely about egoistic status than about the humanistic cultivating or exercising of wisdom. My research team and I recently expanded the Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities scale (Huta & Ryan, 2010), which assesses individual differences in hedonic and eudaimonic value orientations, to include humanistic versus materialistic/egoistic motives in a 2 × 2 framework. Early studies suggest that materialistic eudaimonia correlates significantly with undesirable forms of

perfectionism (Chang, 2009) and obsessive but not harmonious passion (Vallerand, 2008), whereas humanistic eudaimonic correlates significantly with harmonious passion and well-being (Bauer et al., in preparation).

Organismic theory takes a whole-person approach to human development (Goldstein, 1939). Despite the seemingly abstract focus on the whole person as a system, the organismic perspective is grounded in and focuses on action—on activity. In contrast to the organismic perspective is the mechanistic perspective, which focuses not on the system but rather on its component parts. Whereas the organismic perspective focuses on process, the mechanistic perspective focuses on product. Where a person's development is concerned, the organismic perspective views the person primarily in terms of the person's process of becoming, whereas the mechanistic perspective views the person as a product. The organismic perspective also holds that the individual person (as a self-organizing system) makes a contribution to his or her own development (e.g., McAdams, 2006; Murray, 1938; Sheldon, 2004), which sounds eudaimonic but can be framed in terms of hedonically positive-and-negative affect and approach-versus-avoidance motives (e.g., Brandtstadter, 1999). Just as the organismic focus on the person as process lends itself (although not uniformly) to the humanistic focus on experience to define the person, the mechanistic focus on the person as product lends itself to the materialistic/egoistic focus on evaluations of the person to define the person.

The combination of humanistic and organismic concerns is inherently eudaimonic. For example, a subjective concern for growth itself is eudaimonic (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2001). My use of the term *eudaimonic growth* refers to the combination of eudaimonic, humanistic, and organismic value orientations. In particular, the model of eudaimonic growth focuses on self-development (McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007), which is to say, on the development of the self as a subjective understanding of one's person, but only to the degree one defines the self with a combination of eudaimonic, humanistic, and organismic value

<sup>3</sup>Whereas philosophical perfectionism reflects a theory's teleological aims (as with Aristotle's eudaimonia – Haybron, 2008), psychological perfectionism often has a more dire connotation, as in the personal pursuit of unrealistically or idealistically too-high expectations (even if certain forms of perfectionism can be adaptive – e.g., Chang, 2009).

orientations. We return to this idea in the section on the transformative self.

### 10.3.2 Growth Values and Growth Attainments

As suggested earlier, growth can be studied as a value or as an attainment (Bauer & McAdams, 2010). As a personal value, the idea of personal growth can serve as a motivation to foster personal growth (e.g., growth motivation—Bauer et al., 2015; Robitschek, 1998), a personal goal that aims to put growth motivation into action (growth goals and other types of goals that stimulate human development—Bauer & McAdams, 2004a, 2010; Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001), or a personal memory that uses the value of personal growth to endow past events with meaning (growth memories—Bauer & McAdams, 2004b; Bauer et al., 2005; Lilgendahl & McAdams, 2011; Pals, 2006). Growth values are not broad personality traits that can be assessed by objective or outside observers (Tackett, Herzhoff, Kushner, & Rule, 2016). Rather, growth values are at heart subjective, in that only the person who hold the growth value can be the one to say so (either characteristic adaptations or features of a life story—McAdams & Pals, 2006), even if they may be examined by objective methods (e.g., implicitly, as in the narrative research cited here). Furthermore, growth values predict growth attained, as we will see below.

As an outcome or attainment, the term *growth* characterizes a desirably patterned or generally progressive change that has been demonstrated over time, such as increases in psychosocial maturity or well-being over multiple points in time. Growth attainment may be measured objectively (by assessing people—even self-reported assessments—at multiple points in time and looking for patterns of growth) or subjectively (by asking people whether they think they grew). The distinction between growth values and growth attainments is important for the study of topics like intentional self-development (Brandtstadter, 1999), personal growth, and

eudaimonic growth, because they all involve comparisons of how personally meaningful concerns (such as growth values) relate to how people's lives actually unfold over time (such as growth attainments).

The attainment of eudaimonic growth can be operationally defined as increases over time in any of the varieties of wisdom, love, or happiness. For instance, measures of psychosocial maturity, such as Loevinger's (1976) ego development, which measures how complexly and integratively one thinks about the self and others, are forms of wisdom, notably practical wisdom in the Aristotelian sense (Staudinger et al., 2005). Ego development typically increases from childhood through emerging adulthood, after which ego development either continues to rise or stays about the same until old age (depending on the study; e.g., Bauer & McAdams, 2010; Cohn, 1998; Lilgendahl, Helson, & John, 2013), toward the middle of which some declines are noted (e.g., Labouvie-Vief, 2003). However, for people who have growth values (e.g., in the form of growth memories or growth goals in their narrative self-identity), ego development is likely to increase or remain higher than average at any age (Bauer et al., 2005; Bauer & McAdams, 2004a; King & Smith, 2004; Lilgendahl et al., 2013). The eudaimonic domain of meaningfulness may be operationally defined in many ways, e.g., as increases in moral or virtuous functioning (thinking, feeling, acting), relationship functioning, or passion-laden actions and environmental mastery. To the degree those measures tap into heightened capacities to exercise or know about those kinds of functioning, these measures might overlap with notions of wisdom. To the degree the measures tap into a sense of satisfaction or fulfillment in those areas, the measures reflect a sense of meaningfulness and might overlap with happiness (although, given their focus on a specific context of satisfaction, it's eudaimonic happiness; hence "meaningfulness"). Here we see that the umbrella categories of eudaimonia are not orthogonal, which they need not be as long as they cover the conceptual space of eudaimonic well-being.

### 10.3.3 Eudaimonic Growth and Self-Identity

Eudaimonic identity theory (Waterman & Schwartz, 2013) is consonant with my idea of eudaimonic growth. The primary difference deals with subjectivist and objectivist perspectives and measures. (Both are externalist, as far as I can tell.) Eudaimonic identity theory starts with identity formation in adolescence, drawing on the work of Erikson (1968) and emphasizing the eudaimonic concerns with which the adolescent (and later the adult) will grapple in forming his or her own self-identity. Eudaimonic identity theory focuses on the subjective self-identity and outlines several steps and concerns on the path toward self-actualizing, with an emphasis on grounding of eudaimonic identity in activity rather than mere abstract notions of self. Among the qualities of the Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire (PEAQ; Waterman, 2005), a measure of eudaimonic identity, are the personal sense of vitality, engagement, true self, and fulfillment. Importantly for the notion that eudaimonic functioning includes hedonic enjoyment, Waterman and colleagues have found that eudaimonic identity corresponds to experiences of flow, to intrinsic motivation, and to well-being in the form of both life satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffen, 1985), which is more hedonic (i.e., without context of meaning), and eudaimonic, psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Importantly for the study of eudaimonic development, eudaimonic identity theory emphasizes the tasks of recognizing and expressing one's potentials, sustained effort in activities that foster the development of those potentials, setting goals toward that aim, that drawing on social resources in doing so.

Similarly, eudaimonic growth is a model of eudaimonic personality development that focuses on subjective self-identity. However, eudaimonic growth also emphasizes objective qualities of personality and its development that lie outside subjective assessments (Bauer et al., 2005; Bauer & McAdams, 2004a, 2004b, 2010). These objective qualities include the structural features and

development of self-identity, which is generally viewed from “outside” the person (e.g., ego development—Loevinger, 1976). Other objective concerns include social structures like socioeconomic status and cultural ideals for age, gender, ethnicity, and the like that affect one's personality and development (Bauer & DesAutels, *in press*), much in the way of the capabilities approach to eudaimonia in philosophy (Nussbaum, 2011). Also, the model of eudaimonic growth is less focused on notions of a purely subjective notion of true self. However, authenticity does play an important role, as presented later.

Finally, like eudaimonic identity theory, the self-identity component of eudaimonic growth derives from Eriksonian theory, but with two emphases. First, eudaimonic growth focuses on narrative self-identity. Second, eudaimonic growth pays special attention to Erikson's the person's social ecology. The next section considers both.

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### 10.4 The Transformative Self as a Good Life Story

I like to keep in mind the distinction between persons and selves. Here a self or self-identity refers to a subjective, mental representation of one's own person (James, 1890; Leary & Tangney, 2005). A person *has* a self-identity. A person *constructs* (and reconstructs and co-constructs) a self-identity (McLean et al., 2007). This distinction is important for the study of how people use their life stories to construct a self-identity, which then corresponds to other measures of personhood, subjective and objective, over time. Self-identity comes in many forms, but when it comes to an understanding of what is important about one's own person to oneself over time in the big picture, nothing beats a *narrative* self-identity (McAdams, 2008). In this section, we first consider some strengths of narrative research and then move to the notion of a good life story, particularly a life story that serves as a self-identity that fosters eudaimonic growth, the transformative self.



### 10.4.1 Why Narratives?

Through a narrative self-identity, researchers can study how people conceptualize their lives and impute this or that kind of meaning on this or that person, activity, personal characteristic, or life circumstance. Part of the reason is that meaning-making *comes* in narrative form (Bruner, 1990). In constructing meaning in an event or about a person (whether one's own person or another person), we position the event or person with settings in time and place, actors and agents and actions, intentions and effects, associations of preferences and values, metaphors, and a host of other narrative devices or elements. Each of these elements comes to life in relation to the others in the story at hand. We can make lists of the people and places and intentions and values, but their particular arrangement in a story is what conveys the meaning of the story as well as of the events and people in that story. In this way the life story conveys the meaning or meanings of the person's life. In the case of an autobiographical life story, that meaning is the person's self-identity, writ large (McAdams, 1993, 2008).

#### Narratives and Personality

Narrative self-identity plays an important and unique role in the personological system, distinct from both personality traits and characteristics like motives, goals, and well-being (McAdams, 1995, 2013; McAdams & Pals, 2006). McAdams' three-domain or three-level model of the person describes "what we know when we know a person"—at the level of the actor, the agent, and the author. Broad personality traits like the Big Five convey information about the person at the level of the *actor*—a level that is abstracted from specific contexts in life and that does not require that we have much information about the person's subjective self-understanding; we can predict people's traits by observing them in action. Characteristic adaptations—the level of the *agent*—convey more information about the person's subjective self-views, such as motives, values, and ego defenses. At the level of the author, life stories convey information about how the person creates meaning among the varied and

often competing motives, aims, people, life conditions, and other complexities of one's life. Past research has established that elements of life stories are related to specific traits and motives yet are independent of them in predicting well-being and personality development over time (Adler, 2012; Adler, Lodi-Smith, Philippe, & Houle, 2016; Bauer & McAdams, 2004b, 2010; Bauer et al., 2015; Dunlop & Tracy, 2013; Lilgendahl et al., 2013; Lilgendahl & McAdams, 2011; Lodi-Smith, Geise, Roberts, & Robins, 2009; McAdams et al., 2001; Pals, 2006). In other words, narrative self-identity operates as a unique, predictive feature of the personological system.

#### Narrative as Method

As a method for research, narratives can be studied purely qualitatively or (as in the research cited above) turned into quantitative data. In contrast to self-report surveys that tap into elements of self-identity, personal narratives and life stories are an excellent way to study how people select or generate their own topics and methods of meaning-making. Plus, when coded by trained researchers who demonstrate high levels of interrater reliability in their coding, those narratives yield an objective form of data, particularly compared to self-report surveys (see Table 10.3).

#### Facts and Meanings

Narratives are about meaning-making, and we generally assume that all meanings are interpretations of events and experiences. Still, certain facts are more objective than others, if only by consensus agreement, as when everyone comes to the same interpretation of an event. Then again, stories are about meanings, not facts (McAdams, 1993). As noted in the section on pleasure and meaning, what makes a fact meaningful is that an affect or value is associated with that fact. The general facts of a story refer to its plot (see Table 10.1), but the meaning of a story comes from the affects, values, structure, and timing involved. Furthermore, the predictive utility of personal narratives—that is, the capacity for narratives to predict objective conditions—rests not in the facts of the stories but in the

meaningful interpretations of them (Bauer & McAdams, 2010; Wirtz, Kruger, Scollon, & Diener, 2003).

### 10.4.2 A Good Life Story

The phrase “good life story” is a double-entendre: a good life-story and a good-life story. A good life-story is a story about a life that makes for a good read. The criteria for what makes a life story good depends largely on one’s culture (McAdams, 2006). Cultural master narratives—which we see every day in literature, in film, in political discourse, in advertisements—tell us what our culture values as the good in life, and thus as the basic values and storylines to be used in one’s own life (Hammack, 2011; Thorne, 2004). One prominent example is the redemptive self (McAdams, 2006), a life story that moves from bad to good—perhaps from rags to riches, from ignorance to enlightenment, from depravity to salvation. The redemptive self, as McAdams portrays it, is also a story of a eudaimonically good life, particularly in the redemptive self’s emphasis on generativity, or contributing to future generations.<sup>4</sup> In other words, a good life-story can also be a story of a good life, i.e., a good-life story.

#### **Bildungsroman: A Cultural Master Narrative of Eudaimonic Growth**

A prominent master narrative of eudaimonic growth is found in the Bildungsroman genre—stories about character development (Jeffers, 2005). Here the protagonist chooses a life of personal growth by largely following of rejecting mainstream values of status-seeking and the hedonic treadmill, seeking the margins of society to cultivate one’s own talents and interests toward the eudaimonic ideal of self-actualization. In Joseph Campbell’s (1948) hero story, we see the protagonist return to society with generative concerns to help. These types of stories are what

<sup>4</sup>However, any one redemptive event might be narrated in eudaimonic (e.g., selfishness to compassion) or hedonic ways (e.g., rags to riches).

mainstream, Western, industrialized culture calls “good.” To the degree one’s life story models such a story, one feels good about one’s life because, as the one sees it, one’s life matches the cultural ideal of the good. In any case, it is both a good life-story and a good-life story.

#### **Two Paths: Upward Mobility and Personal Growth**

However, not all good stories are about a good life from the eudaimonic perspective; not all good life-stories are stories about a good life. Stories of villains can make for a good story but do not necessarily portray a cultural master narrative of virtue (or even pleasure, for that matter). We can think of cultural master narratives along two paths of self-improvement, where self-improvement may be either internally or externally motivated (Sedikides & Hepper, 2009). First is the path of upward mobility, which is largely materialistic (as with the American Dream—Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Then lies the path of personal growth, which is largely about eudaimonic growth and the bildungsroman genre. The person with a transformative self constructs a narrative self-identity that is modeled on the idea of the second path. The transformative self is a good-life story. (But whether it is a good good-life story is another question.)

### 10.4.3 The Transformative Self

The transformative self is a self-identity that features the idea of eudaimonic growth (Bauer, 2016). A person who has a transformative self identifies with the idea (and cultural ideal) of eudaimonic growth. The person with a transformative self deeply values the idea of growth to the point that he or she interprets and plans his or her life in terms of growth: This person creates meaning in personal memories by framing them in terms of growth and does the same when setting personal goals. This person wants to grow, and much as in eudaimonic identity theory (Waterman & Schwartz, 2013), pursues activities that facilitate eudaimonic growth. As described earlier, eudaimonic growth is not just about

attaining high levels of meaning and meaningfulness in life; eudaimonic growth is about a deepening of personal experiences. Thus the person is paradoxically less interested in the status of “having meaning” than in participating in doing the kinds of thing and pursuing the kinds of relationships that naturally yield a sense of meaningfulness.

The transformative self is not a Pollyanna idea. The fostering of growth demands critical self-reflection. Indeed, the person with a transformative self is critical of the limits of self-identity, in part because it is, in the end, a mental construct rather than an activity. And just as eudaimonic theory since Aristotle has emphasized the claim that eudaimonia is an activity, the person with a transformative self focuses on action. Furthermore, there are pitfalls to the transformative self, such as the dangers of perfectionism and trying to squeeze growth out of every situation and person in one’s path (the *Growth Nazi*—Bauer, 2016). But when actions and self-identity align around the eudaimonic, humanistic, and organismic values at the root of the transformative self, on average we can expect eudaimonia and eudaimonic growth.

#### 10.4.4 Narratives of Eudaimonic Growth

The transformative self is importantly (but not exclusively) a narrative construct. Life stories, like stories in literature, have narrative elements that are common to a culture that make the meaning of a story recognizable—elements like narrative tone and narrative theme. The transformative self is especially characterized by *narrative themes* of eudaimonic growth that tie the people and events in one’s life to value orientations—namely eudaimonic, humanistic, and organismic orientations.

##### Growthy Tones

Narrative tone conveys the general qualities of positivity or negativity, optimism or pessimism, comedy or tragedy (McAdams, 1993). A life

story that is analyzed for exclusively for narrative tone is a purely hedonic measure of narratives. Some measures of narrative tone involve changes in affectivity over time—what is called an *affective sequence* (Adler, 2012). A prominent example of affective sequence is the redemptive sequence, which involves an event that is narrated as starting off bad but ending up good (McAdams et al., 2001; Dunlop & Tracy, 2013). However, not all redemption sequences involve eudaimonic growth. Some redemption sequences are purely about material circumstances getting better. When controlling for narrative themes of eudaimonic growth (see below), these measures of tone have a markedly diminished capacity to predict measures of eudaimonic well-being (and even hedonic well-being—e.g., Bauer et al., under review). Thus I say that some narratives are *growthy* but not squarely about eudaimonic growth (Bauer, 2016).

##### Growth Themes

Another element is narrative theme, which conveys *not just affect but values*—and specifically, value orientations. Two prominent themes in life stories (and stories generally) are agency and communion (Bakan, 1966; McAdams, 1993). Agency involves values like power, achievement, mastery, victory, and status-seeking, whereas communion involves values like love, intimacy, sharing, and dialogue (McAdams, Hoffman, Mansfield, & Day, 1996). Caring for others involves both agency and communion (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Such themes connect the myriad people, actions, and events within a story (and episodes within a story) into a coherent sense of meaning, so much so as to define that person or event: Some characters are all about power, some about love; the more interesting characters in stories have multiple, even competing themes. So it is in the life story: We often see people telling life stories in which they wrestle with the competing desires and demands of agency and communion, power and love, independence and dependence. In this section we consider themes of eudaimonic growth—themes rooted in eudaimonic, humanistic, and organismic

values—that a person with a transformative self uses to construct his or her life story (and that make that life story a transformative self).

### Growth Themes and Time

Whereas themes of agency and communion position the self and others in psychosocial space, themes of eudaimonic growth (“growth themes” for short) position the self and others in psychosocial time. Narrative time unfolds and is conveyed in numerous ways (Brockmeier, 2000), but some framing of time is inherent to narratives (Riceour, 1990). The particular model of time in themes and stories of eudaimonic growth is organismically progressive (which is to say, not necessarily linearly). Growth themes convey the value for—and sometimes the attainment of—the development of deeper, broader, more adaptive capacities for experience and action over time. These developments may be agentic, communal, or both.

### Experiential and Reflective Growth Themes

As two broad classes of growth themes, I have identified *experiential* growth themes and *reflective* growth themes. Experiential growth themes deal with a concern for deepening one’s skills, one’s experience of activities and relationships, and those of other people. Reflective growth themes deal with a concern for deeper conceptual understanding, for intellectual development, or for other forms of differentiating and integrating multiple points of view about one’s life.<sup>5</sup> Following is an example of the personal narrative of a college student with a theme of experiential growth. This excerpt comes from a study of how people describe their “personal growth projects” in an effort to distinguish themes of eudaimonic

growth from hedonic forms of self-improvement and recovery (Bauer et al., 2015).

Developing a better relationship with my mom... My mom and myself were never close in high school and we butted heads all the time. We never really hung out together, and when she tried to talk to me I completely would just shut her off and ignore her. I decided to pursue this project because I want a great relationship with my mom for the rest of my life. I love her more than anything and she is the one person who will always be honest and there for me no matter what situation comes into my life. There are a few conflicts considering we have very different personalities and opinions on certain matters, and also trying to talk to her as much as possible when I’m away at college. My siblings and my dad have helped take part in this process by planning more family activities together as much as possible, especially stuff that my mom and me can enjoy together.

This excerpt focuses on the project of developing the experience and quality of a relationship that the narrative portrays as personal meaningful. The narrative showcases eudaimonic and humanistic ideals, specific actions taken that are necessary for organismic development, and the consideration of difficulties amid a bigger picture of optimism for growth. However, the narrative does not focus on reflective growth. Yes, it shows that reflection was done, but the cultivation of reflective growth itself is not of concern in this narrative. The following narrative, from the same study, conveys reflective growth.

In the past two years or so I have begun to really try and understand other people and what makes them “tick” instead of jumping to conclusions and judgments. A few situations led me to launch the project. First, I was beginning to realize I was becoming very judgmental and cynical about people and the world in general. Secondly, I took a trip to Europe and met many different people, and I became fascinated with people’s stories and how they got to where they are. The initial realization, and my trip to Europe caused me to become conscious of the people I interact with, and remember that everyone has a story and a purpose and I cannot be quick to judge things I do not immediately understand. I continue to work on this project by keeping that thought process, and also by reading about new people, looking at quotes, listening to different music. I think this project exposes and reflect that I am a people person and a story-teller/listener, and I want to relate to the world as best I can.

<sup>5</sup>Growth themes always express growth concerns (i.e., values and motives of eudaimonic growth) and sometime express growth attainments (e.g., “I grew from that event”). I am less interested in subjective assessments of growth at any one point in time and more interested in how growth concerns at one time predict subsequent increases in eudaimonic growth attained longitudinally. Still, all such research is needed and can shed light on the enormous project of studying eudaimonic development.

This narrative features not only a great deal of self-reflection but, as stated in its opening sentence, an explicit concern for *understanding* people—and not for deepening relationships with them. The focus is on understanding, realization, thought processes, and taking actions (reading, listening to music) that might expand such reflection. This narrative was also coded for experiential growth (the two growth themes are not mutually exclusive), as it also conveyed a joy in activities to promote learning and meaningful dialogue. Also, I wish to note that I have chosen two, *communal* growth themes for comparison, but either experiential or reflective growth themes may be agentic as well (Bauer & McAdams, 2004b, 2010).

### Two Themes of Growth Valued, Two Paths of Growth Attained

Despite the fact that any one narrative might convey both experiential and reflective growth, these growth themes—which reflect *values* or *concerns* for growth—predict two distinct classes of growth *attainments*, notably happiness and wisdom. Experiential growth themes predict high levels of—and increases years later in—measures of happiness and well-being. Reflective growth themes predict high levels of—and increases years later in—measures of psychosocial maturity, where maturity deals with wisdom-related capacities for perspective-taking, differentiation and integration of psychosocial phenomena, and integrative complexity of thinking about the self and others (Bauer et al., 2008; Bauer & McAdams, 2010). Importantly, growth themes function these ways in good times and in bad: Whether narrating high points in life or low points in life—such as loss, trauma, and serious illness—themes of eudaimonic growth can be found (first of all) and can be found to predict maturity and well-being.

#### 10.4.5 Young Growth, Mature Growth

The excerpts above come from college students whose ages placed them in the life period of

emerging adulthood, roughly ages 18 to the mid-to-late 20s in modern societies (Arnett, 2000). From an updated Eriksonian (1950, 1968) perspective, emerging adulthood extends the period of identity versus role confusion beyond adolescence, as emerging adults engage in the process of defining the self and finding one's place in an increasingly complex society (Arnett). From a narrative perspective, emerging adulthood marks the development of the person as author of his or her own life story, defining one's life in terms of contextualized stories (McAdams, 1993, 2013; McLean et al., 2007). Growth themes can be found in the stories of both younger and older adults—which is to say, young and old can have a transformative self. Those growth themes predict measures of wisdom, love, and happiness throughout adulthood (Bauer et al., 2008).

Yet the stories of emerging adults do not deal with the same things as the stories of, say, mid-life or older adults. Consonant with Eriksonian theory, younger adults focus more on concerns of identity, whereas their older counterparts focus more on concerns of generativity (Bauer et al., 2015; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Furthermore, older adults' life stories simply convey more personal meaning-making: more emotion-laden evaluations than mere descriptions, greater structural complexity, greater thematic coherence (Bauer et al., 2005, Bauer et al., 2015; Lilgendahl et al., 2013; McLean, 2008; Pasupathi, 2001; Pasupathi & Mansour, 2006). In a nutshell—and in contrast to the belief that “growth is for the young”—older adults are more likely to tell growth stories than are younger adults (Bauer & Park, 2010). The excerpts above are good examples of what I call “young growth,” showing concerns for eudaimonic growth but without a lifetime of experience informing them, making the descriptions of any one person or idea more straightforward. Compare those narratives with a narrative exhibiting “mature growth” from a woman, age 62, who recalls a high point in her life:

My granddaughter [name] was at my house. She was approx. 3 yr. old. We were lying on my bed...I suddenly felt this incredible love for her and almost simultaneously I felt a surge of deep pain and

sadness and I became conscious, I feel, for the first time, that the price of loving so completely, so unconditionally is that the other side is that I would feel excruciating pain if she were to die or be separated from me forever. This event is significant because I felt so alive—so capable of being loving without consciousness about acceptance/nonacceptance and other self-centered thoughts. The awareness of the other side of connection is loss—I know this and have felt this since, and the knowing has greatly enhanced my life—much more freely able to love and to understand why I have been so fearful of this kind of loving in the past.

The presence of growth themes in personal narratives (and in open-ended goals) has been shown repeatedly to explain the bivariate relation between age and well-being (citations above). In other words, older people may report higher life satisfaction (in some studies; seldom lower), but this is explained by the fact that older adults are more likely to tell growth stories; they are more likely to have a transformative self.

#### 10.4.6 Authorship, Authenticity, and Self-Actualizing

For all the depth of meaning in narratives of mature, eudaimonic growth, they do not necessarily reveal self-actualization. Psychological science, for good reason, hardly holds the bar for eudaimonic well-being as high as Maslow's self-actualization. Self-actualizing is one of the canonical, candidate goods among the many goods of personhood and eudaimonia, as noted earlier. Furthermore, self-actualizing is an aim for the person with a transformative self. This person can be said, at any phase of development, to be aiming for a more authentic life story—a story about activities that increasingly reflect and foster authentic living. The person with a transformative self strives for heightened capacities for authentic self-authorship.

#### Identity Achievement Versus Self-Actualizing

When self-identity first takes its relatively adult form, sometime in late adolescence or emerging adulthood, the person can be said to first *author* his or her own self-identity as a life story

(McAdams, 2013; although autobiographical reasoning is present earlier—see Dunlop & Walker, 2013). This development may well involve a push to cultivate one's "true self" (if only as subjectively perceived—Schlegel, Hicks, Arndt, & King, 2009; Schlegel, Hicks, & Christy, Chap. 14, this volume), but identity formation at this point is largely defined by various freedoms from parental or school authority and various freedoms to pursue one's own course of action and belief. The aim of identity achievement in youth, as Erikson puts it, is to find "where one stands" in a world of others. But this is a far cry from the subtler considerations of existential authenticity in the manner of Sartre or Rollo May.

Does that sound elitist? If a person is to be judgmental about the descriptive differences between young and mature self-identity, then we see elitism. Then the claims here are ageist, but with a bias against youth. Few adolescents can even conceptualize the issues of authenticity and self-actualizing within the vicissitudes of the actual, lived contexts of adult life (let alone shape their largely unconscious, personal patterns of intentions, actions, and interpretations in a way that exudes self-actualizing routinely).<sup>6</sup> It simply takes decades of experience in life, on average, to develop the capacities for perspective-taking that are required of Maslow's self-actualizing or Loevinger's integrated stage of development.

Now, an adolescent's self-identity can surely reflect qualities of authenticity and surely involve a focus on eudaimonic growth. But on average, the adolescent self-identity is considerably more likely than the mid-life or older-adult self-identity to be focused on extrinsically motivated concerns, such as self-image, social status, and appearances—and, conversely, less likely to be focused on internally or humanistically motivated concerns like personally meaningful activities and relationships (Bauer et al., 2005, 2015;

<sup>6</sup>To temper the reverse ageism, let's keep in mind that the cultivation of self-understanding toward authenticity is but one of many lines of development that constitute a good life (cf. the big umbrella of eudaimonia). One need not scale the heights of authenticity to be a good neighbor or parent etc.

Sheldon & Kasser, 2001). Such concerns are not sufficient requirements of existential authenticity, but they do seem to be necessary. So, even though adolescent self-identity may reflect authenticity, authenticity seems more likely in mature years than in youth.

Still, adolescents can act authentically or not. So I maintain that authenticity has a developmentally sliding scale. Authenticity in youth is not the same authenticity as in maturity. Similarly, the authenticity of earlier stages of ego development more simplistic understandings of self and others than does the authenticity of later stages of ego development. Authenticity at later stages is not about one's achieving an identity that is merely based on, as in youth, one's self-examination and commitments to roles and beliefs in society. In other words, mature authenticity is not just about identity achievement. Mature authenticity is more about self-actualizing.

### Independence and Authenticity

Another way to oversimplify the scenario with authorship and authenticity is to view them in terms of basic notions of freedom: *freedom from* (i.e., negative freedom, which is the absence of hindrances to self-determination) and *freedom to* (i.e., positive freedom, which is the presence of self-determination; Berlin, 1969). In the course of personal development, the emergence of the adult form of authorship in adolescence or emerging adulthood is largely about *independence*, which deals largely with *freedom from* one's parents or guardians (as in adolescence) as well as *freedom to* choose one's own responsibilities and courses of action in society. In contrast, authenticity deals largely with *freedom from* society (particularly the directives and ideologies of social institutions and social roles, notably the ones that the independence-focused person so eagerly chose for him- or herself in youth) as well as *freedom to* choose among self-examined ideals. In both cases we see a development toward a "truer" self than had been known and lived prior. But whereas the earlier true self in the dawn of adult authorship deals with independence, the more mature true self deals with authenticity.

### Authenticity and Self-Authorship

Authenticity can be viewed as a refined or mature form of self-authorship. Authenticity is a refined form of authorship. We often see how novelists refine their craft over the course of their career such that their earlier works come across as the work of a younger person. Similarly, individual persons—if they continue to develop—refine their capacities to author their own narrative self-identity. More mature life stories involve greater attention to multiple meanings, to greater acceptance of the good and bad in one's life as integral to one's "one and only life" (Erikson, 1968), or to the balancing of competing and underlying motives—motives that might not have even been perceived as competing or even existing in youth. Authenticity as a characteristic of a narrative self-identity is not the only way in which a life story might be refined, but it is one kind—and a kind especially relevant to the study of self-actualizing and, more broadly, eudaimonic growth. Authenticity is a way of authorship that accounts for the multifaceted, multivalenced, myriad qualities of a life with honesty, humility, a lack of defensiveness (a quiet ego—Wayment, Bauer, & Sylaska, 2015), a deep sense of connection to the people in one's life (at multiple levels of the social ecology, from immediate others to society over history—Bronfenbrenner, 1979), a deep understanding of how one's motivations and values and actions both conflict and integrate (e.g., self-concordance—Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001), and other qualities that acknowledge the various virtues of the fullness of one's personhood.

### Authenticity, Traits, and Self-Authorship

Finally, when I say *authenticity*, I do not mean only *being true to your traits*, which is a common way of interpreting authenticity (McGregor, McAdams, & Little, 2006; Little, Chap. 19, this volume). Instead, I mean something closer to "being true to your beliefs." Both forms of authenticity are important and facilitate well-being (Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997). An authenticity that means nothing more than living in accord with some deeply ingrained

traits—say, if one is born or raised to be hyper-aggressive or just simply a jerk—strikes me as good for little more than fostering a sense of satisfaction that might come from either self-verification or a massive dose of self-justification: “Yeah, I was a jerk. That’s just me being me. Tough luck for you.” Being true to one’s beliefs involves at least some reflection of what is meaningful and valuable in life, ideally from a non-defensive point of view (Bauer, 2008; Wayment, Bauer, & Sylaska, 2015). The system of eudaimonic and humanistic values exists in part to guard against the more selfish impulses of human nature (that continue to exist in even the most self-actualized among us—Maslow, 1968). So authenticity involves characteristics of the person at the level of traits and characteristic adaptations, the latter of which involves subjective beliefs, values, and motivations (McAdams & Pals, 2006).

### **Subjectivity, Objectivity, Authenticity, and Self-Authorship**

Yet even “being true to one’s beliefs” is problematic, particularly in its reliance on internality. The philosopher Wayne Sumner (1996) tries to get around this problem with a subjectivist notion of authentic happiness. Certain externalist criteria for the welfare of others obtain. Furthermore, we probably need stories, a narrative account of how the person weaves the various activities and people and personal beliefs in his or her life into an a sense of not merely coherence but also integrity—where one’s activities and interactions in actual, lived contexts bring one’s abstract values to life. As noted earlier, we see that the capacity to tell such a story increases with age but is more proximally tied to the transformative self. From a narrative perspective, this process is a matter of moving from authorship to authenticity. However, this movement does not happen overnight. Instead, authorship throughout adulthood may be viewed in terms of gradually increasing authenticity over the years, perhaps in fits and starts as one makes attempts, fails, and tries to learn from experience, but nonetheless gradually over broad spans of time. The transformative self, as a self-

identity rooted in the process of eudaimonic growth, facilitates such development.

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