

Personal Expressiveness: Philosophical and Psychological Foundations

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Psychological and philosophical perspectives are employed in an exploration of the reasons particular individuals experience an activity as personally expressive while others may find the same activity neutral or even aversive. The relationships between personal expressiveness and intrinsic motivation, flow, and self-actualization are considered. The construct of personal expressiveness is shown to have its roots in eudaimonistic philosophy. Living in a manner consistent with one's daimon or "true self" gives rise to a cognitive-affective state labeled "eudaimonia" that is distinguishable from hedonic enjoyment. A personally expressive personality pattern is described integrating concepts from diverse theories including (a) a sense of personal identity, (b) self-actualization, (c) an internal locus of control, and (d) principled moral reasoning. A series of empirical investigations is proposed to test the theoretical concepts of personal expressiveness advanced.

The focus of this article is on two relatively commonplace observations that have not, as yet, received substantial scrutiny from psychologists. First, there are instances when an individual engaging in an activity will report one or more of the following: (a) an unusually intense involvement in an undertaking, (b) a feeling of special fit or meshing with an activity that is not characteristic of most daily tasks, (c) a feeling of being complete or fulfilled while engaged in the activity, and (d) an impression that this is what the person was meant to do. When this occurs, it seems fitting to characterize such an activity as personally expressive of the individual. We need to understand the nature of such experiences and the relationship between the activity and the experience to which it gives rise. Second, it can be readily observed that activities that are personally expressive for one individual may be ex-

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perienced by another either neutrally or even aversively. Clearly then, it is not the activity in itself that is responsible for the feelings indicative of personal expressiveness. How are we to interpret individual differences in this regard? I will refer to this as the problem of selectivity.

Personal Expressiveness and Related Psychological Constructs

I will begin the analysis of personal expressiveness by examining its connections with three concepts that have occupied the theoretical and research attention of psychologists: (a) intrinsic motivation, (b) flow, and (c) self-actualization.

Intrinsic Motivation

It should be apparent that the activities of concern here can appropriately be described as intrinsically motivated. While intrinsic motivation has been extensively investigated (Day, Berlyne, and Hunt, 1971; Deci, 1975; Deci and Ryan, 1985), neither the conceptual nor empirical work done to date helps to elucidate the phenomenon of personal expressiveness. As has frequently been noted, the traditional definitions of intrinsic motivation are not very helpful (Berlyne, 1971; Deci, 1975). Intrinsically motivated activities are said to be their own reward, to be self-reinforcing, to be engaged in for their own sake rather than for any extrinsic reward that might be derived from them. Yet as Berlyne (1971) has indicated, there is no meaningful sense in which something can be said to reinforce itself. Rather, he identifies the reinforcement of an intrinsically motivated activity with particular internal consequences arising in connection with the activity that is experienced as rewarding. But this only moves the analysis one step along to a search for the nature of the "internal consequences" that are experienced in this way.

There has been no lack of candidates to occupy the role of such internal consequences. They include: (a) experiences of exploration, manipulation, and/or curiosity, (b) the attainment of optimal stimulation, incongruity, and/or arousal, (c) the reduction of uncertainty, (d) feelings of competence and/or self-determination, among others (see White, 1959 and Deci, 1975, for discussions of these various lines of analysis). While there is merit in each of these perspectives on internal rewarding consequences, none has advanced our understanding of the selectivity of intrinsic rewards experienced by any given individual. In their day-to-day lives, people are not curious about and do not choose to explore a stimulus merely because it is novel. They are selective about which novel stimuli are considered worth exploring. In seeking stimulation, or incongruity, or arousal, people are not indiscriminate about what activities they choose to produce such ends. Not all forms of uncer-

tainty are experienced as comparably aversive across the population; rather some people live quite comfortably with particular forms of uncertainty that others would seek to remove as rapidly as possible. Similarly, individuals are quite selective about which competencies they wish to develop and are selective about the areas of their lives in which they most desire to experience self-determination.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) recognized the importance of the problem of selectivity in his analysis of the nature of enjoyment experienced in autotelic (intrinsicly motivating) activities.

The crucial question is why patterns of stimulation under some conditions are neutral or even aversive can suddenly become enjoyable. Rock climbing, for instance, is an activity that most people try to avoid and that even committed climbers sometimes dread – when the choice of climbing is not voluntary, for example. Yet under the right conditions it is an exhilarating experience. To understand how this is possible, it is not enough to know the objective characteristics of the external stimuli involved, or the pattern of the person's learned associations to pleasant experiences. What one needs is a holistic approach which takes into account a person's goals, and abilities and his subjective evaluation of the external situation. It is the complex interaction of these subjective processes that determines whether an experience is enjoyable, as opposed to being simply pleasurable. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 6)

Flow

When Csikszentmihalyi (1975) writes of enjoyment in intrinsically motivating activities, he is referring to a cognitive-affective experience he terms “flow,” and which he takes to be the reward inherent in such activities. Such experiences are characterized by a merging of action and awareness, the centering of attention on a limited stimulus field, loss of ego or self-consciousness, a feeling of being in control of one's actions and of the environment, the experience of coherent, noncontradictory demands for action, the presence of clear, unambiguous feedback as to the rightness of the actions taken, and the absence of the need for external rewards to maintain the behavior. This description, along with Maslow's (1968, 1970) depiction of peak experiences, has gone furthest in advancing our understanding of the cognitive-affective component of personally expressive behaviors.

Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (1988) take us a further step along the route to analyzing the problem of selectivity when they identify the experience of flow as emerging from a balance of the individual's skills and the challenges provided by the environment, when both skills and challenges are relatively high. When personal skills exceed the challenges available, boredom is the consequence; when challenges exceed the skills that can be brought to bear, anxiety is the result; and when both skills and challenges are relatively low, apathy is experienced. Still, there appear to be two sources of difficulty here when trying to understand the selectivity of intrinsic motivation.

First, granting that when engaged in personally expressive behaviors, a person experiences flow as a cognitive-affective rewarding state, we still do not know why one person will experience that state during rock climbing while others comparably able to become adept at the sport will never achieve it through this activity. Indeed, those not achieving flow through the activity are likely to leave it on the grounds that the risks are not worth taking in proportion to the benefits attained. Rather, they must find very different activities if they are to achieve the experience of flow. This variability can be accounted for in terms of differing *perceptions* of the skills and challenges involved, particularly as these pertain to judgments of the incentive value of the activity to each individual. But it is just this selectivity of perceived value that must now be explained.

Second, the reports of Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) own respondents, rock climbers, chess players, composers, etc., seem to belie the idea that flow experiences are the motivating reward for autotelic activities. If the cognitive-affective state was the goal of such activities, then if it could be attained by different activities, or by no activity at all, it should be all the same to the individual. But to suggest to a rock climber that there are easier and safer ways to experience flow is to invite an incredulous response. The climbing itself is an integral part of the experience. The climber does not want a different way, and particularly not an easier way, to the cognitive-affective experience of flow. Rock climbers and others invested in autotelic activities are not engaged in emotional experience seeking, *per se*. The flow experience is only valued if it is derived from particular activities, with the specific activities invested-in varying from individual to individual. This leads to the paradoxical conclusion that without the flow experience an activity is not intrinsically rewarding, yet the flow experience in itself is not the internal consequence that constitutes the reward. This is a paradox to which I will return.

Self-actualization

A key to the understanding of the selectivity of intrinsic motivation and personal expressiveness can be found in the work of Maslow (1968, 1970). The two constructs with the greatest relevance for this discussion are growth motivation and b-cognition. Growth motivation is used to refer to motives, in contrast to those based on tension reduction or homeostasis, that underlie the healthiest psychological functioning. The focus here is on self-actualization which Maslow (1968) defines as

ongoing actualization of potentials, capacities, and talents, as fulfillment of mission (or call, fate, destiny, or vocation), as a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person's own intrinsic nature, as an increasing trend toward unity, integration, or synergy within the person. (p. 25)

If we take self-actualization to refer to the most extensive and complete form of intrinsic motivation, in comparison to which the more common experiences of intrinsic motivation are less extensive or complete, and therefore milder, then Maslow's (1968) definition shows where to look in our efforts to account for individual differences in personally expressive behavior. Activities will be experienced as personally expressive to the extent that they engage and serve to further the development of an individual's particular potentials, capacities, and talents. But the person's potentials, capacities, and talents are not all of equal importance from a personal perspective, such that furthering each of them will not be experienced as equally rewarding. Rather, consistent with Maslow (1968), the activities that advance those potentials, capacities, and talents most valued by a person because they are integral to his or her purposes in living (or mission, call, etc.) will be most intrinsically motivating and experienced as most personally expressive.

Maslow (1968) wrote of b-cognition or peak experiences as most often experienced in conjunction with self-actualization. Indeed, he saw the link as so close that during any peak experience a person could be considered self-actualizing. The descriptions that Maslow obtained of b-cognition by asking respondents to describe the highest moments of their lives are quite similar to those subsequently elicited by Csikszentmihalyi (1975) from respondents asked to describe their cognitive-affective state while engaged in autotelic activities. (A point-by-point comparison of flow and peak experiences should be quite useful given the different methodologies employed to obtain the descriptions, but is beyond the scope of this analysis.) As with the relationship of self-actualization to intrinsic motivation, so too peak experiences can be viewed as more intense and complete than flow, while the emotional concomitants of everyday intrinsically motivated activities are still milder and less complete. We are thus led to postulate two parallel and clearly interrelated gradients: (a) one for motivation ranging from mild intrinsic motivation to self-actualization, and (b) the other for cognitive-affective experiences ranging from mildly involving through flow to peak experiences. Both of these gradients pertain to the phenomenon of personal expressiveness and the nature of the correspondences between them will require extensive theoretical, and if possible, empirical analysis.

To this point we have come to view activities as personally expressive to the extent that they engage and further those potentialities that are integral to, or at least consistent with, our purposes in living. Psychologists have traditionally had difficulty in working with concepts like potentialities and purposes in living because they do not readily lend themselves to operational definitions, or even to observation. For this reason, it can prove worthwhile to turn to the field of philosophy to continue the conceptualization of personal expressiveness being developed here, since its practitioners do not feel

constrained to think only about observables. I will return to a psychological level of analysis, both theoretical and empirical, after examining some of what philosophers have to offer to us on the subject.

Personal Expressiveness: Some Contributions from Philosophy

The roots of the concept of personal expressiveness can be traced to the philosophical tradition of eudaimonism. Eudaimonism is an ethical theory that calls upon people to recognize and live in accordance with the daimon or "true self." The theory extends at least as far back as classic Hellenic philosophy where it received its most notable treatment in Aristotle's (1925) *Nicomachean Ethics*. Contemporary presentations of eudaimonistic ethics are provided by May (1969) and Norton (1976).

As the term will be used here, the daimon refers to those potentialities of each person, the realization of which represents the greatest fulfillment in living of which each is capable. These include both the potentialities that are shared by all humans by virtue of our common specieshood and those unique potentials that distinguish each individual from all others. The daimon is an ideal in the sense of being an excellence, a perfection toward which one strives and, hence, it can give meaning and direction to one's life. The efforts a person makes to live in accordance with the daimon, to realize those potentials, can be said to be personally expressive.

According to the ethics of eudaimonism, each individual "is obliged to know and live in truth to his daimon, thereby progressively actualizing an excellence that is his innately and potentially" (Norton, 1976, p. ix). This spirit underlies two famous classical Greek injunctions: "Know thyself" and "Become what you are." To choose, in Norton's (1976) phrase, "to live freely the life that is one's own" (p. 26) is an affirmation of personal responsibility and a statement of personal integrity. It requires that a commitment be made both to the principles by which one chooses to live and the goals toward which one's life is to be directed. This commitment involves a conscious recognition and acknowledgement of personal truths already known intuitively.

The Nature and Scope of the Daimon

To define the daimon in terms of potential excellences would seem to suggest that it is something characteristic of only a few great men and women. If one accepts the view that there is a natural lottery of abilities, the potentials of some people may be claimed to be "better" than the potentials of others. But such a position was not intended by either the classical or contemporary proponents of eudaimonism. Rather, the daimon is seen as universal, possessed in varying forms by all, though expressed in widely varying degrees. As Nor-

ton (1976) has shown, there is no way of demonstrating the existence of unequal potentialities, only unequal performances can be observed. While each individual has his or her own distinctive potential excellences, thereby allowing for the possibility of a great diversity of excellent accomplishments, it is unclear what standards could be applied to judge some excellences as being of more worth than others.

When it is claimed that the daimon is universal, the assumption is being made that there exist for each person some actions, which because they actualize personal potential excellences, will yield greater self-expression and self-fulfillment than could be derived from activities in any other direction. The relevant set of norms for understanding daimonic potentials is not external, using others as a basis for comparison, but internal, comparing the relative possibilities of progressively actualizing the potentials for excellence among the myriad of goals that might be pursued. It is with respect to the areas of the individual's highest potentials that philosophers refer when they speak of potential excellences toward which the person is morally obligated to strive.

Still, the actual range of expression of daimonic potentials will be very broad indeed. This is both a result of the difficulty of the tasks that some may feel called to undertake and as a result of people defaulting on their potentials in varying degrees. They may be limited by their environment to activities necessary for the satisfaction of needs that take precedence over the pursuit of self-fulfillment (e.g., those associated with survival). They may succumb to external social pressures directing them into other channels. They may allow themselves to be distracted by pleasures incompatible with the pursuit of their unique excellences. Or they may turn aside because of the arduous nature of the tasks that are theirs to do.

To speak of the daimon as personal potentialities capable of guiding action in the direction of self-fulfillment seems to invite granting it reified status. In part this is a carryover of its philosophical origins. Like the Roman *genii*, or tutelary gods, the daimon was conceived as originating externally to the individual as a kind of guiding spirit provided at birth. But the concept was later internalized, as reflected in the view of Heraclitus that "man's character is his daimon" (May, 1969, p. 133). To be consistent with the standards of contemporary theories, the daimon should be interpreted as being a number of interrelated psychological processes. If it is accepted that individuals by virtue of their physiology and/or experiences possess particular potentialities for excellence, some universal, some unique, then the daimon is constituted by those processes, both intuitive and reasoned, by which such potentialities are recognized and come to attain the status of personal goals to be actualized.

This is not the place to elaborate on a series of questions that are important to the understanding of the nature and scope of the daimon. These ques-

tions include (a) whether there is only one daimonic potential for each person or several, (b) whether there are daimonic potentials for destructive talents as well as those that are personally and socially productive, (c) the extent to which potential excellences are genetically determined and/or acquired in our life-time, (d) the extent of malleability of daimonic potentials, (e) the role of agency in efforts toward the realization of such potentials, and (f) how we come to recognize our potential excellences and the means toward their realization. I have endeavored to provide at least a preliminary analysis of these questions elsewhere (Waterman, 1984a, 1984b, 1986).

Eudaimonia

When an individual is succeeding in living in truth to his or her daimon, it gives rise to a condition the Greeks called eudaimonia. This concept is central to the understanding of personal expressiveness and to the concepts of intrinsic motivation, flow, and self-actualization.

The usual translation of eudaimonia in Aristotle's (1925) *Nicomachean Ethics* is as "happiness," but there is a controversy within philosophy over whether this is indeed a proper translation (Cooper, 1975; Kraut, 1979; Telfer, 1980). Happiness, in the sense of hedonic happiness, is generally understood as a subjective experience that includes "the belief that one is getting the important things one wants, as well as certain pleasant affects that normally go along with this belief" (Kraut, 1979, p. 178). The implication of the term "eudaimonia," as originally developed, is not that one is pleased with one's life but rather that one has "what is *worth* desiring and worth having in life" (Telfer, 1980, p. 37). This is to be taken as an objective statement as to the proper ends of each person and as such does not lend itself to use within a psychological framework.

Yet, it is the concept of eudaimonia within philosophy that can most expand the meaning of personal expressiveness as a psychological concept. Drawing on eudaimonist philosophy, two essential characteristics of activities experienced as personally expressive can be identified. First, personally expressive activities are ones through which individuals advance their highest potentials, that is, their potential excellences. Activities will be experienced as personally expressive to the extent that they are recognized as vehicles through which people convert their aptitudes into skills and talents and further the development of those skills and talents they already possess.

But, in line with the problem of selectivity, it is not as if the development of any skill or talent will be experienced as personally expressive. The second essential quality of personally expressive activities is that they further our purposes in living, that is, those ends that are considered worth having or desiring in life. Activities will be experienced as personally expressive to the

extent that they are recognized as vehicles for making progress toward goals that represent the type of life worth living.

Making use of the potentially useful insights to be gained through the concept of eudaimonia involves rendering it into a form more congenial to psychology. This involves several significant departures from the Aristotelian perspective. These are:

(a) Considering eudaimonia to have a subjective component embodying the experiences that flow from efforts to live in truth to one's daimon by striving to develop one's skills and talents for purposes deemed worth having in life.

(b) Considering eudaimonia as a subjective condition to be experienced as a function of discrete aspects of one's life, rather than one's life as a whole.

(c) Broadening the range of the constituents of eudaimonia beyond contemplation and moral virtue as discussed by Aristotle, to include efforts directed at the development of one's talents and the furthering of one's purposes, as these are consistent with the daimon.

(d) Viewing eudaimonia as available to children and adolescents, rather than restricting its possibility to adults as was done by Aristotle.

While I will comment on each of these issues briefly here, this is not the place to attempt a philosophical defense for each of these assumptions. In taking the path I have, I am following the lead of several contemporary philosophers writing on eudaimonism. My analysis is most fully consistent with that of Norton (1976) and shares, to varying extents, points made by Cooper (1975), Dybikowski (1981), Kraut (1979), and Telfer (1980).

Eudaimonia as a subjective condition. It seems an unremarkable observation that individuals may reflect upon, or otherwise come to experience, the view that they are developing their skills and talents. Similarly, they may reflect upon, or otherwise come to experience, the view that they are desiring, and are pursuing, that which in life is worth having. In other words, they may assess themselves in terms of the objective standard of eudaimonia. When individuals experience themselves as acting in such a way as to further the development of their highest potentials and/or further their purposes in living, this will almost certainly be accompanied by a positive, subjective, cognitive-affective state, that I will also term eudaimonia after the standard being employed. Norton (1976) writes of this as the feeling of "being where one wants to be, doing what one wants to do" (p. 216) where what is wanted is to be taken as being "worth having."

But since this experience of eudaimonia is subjective, not objective, it must be acknowledged that a person may wrongly experience it, that is, the actions engaged in may not either be advancing one's highest potentialities or one's purposes in living. Whether such an error could be detected by an observer is another issue. This possibility of error regarding self-attributions of eudaimonia stands in contrast to the condition of hedonic happiness where

it can be assumed that a person knows whether or not he or she is happy and cannot be wrong about a sincere claim in this regard.

It is proposed here that experiences of personal expressiveness, from the feelings accompanying intrinsic motivation, through flow, to peak experiences, constitute a sign that one is acting in a manner consistent with one's daimon. The more of one's potentialities that are engaged and the greater the degree of success being achieved in developing one's talents and furthering one's purposes in living, the more intense and enduring should be the experiences of personal expressiveness. To the extent that there are errors in self-attributions of personal expressiveness, it should become more difficult to confirm hypotheses about the nature of experiences of personal expressiveness or concerning the correlates and consequences associated with such experiences.

It should be noted that experiences of personal expressiveness do not typically involve extensive deliberative reflection upon one's talents or purposes in life but on most occasions are perceived as given concomitants of the activities themselves. In this respect they appear to have the properties of an emotion and like other emotions may be understood as an acquired valuing process (Branden, 1971). To experience personal expressiveness as a function of a given activity is to have learned at some prior time that through that activity one's talents are extended or one's purposes advanced, thus leading to the attachment of a distinctive type of value to the activity itself. On subsequent occasions in which the activity is pursued, the associated value is experienced in conjunction with its performance. This suggests that one type of error that may be made in self-attributions of eudaimonia results from an overgeneralization of these emotional properties from past experiences to a current situation in which the outcomes previously present do not now pertain. There appears, however, to be a natural corrective to this type of error – for mere repetition of an activity is not sufficient for sustained experiences of personal expressiveness if over time no new advances are being made. In the absence of further progress, the feelings accompanying an activity become ones of staleness or frustration. Thus, while on a given occasion, subjective experiences of personal expressiveness may be a fallible sign as to whether one is successfully developing one's skills and talents or advancing one's purposes in living, there are good reasons to believe that over the long-term, they serve as a highly reliable indicator.

It should also be recognized with respect to the accuracy of self-attributions of eudaimonia, that the validity of the experience does not entail any need for omniscience as to whether one's projects will be successful in the long run. One may ultimately fail at tasks consistent with one's potentialities because of the occurrence of unforeseeable environmental circumstances. The feeling of eudaimonia as a subjective condition is valid so long as one's talents

or purposes in living are being advanced. Their thwarting in the future may effectively prevent such experiences at a later time, at least in terms of continuing in the direction one had been going.

Eudaimonia as a function of aspects of one's life. The second departure from Aristotle's conception of eudaimonia pertains to its being rendered a judgment about a person's life as a whole. A person's life could not be considered eudaimon if it were seriously flawed in some way. The classical Greeks had an expression "Call no man eudaimon until he is dead" (Dybikowski, 1981), indicating the importance of the final tally. Within philosophy, a similar approach is often taken with regard to the understanding of hedonic happiness as pertaining to one's life as a whole (Kraut, 1979; Telfer, 1980), although happiness as a subjective condition does not have to await a terminal disposition.

At least with respect to happiness, it can be argued that most people are willing to make delimited attributions of happiness rather than using the concept in only a global sense. Thus it is meaningful to say "I am happy with this part of my life, but not with that part," or to say "I am happy when I am doing _____, but not at other times." The fact that such a person could be happier in life does not rob him or her of the experience of happiness in the circumstances specified. A similar form of reasoning can be applied to the understanding of eudaimonia as a subjective condition. To the extent, and in whatever ways, a person is acting so as to further the development of his or her talents or is advancing his or her purposes in life, the experience of eudaimonia may be an expected concomitant. Such experiences may be no more than fleeting glimpses as to what is worth pursuing in life. At other times, the experience may be more sustained, occurring contemporaneously with the performance of a particular activity, but fading rapidly when the activity is put aside. At its most complete, the experience of eudaimonia may be quite enduring, coloring one's feelings even at those times when one is engaging in day-to-day activities not directly related to advancing one's talents or purposes in life. It is in this last instance that eudaimonia could be viewed as involving one's life as a whole, as in Aristotle's usage. While it is undoubtedly useful to distinguish between individuals who have attained differing levels of success in living in truth to their individual daimon, and to recognize the achievement in those lives that are most complete in this regard, it is also important to acknowledge those whose success is more limited either in degree or with regard to the aspects of their lives to which it pertains.

The constituents of eudaimonia. Aristotle, in considering those things which are to be considered worthwhile in themselves in human life, and therefore constituents of eudaimonia, allows in the end only two candidates: contemplation and the exercise of moral virtue (Telfer, 1980). Important as these are,

they hardly exhaust the potentialities of an individual, whether in terms of talents or purposes in living.

If one starts with the central tenet of eudaimonism as an ethical theory, that one should strive for the fullest realization of one's potentialities by ethically permissible means, whatever the nature of those potentials and however far one may be able to go in realizing them (Kraut, 1979; Norton, 1976), a conclusion quite different from Aristotle's will be reached. Feelings of eudaimonia can be expected to arise whenever a person encounters success in furthering his or her potentialities and by whatever activities this is accomplished. This explicitly recognizes the uniqueness of each individual in terms of the array of potentialities each person possesses. It recognizes that the environmental conditions within which each person operates will facilitate eudaimonistic undertakings for some and hinder them for others. And it recognizes the physical and mental handicaps will in varying degrees limit what can actually be accomplished. Where Aristotle applies the same concept of the worthwhile life to everyone, the view of eudaimonism advanced here involves individual ideals in that a worthwhile life is constituted by the fullest realization of talents and purposes in life of which the person is capable given his or her unique situation. Kraut (1979) refers to such a view as "a more humane doctrine" (p. 194).

Eudaimonia as available to children and adolescents. Since Aristotle restricted the possible constituents of eudaimonia to contemplation and moral virtue, this precluded its presence in anyone who had not attained the adult years. This is paralleled by Maslow's (1970) empirical observation that he could identify virtually no exemplars of self-actualization not well into their adult years. Yet those psychologists concerned with personal expressiveness in the form of intrinsic motivation have repeatedly used examples of the curiosity and exploration of even very young children in their analyses. The broader view of the constituents of eudaimonia just described resolves this seeming contradiction. Since children and adolescents can and do act in ways that further their potentialities, they too can be leading the type of life worth living for their ages, and thus have the possibility of experiencing eudaimonia. A more extended discussion of these issues is provided in a subsequent section on eudaimonia from a developmental perspective.

On the Relationship of Eudaimonia to Hedonic Happiness

As a subjective psychological condition, eudaimonia can be considered synonymous with such other cognitive-affective terms employed here as experiences of personal expressiveness, flow experiences, and peak experiences. It is important to distinguish eudaimonia and its synonyms, from the cognitive-affective condition of hedonic enjoyment. While eudaimonia and hedonic

happiness appear to be interrelated, sharing a number of descriptive qualities in common, differences should be found between them in the distinctive role played by talents and purposes in living. Whereas advancements in talents and/or purposes in living are an integral part of experiences of eudaimonia, they are not essential to experiences of hedonic enjoyment. Other differences between these cognitive-affective conditions may be found along lines suggested by Csikszentmihalyi (1975) in his discussion of flow, and by Maslow (1968, 1970) in his writings on peak experiences.

On philosophical grounds it has been claimed that eudaimonia is a sufficient, but not a necessary condition for hedonic happiness (Telfer, 1980). That is, a person regularly engaging in personally expressive activities will be happy with his or her life, but there are plausibly many other routes to hedonic happiness besides engaging in personally expressive activities. Logically there are four possible categories of activities structured in terms of the presence or absence of the two cognitive-affective conditions, though one of these may be a null category. The first category is comprised of activities giving rise to both eudaimonia and hedonic enjoyment. The second category involves those activities that are hedonically enjoyed but that do not give rise to eudaimonia. The third set is comprised of activities that are neither hedonically enjoyed nor which give rise to eudaimonia. The fourth, and theoretically null, category would include any activities giving rise to eudaimonia but which are not enjoyable in the hedonic sense of the term. In the distinction among activities in these categories lies the potential to distinguish empirically between the two cognitive-affective conditions.

An understanding of the differences between eudaimonia and hedonic happiness now allows a resolution of the paradox first introduced in connection with the concepts of intrinsic motivation and flow. The rock climber in Csikszentmihalyi's example is likely experiencing both eudaimonia and hedonic happiness as a consequence of engaging in the sport, but the rock climbing is not being engaged in as a means to achieve either of these cognitive-affective states. If some cognitive-affective experience deriving from rock climbing were the goal of the activity, then it should make no difference to the person if it were available by different or easier means. But it is the rock climbing that is perceived to be an end in itself. The presence of hedonic enjoyment does not help to explain the paradox for there is no essential connection between rock climbing and the resultant condition of hedonic happiness. However, there is plausibly an essential relationship between the climbing and eudaimonia for some rock climbers, for the climbing is inherently related to the advancement of certain potentialities including, for example, such talents as balance, agility, muscle strength, body control, and problem solving under pressure. Further, the rock climbing allows for the advancement of purposes in living embodying such values as self-reliance, courage, and goal

attainment. It is the advancement of these talents and purposes that gives rise to the experience of eudaimonia. The rock climber is not climbing to attain eudaimonia, but rather to advance particular talents and/or purposes that are relatively specific to rock climbing (whose advance gives rise to eudaimonia).

The resolution of the rock climber's paradox contains a solution to the problem of selectivity. Experiences of personal expressiveness (eudaimonia) are a *sign* of the success the individual is having in furthering his or her talents and/or purposes in living. It follows that in the presence of the sign, the activities leading to it will be selectively pursued further, and in its absence other activities may be sought. But the sign of the reward, though enjoyable in its own right, should not be confused with the end or reward actually being pursued. In the case of personally expressive activities, that end or reward is not a particular cognitive-affective condition but rather, living a life in truth to one's daimon, that is, advancing one's talents and purposes in living.

Eudaimonism from a Developmental Perspective

While Aristotle had said that eudaimonia is not possible for children and adolescents, it is unmistakable that when children engage in activities involving increased autonomy and skill development, they experience such activities as intrinsically motivating and personally expressive. It is also evident that such activities involve the realization of personal potentials, although those potentials are as yet unconnected to any purposes in living of which a child can be aware. The earliest experiences of personal expressiveness are for potentials that are universal (or nearly so), to grasp, to crawl, to walk, to talk. Later in childhood, the potentials that are actualized are more individual, but still not unique, for example, to play soccer, to play piano, to relate to animals. Simultaneous with the emergence of the self is the emergence of the desire not just to do the activity, but to do it as well as it is possible for the child to do it. In other words, there is an emergence of both selectivity and the desire to fulfill selective potentials to the highest degree. This may help to explain the fantasy activity of young children since their imaginations can so far outstrip the skills they currently possess.

In childhood, then, eudaimonia is first experienced in terms of what White (1959) refers to as competence. It seems likely that since childhood is a time of such rapid skill development in so many areas, that children actually experience eudaimonia very frequently. The enjoyment that adults have in children encompasses, in part, the recognition of the child's eudaimonic experiences. The regret they feel as they watch children grow beyond childhood may stem, in part, from the knowledge that such experiences will not be so readily achieved again.

What is missing from the experience of eudaimonia during childhood is any conscious awareness of the purposes in life toward which one's potentialities can or should be put. The development of such purposes appears to await the adolescent years. The philosopher Norton (1976) writes that:

every person has experienced eudaimonia, at least momentarily, at a specific juncture in his life. . . . It appears as the first free act by which the adolescent oversteps the boundaries of dependent childhood. (p. 217)

What is referred to here is not simply going against parental wishes, a form of autonomy readily available to a two-year-old. Rather, the subject is autonomy of purpose. The adolescent is able to reflectively recognize that his or her purposes are not necessarily those of the parents, and then choose to act for his or her own ends. In that newly acquired insight is eudaimonia. The idea of personally expressive activities now takes on an entirely new dimension, that of the pursuit of one's own purposes in living.

Psychologists quickly followed the lead of Erik Erikson (1963, 1968) in interpreting adolescence as the time when individuals strive to establish a personal sense of identity, an identity comprised of those goals, values, and beliefs to which they can become unequivocally committed. Identity formation is therefore the process by which adolescents come to acquire their purposes in living. It follows that the experience of eudaimonia is more readily available to those who have achieved some measure of success in establishing their sense of identity than to those still struggling with the task or those who have given up on the quest.

But how is the adolescent to determine what are, or should be, his or her purposes in living? Here two metaphors are available that reflect alternative approaches to the task of identity formation: discovery and creation (construction) (Waterman, 1984a). The discovery metaphor is grounded in eudaimonistic philosophy and suggests that adolescents must look inside themselves for purposes through which to make their unique potentialities or talents manifest within the social circumstances in which they operate. Identity formation is thus a process of self-recognition leading subsequently to self-realization. The creation metaphor is more closely associated with existential philosophy and suggests that adolescents have a virtually unlimited array of possibilities from among which each must choose. By their individual choices they bring into existence, create, their own purposes in living. Here identity formation is a process of self-construction that must be followed by implementation. (See Waterman, 1984a, for a discussion of the diverse implications that follow from the choice of one or the other metaphor.)

According to the analysis provided here, there are grounds for preferring the discovery metaphor over the creation metaphor since the purposes in living chosen under the former process are more likely to be consistent with

the person's actual skills and talents and therefore more likely to be realizable, than if the latter process were employed. But, however a sense of purpose in living is arrived at, it is only when it is in place that personally expressive activities can have their full double-meaning, expressive of one's talents and expressive of one's purposes in living.

One other point about eudaimonia in adolescence should be made. It is the central frustration of adolescents that they can establish purposes in living of great breadth and strength, long before they have developed their talents to the point where they can achieve any notable success in attaining the goals they have set. Where childhood was a time when potentialities were furthered with at most a glimmer of future purposes, in adolescence the establishing of purposes far outpaces the development of the needed talents. Thus, having come to recognize the possibility of a far richer experience of eudaimonia than was possible during childhood, adolescents feel thwarted by their inability to know that experience in any sustained way. According to eudaimonistic philosophy, eudaimonia continues to be available through each undertaking the adolescent makes toward furthering his or her potentialities, particularly those in line with the newly established purposes in living. But the adolescent overlooks or discounts these experiences by focusing attention not on the distance traveled, but on the distance still to go. Put in other words, adolescents are living in the future (or are running from it), and thus are not able to recognize the joys available at present.

It is in adulthood that the effective integration of individual talents and personal purposes in living first becomes feasible. For the adult, the experience of eudaimonia requires the full involvement of one's talents in the pursuit of goals deemed worthy of giving direction and meaning to life. It is almost certainly also necessary that the person perceive himself or herself as achieving a reasonable degree of success with respect to the purposes in living being pursued. While it is the individual's own assessment of progress or success that is essential for feelings of eudaimonia, it is difficult, if not impossible, to sustain a positive evaluation in this regard in the absence of some tangible signs supporting such a conclusion. Evidence for success regarding one's purposes is strongest in terms of a recognition of the impact of one's activities upon other people, or in other ways upon the world. Less effective, but still relevant, are the evaluations received from others, as these attest to, or deny, the value of the person's activities. It is important to recognize that a person may be receiving consistently favorable evaluations on the value or success of his or her undertakings, and still not experience eudaimonia. Such an outcome may result if the person does not deem his or her own activities of sufficient worth, if the person does not believe he or she has been fully invested in the activities (i.e., has given less than his or her best efforts), or if the sources of the evaluations are not viewed as credible.

Since the purposes in living individuals pursue will differ widely in their content and in the objective probabilities of success, it follows that for some people, diligent, even inspired, efforts toward the chosen goals will not necessarily meet with success. The consequence of such thwarted efforts are likely to include a variety of negative emotional states such as burnout and mid-life crisis. It is possible to identify at least two components of such conditions. First, there may be a sense of stagnation in that there are perceived to be no new developments regarding skills or talents. Irrespective of the quality of the performance involved, mere repetition of an activity renders it less satisfying. The experience of eudaimonia is dependent upon the continual furthering of the talents involved. Second, in the absence of notable successes, doubt may arise regarding the value of the purposes in living to which the person is committed. Failure is taken to be a sign that one has taken a wrong direction even when the reasons for that failure reside in external circumstances. If eudaimonia is to be experienced, it can only occur through activities where the desired impacts are environmentally available. Descriptively, mid-life crises involve efforts to revise existing purposes in living or establish new ones.

A Concluding Thought on Eudaimonia

In view of the many departures from the Aristotelian perspective on eudaimonia advanced here, and in view of the importance of the issues involved, it can be argued that in rendering the idea amenable to psychological analysis, I have so altered its meaning that it bears little resemblance to its original intent. I am not lacking in some sympathy with this charge, but can respond to it in two ways. First, there are numerous points of similarity in my analysis with those of contemporary philosophers writing on eudaimonia. Second, I would not have arrived at my current understanding of personal expressiveness without traveling the route of eudaimonist philosophy. Whatever the eventual philosophical disposition of the issues I have raised, from a psychological perspective, my analysis can be sustained if efforts to develop one's individual talents and further one's purposes in living, in ethically justifiable ways, are accompanied by a distinctive subjective, affective condition that is related to, but distinguishable from, happiness in the hedonic meaning of the term.

The Personally Expressive Personality: Some Contributions from Psychology

I have been working for some time on a theory of optimal psychological functioning involving a pattern of personal qualities integrated under the term "psychological individualism" (Archer and Waterman, 1988; Waterman, 1981,

1984b). This pattern incorporates qualities drawn from four distinct theoretical traditions within psychology: (a) a sense of personal identity (Erikson, 1963, 1968 – ego analytic theory), (b) self-actualization (Maslow, 1968, 1970 – humanistic theory), (c) an internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966 – social learning theory), and (d) principled moral reasoning (Gilligan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1969 – cognitive-developmental theory). Despite the diverse origins of these constructs, they share a common philosophical foundation (Waterman, 1984b) and can meaningfully be integrated into a distinctive theoretical approach for the understanding of effective personality functioning. (It should be noted that not all of these theorists would acknowledge that their work has individualistic implications, and so they may not approve of the ways in which their ideas have been adapted.)

My concern with the phenomenon of personal expressiveness has emerged from my efforts at theory building. I am hypothesizing here that those persons most characterized by the four individualistic psychological qualities will be experiencing the greatest success in identifying and engaging in personally expressive activities.

A Sense of Personal Identity

A sense of personal identity can be defined as “having a clearly delineated self-definition comprised of those goals, values, and beliefs to which the person is unequivocally committed. These commitments evolve over time and are made because the chosen goals, values, and beliefs are judged worthy of giving a direction, purpose, and meaning to life” (Waterman, 1984a, p. 331). The content of a person’s identity elements, the substance of identity commitments, should be constituted of material that is experienced as personally expressive. Understood this way, a sense of identity is not so much something to do, as it is someone to be.

The approach to the concept of identity advanced here goes beyond the theoretical contributions of Erikson (1963, 1968) and the methodological-empirical and theoretical contributions of Marcia (1966, 1967, 1980). For Erikson (1963, 1968), identity emerges out of identifications with parents, age-mates, and a variety of significant others and comes to include both unique talents and the societal opportunities for their expression. Among the functions served by the construct of identity are inner coherence, continuity over time and situation, and self-presentation, both to self and others. In the present context, what needs to be stressed, and what is not focal in Erikson’s work, are the motivational properties of identity. Identity specifies that which one wishes to become, or wishes to continue being. It thus embodies both the directional (the ends to be pursued) and the energizing (the impetus to action) components of motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

The individual’s sense of identity provides directionality to behavior in that

it embodies the goals, values, and beliefs deemed worthy of being pursued. This will be the case whether or not the identity elements are consistent or inconsistent with the person's underlying potentialities or talents. There can be no assurance that when a person engages in the task of identity formation that the decisions made will be personally expressive. Identity elements may be chosen based on the models available, parental expectations, social rewards, or a variety of other factors unrelated to eudaimonistic considerations. Once formed, and on whatever basis chosen, identity commitments serve as a basis on which the individual chooses between alternative courses of action in terms of the extent to which each course furthers the implementation of the chosen identity elements. While this is true of both expressive and nonexpressive identity elements, it may be anticipated that differences will exist between these situations regarding the energizing components of motivation.

There are at least two distinguishable ways in which a sense of personal identity energizes behavior. First, to the extent that an individual perceives himself or herself as not moving toward the realization of chosen goals, or as not living consistently with internalized values and beliefs, there is an accompanying experience of discomfort and motivation to undertake those actions appropriate for making progress toward the desired ends. The progress achieved toward those ends reduces the discomfort and serves as a reward for the behavior involved and thus helps sustain the activity. There is more than a passing similarity here to the motivational properties of cognitive consistency (Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1958; Osgood and Tannenbaum, 1955). What is different here from the cognitive consistency theories in the realm of social psychology is the centrality of the cognitive elements involved and the basis of their selection. The fact that the person's self-definition is involved means that the cognitive elements are of the highest salience, and therefore, that the motivational properties of any inconsistency are of the greatest magnitude. But it is the basis of selection of properly chosen identity commitments that is richest in its implications for an understanding of human motivation.

In line with philosophical eudaimonism, the formation of identity commitments is most appropriate when they are expressive of personal potentials. The activities undertaken to implement one's sense of personal identity will then give rise to the experience of the increasingly full utilization of skills and talents. This offers us a means of distinguishing between identity elements that are, and are not, well chosen. Where identity contents are well chosen both the achieving of cognitive consistency and intrinsic reward will serve to sustain the effort. Where identity contents are poorly chosen, that is, the elements are not consistent with personal potentials, only the maintenance of cognitive consistency is serving as an identity related motivational force. There will then be a decreased likelihood that the commitments will prove durable.

Self-actualization

Maslow's (1968, 1970) contribution to the understanding of the motivational nature of personal expressiveness has already been discussed. What needs comment here is the perception that self-actualization is experienced by relatively few people, and only during the adult years. This perception arose because in his classic study of exemplars of self-actualization, all were highly accomplished individuals well into their adult years. Indeed, Maslow (1970) wrote that the screening of some 3000 college students yielded just one immediately usable subject. Yet it is likely that Maslow did not intend growth motivation and self-actualization to be construed as applicable to only a very limited segment of humanity.

If we define growth as the various processes which bring the person toward ultimate self-actualization, then this conforms better with the observed fact that it is going on *all* the time in the life history. (Maslow, 1968, p. 26)

Since experiences of intrinsic motivation are evident in early childhood and continue throughout the life course, and since flow experiences have been described by adolescents, and by a wide range of individuals whose level of accomplishments do not approach that of Maslow's sample, it appears warranted to undertake the exploration of the idea of self-actualization in everyday life. Experiences of personal expressiveness can be employed as the criterion in studies of the ways in which self-actualization may be occurring in the lives of a very substantial proportion of the population.

The existence of a strong link between self-actualization and the sense of personal identity should also be recognized. Under optimal circumstances, the goals and values incorporated into the sense of identity should incorporate the skills and activities that can give rise to feelings of personal expressiveness. Both at the level of skill development and goal attainment, self-actualization should be present, whether tentatively, sporadically and to a mild degree, or in a stronger and more sustained fashion. The intensity, frequency, and duration of self-actualization will depend on the degree of progress made or success achieved in one's undertakings. Similarly, living up to one's ideals, as embodied in the sense of personal identity, will be experienced as self-actualizing in varying degrees, depending in part on the levels of effort and difficulty involved in putting those ideals into action.

This conceptualization of self-actualization suggests a significant departure from previous efforts to study self-actualization. Rather than using outstanding exemplars of self-actualization, as did Maslow (1970), or identifying individuals in a college or the general population who share personality or attitudinal similarities to exemplars of self-actualization, as is done in research using the *Personal Orientation Inventory* (Shostrom, 1974), it should be possible to

distinguish between individuals in terms of their current levels of self-actualization as indicated by the extent of their feelings of personal expressiveness about the activities in their lives. Further, if it is found that most people experience self-actualization to some extent, as indicated by feelings of personal expressiveness, then it becomes feasible to study those environmental circumstances that facilitate and impede self-actualization in everyday life for the general population.

An Internal Locus of Control

The role of locus of control in personal expressiveness is more indirect than in the case of either a sense of personal identity or self-actualization, though its relevance is readily apparent. It is likely that the outcomes of activities experienced as personally expressive will be attributed primarily to the actor's own personal qualities, that is, as reflecting an internal locus of control, whereas the outcomes of nonexpressive activities may be perceived as either under internal or external control. For example, a student for whom studying mathematics is personally expressive will likely be highly invested in math courses and choose to spend time in course related activities, and will perceive his or her course grades as determined largely by personal qualities and efforts. In contrast, a student whose enrollment in the course is based solely on the need to fulfill a distribution requirement may or may not be invested in the course, will likely find course activities not fully involving, and will likely perceive a course grade as based on luck, or fate, or the actions of powerful others (e.g., whether the professor gives hard or easy exams).

There is a phenomenological paradox that should be noted here, however. Maslow (1968) observed that peak experiences are often experienced passively, as something happening to the person, rather than as something actively achieved. By extension, this may occur with respect to feelings of personal expressiveness as well. The paradox arises from the fact that the person's own efforts are an active, integral part of the process leading to the experience, without which the peak experience or experience of personal expressiveness would not occur. Yet the passivity felt at the time may lead some research respondents to use external locus of control language when describing the cognitive-affective aspects of such experiences. Such language would not likely to be employed when talking about the personally expressive activities themselves.

Principled Moral Reasoning

Although the term principled moral reasoning has been identified primarily with the work of Kohlberg (1969, 1976), for whom justice was the central con-

struct for determining morality, it will be used here as a broader conceptualization. Gilligan (1982) has criticized Kohlberg for too narrow a focus on an ethics of justice and rights that is more typical of males, and a disregard of an ethics of care and responsiveness that is more typical of females. Both can be shown to reflect principled functioning in that both unfold in a developmental sequence of cognitive functioning toward an ideal that is increasingly reintegrative and equilibrated, though emphasizing different ends.

But there is no need to restrict the foundations of morality to only one or two basic virtues. The philosopher Pincoffs (1986) has identified over 60 virtues that could become the basis of a principled approach to moral reasoning. And argues Pincoffs, there is no a priori basis on which to demonstrate that one particular virtue is to be preferred over all other virtues as more fundamental for morality, although any virtue can be shown to be preferable to its opposite (a corresponding vice) or to its absence. If different individuals start with different premises as to what constitutes the fundamental virtue(s), then each may reason to different conclusions as to how to act ethically in a particular set of circumstances, and each could be considered moral.

It can then be hypothesized that which virtue a person chooses to consider fundamental, therefore providing a basis for action, is a statement of personally expressive preference. The preference may be justified to others on either rational or intuitive grounds, but either way, at another level it is a decision about how the individual wishes to define himself or herself on the level of moral values. Such values are aspects of personal identity and ideally are chosen because they are reflective of those existing potentials the person wishes to actualize.

The Testability of Hypotheses Concerning Personal Expressiveness

The conception that feelings of personal expressiveness arise from the successful performance of activities in line with eudaimonistic potentials valued by the individual is not directly testable. Potentialities are not observable. Except for cases of physical inability, there is no way to reject a claim that some potential exists (e.g., for the development of a particular skill), and that it is actualizable. Therefore, the daimon cannot be assessed directly by empirical procedures. Nor is there anything useful to be gained by claiming, *ex post facto*, that since a person has found a particular undertaking to be personally expressive, there must have been a potentiality for it.

However, the inability to study the relationship of potentials to personal expressiveness directly does not mean there are no indirect approaches that could prove fruitful. One such indirect approach is through the psychological concept of aptitude or latent talent. Aptitudes are observable, present per-

formance indicators providing a basis for prediction of future performance that, with appropriate training and/or relevant experiences, a person can develop a high level of proficiency at particular skills. Aptitudes, then, are fallible predictors of the person's potentials. From this it can be hypothesized that the higher the level of assessed aptitude, the greater will be the level of personal expressiveness experienced when engaging in the relevant activities. To minimize the possibility of self-fulfilling prophecies on the part of the research participants, it will be useful to test this hypothesis with aptitudes of which the participants had been previously unaware and with control activities for which aptitude indicators are not high. Also, it will be necessary to assess the values attached to the various activities by the respondents since feelings of personal expressiveness would not be expected where value loadings are neutral or negative, even when latent talents do exist.

A second approach to research on personal expressiveness, already mentioned, concerns the links between personal expressiveness and the four individualistic personal qualities. The conceptual links among these constructs can be traced to eudaimonistic philosophy and can be studied empirically. Those individuals scoring highest on measures of a sense of personal identity, self-actualization, internal locus of control, and principled moral reasoning should report engaging in activities generating feelings of personal expressiveness with greater frequency, and the strength of expressive feelings should be more intense.

A third approach is through the study of the implications of using the discovery vs. creation (construction) metaphors in the task of identity formation (Waterman, 1984a). Since the metaphor of "self-discovery" is linked with eudaimonistic philosophical assumptions, while the creation metaphor is linked with existentialist assumptions, confirmation of the hypothesized consequences of use of the metaphors can serve as a support for the conceptual framework from which this analysis of personal expressiveness was developed. For example, use of the discovery metaphor should be associated with (a) placing greater reliance for the making of important life-decisions on personal experiences rather than on the opinions of others, (b) information gathering restricted to a relatively limited number of possibilities in line with personal inclinations, and (c) placing greater reliance on achieving a resolution to life-questions on the intuitive decision-making level, rather than the cognitive decision-making level. Most importantly for present purposes, activities identified on the basis of use of the discovery metaphor should yield more frequent and more intense feeling of personal expressiveness than do activities identified through use of the creation metaphor.

Still another approach to the study of personal expressiveness involves research on the differences among the various forms of enjoyment, particularly between personal expressiveness and hedonic pleasure. It can be hypoth-

esized that the nature of the psychological experience for the two states will be described differently in key ways and the two will arise from different circumstances and activities. Such research will require the development of new instruments, either paper-and-pencil measures or interview schedules, designed to elicit discriminations between personal expressiveness and hedonic pleasure.¹ Instruments of this type may make it more feasible to study intrinsic motivation, flow, and peak experiences as personality variables.

Finally, it will be of interest to study the correspondence between self-attributions and observer-attributions of personal expressiveness, as this may reflect on the validity of self-attributions. Such studies could be conducted in family settings using parental observations, in school settings, where teachers' observations can be employed, or in laboratory settings where researchers may employ any of a variety of constructed tasks for purposes of observation. It should not be assumed that the existence of discrepancies between self- and observer-attributions of personal expressiveness necessarily reflects errors in the self-reports. Rather, it will be necessary to explore the circumstances under which such discrepancies arise and the motivations that may be operating to yield distorted perceptions of self or distorted perceptions or presentations of the person on the part of the observer. For example, parents may deny the presence of feelings of personal expressiveness in a son or daughter for any activity that is incompatible with their career aspirations for their child. Alternatively, an adolescent or youth may misperceive himself or herself as being expressively involved in some career related activities in order to live up to parental expectations.

Some Observations on Personal Expressiveness and the Study of Psychological Health

I have endeavored in this paper to explore the philosophical and psychological foundations of the concept of personal expressiveness. Whatever the fate of the hypotheses offered here, whether tested by the methods I have suggested or by different approaches, the primary observations regarding personal expressiveness will remain unaffected. Between individuals, there are wide differences in the overall extent to which people feel deeply involved in what they are doing in their lives and in the overall extent to which they feel fulfilled through the activities they pursue. Within individuals, there are similarly wide differences between the times when what a person does is experienced as profoundly fulfilling and those times when life appears mundane, a succession of events without apparent purpose or meaning worthy

¹The author has developed a paper-and-pencil measure designed to identify activities giving rise to experiences of personal expressiveness. The instrument is available upon request.

of psychological involvement. These are observations that anyone endeavoring to develop a conceptual system for the analysis of personality must incorporate if effective or healthy psychological functioning is to be understood.

The reasons why prior efforts to study healthy psychological functioning have proven of limited utility can be readily identified. The attempts to define positive mental health (Jahoda, 1958; Shoben, 1957) and to study the exemplars of self-actualization (Maslow, 1970) have yielded an image of psychological health that appears so seldom attained as to raise questions of relevance for almost all of humankind. Personological analyses (Murray, 1938; White, 1975), psychohistorical analyses (Erikson, 1958, 1969), and other idiographic approaches make it possible to know individual coping within the context of particular socio-historical-environmental circumstances, but difficult to gauge what is generalizable across time, settings, and endowment. More recently, the theoretically based research attempts to understand isolated components of effective personality functioning (e.g., a sense of personal identity, locus of control, principled moral reasoning) have added greatly to our understanding of the particular processes involved, but have too often given rise to a seemingly endless search for correlates from which no sense of how a fully-functioning individual functions can emerge.

In order to learn from the history of work on healthy psychological functioning, I suggest that to be successful, future efforts will need to do the following:

- (a) conceive of psychological health in such a way as to include the possibility that most people function in that way, at least at their best moments;
- (b) conceive of psychological health in such a way as to include individual uniqueness in its expression while preserving a core of commonality to the phenomenon that can facilitate generalizations across individuals; and
- (c) conceive of psychological health as an integrated system of component processes that can be analyzed at either an elemental or global level.

The theoretical analyses and methodological proposals regarding personal expressiveness advanced here represent an attempt to proceed on the basis of the suggestions outlined above. Personally expressive functioning is not an ideal conceived of in terms that exclude almost everyone. Rather, it is viewed as a psychological state that almost everyone does experience, though with widely different frequencies and intensities. Individual uniqueness is assumed in that each person has a particular array of activities through which his or her highest potentials can be advanced, yet it is postulated that personal expressiveness itself is essentially experienced in similar ways throughout the population. Further, my focus on personal expressiveness is an attempt to integrate themes within psychology and philosophy and to integrate concepts drawn from diverse personality theories so as to yield a multi-level conceptualization of at least one central aspect of effective functioning.

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