

## Chapter 1 : PERMA - A Well-being Theory by Martin Seligman

*I am studying about psychological well-being and I used Ryff's theory of psychological well-being. I am looking for other theories of Psychological well-being but I did not blog.quintoapp.com share.*

Measurement[ edit ] The Ryff Scale of Measurement is a psychometric inventory consisting of two forms either 54 or 84 items in which respondents rate statements on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 6 indicates strong agreement. Following are explanations of each criterion, and an example statement from the Ryff Inventory to measure each criterion. High scores indicate that the respondent is independent and regulates his or her behavior independent of social pressures. An example statement for this criterion is "I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus". High scores indicate that the respondent makes effective use of opportunities and has a sense of mastery in managing environmental factors and activities, including managing everyday affairs and creating situations to benefit personal needs. An example statement for this criterion is "In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live". High scores indicate that the respondent continues to develop, is welcoming to new experiences, and recognizes improvement in behavior and self over time. An example statement for this criterion is "I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world". An example statement for this criterion is "People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others". An example statement for this criterion is "Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them". An example statement for this criterion is "I like most aspects of my personality" [1] Applications and research-findings[ edit ] Contributing factors[ edit ] Positive contributing factors[ edit ] Positive psychological well-being may emerge from numerous sources. A happy marriage is contributive, for example, as is a satisfying job or a meaningful relationship with another person. Optimism also can help an individual cope with stresses to their well-being. Social interaction has a strong effect on well-being as negative social outcomes are more strongly related to well-being than are positive social outcomes. In contrast, those individuals who aspire for wealth and material, social recognition, fame, image, or attractiveness can be described as aiming to fulfil their extrinsic psychological needs. Positive correlations have been found with indications of psychological well-being: Negative correlations have been found with indicators of psychological ill-being: Results suggested that individuals whose actions had underlying eudaimonic tendencies as indicated by their self-reports e. Importantly, she also produced scales for assessing mental health. Heritability[ edit ] Individual differences in both overall Eudaimonia , identified loosely with self-control and in the facets of eudaimonia are heritable. Evidence from one study supports 5 independent genetic mechanisms underlying the Ryff facets of this trait, leading to a genetic construct of eudaimonia in terms of general self-control, and four subsidiary biological mechanisms enabling the psychological capabilities of purpose, agency, growth, and positive social relations.

## Chapter 2 : Well-Being Concepts | HRQOL | CDC

*Ryff's six domains of psychological well-being. A six item questionnaire to assess your psychological well-being. Your whole theory and blogs are very good for "professional" areas; I want to.*

According to these theories, living well is getting what you want, feeling satisfied, experiencing pleasure, or the like. Other theories take well-being to be something that is not defined by our psychology; for example, they define well-being in terms of objective values or the perfection of our human nature. These two approaches present us with a trade-off: In this paper I argue that we can take a middle path between these two approaches if we hold that well-being is an ideal but an ideal that is rooted in our psychology. The middle path that I propose is one that puts what people value at the center of the theory of well-being. In the second half of the paper I consider how the value-based theory I describe should be applied to real life situations.

Introduction Well-being is, by definition, what is good for you. If you achieve well-being in your life, you may not have lived a morally perfect life and your life may not have made any great contribution to art, world peace or progress, but you will have lived a life that is good for you. Even though a good life in this sense is not the same as a perfect life whatever that might be, well-being is still an ideal. It is something we strive for and we certainly do not all achieve it. Our well-being may be diminished by health problems, bad financial luck, the death of a loved one, poor planning, or many other factors. Even if we are lucky and things go well for us, the ideal of a good life serves as a goal for our aspirations about how things might go even better. Theories that define well-being in terms of our psychology directly keep the ideal down to earth. What I want to argue in this paper is that we can take a middle path between these two approaches if we say that well-being is an ideal—something it makes sense to say is valuable—but an ideal that is anchored in our psychology. Other theories have taken this path. Full information theory, for instance, defines well-being in terms of idealized psychological states, namely the desires that we would have if we were fully informed. I believe such theories are on the right track, but I also think that existing theories of this kind can be improved upon. In this paper I propose a version of these idealized subjective theories that I hope shares their virtues and avoids their shortcomings. Idealized subjective theories in general have the problem that we do not have ideal psychologies to work with, which means that there are special difficulties for applying such theories of well-being. I answer this question by articulating a different way that a theory of well-being can be helpful. So, this paper has two aims: In section two, I will outline the theory I favor: In section three I discuss how the theory can be applied. Some theories define well-being in terms of our actual psychological states. Many psychologists, for example, think that well-being consists in life satisfaction and positive affect balance roughly, more pleasant feelings than painful ones Diener ; Diener Some philosophers agree that well-being should be defined in terms of mental states like pleasure and pain. According to hedonism about well-being, the good life for a person is a life that has the most pleasure and the least pain Crisp ; Feldman Others many philosophers and economists think that desires or preferences are the right psychological state to focus on. According to the desire satisfaction theory of well-being, the good life for a person consists in getting the most of what she ultimately wants over the course of her lifetime Heathwood ; Heathwood All of these theories have something going for them and it is not the purpose of this paper to show that these theories are wrong. What I want to point out is that these theories make well-being depend very heavily on our individual psychologies. What we happen to take pleasure in, to be satisfied by, or to want fundamentally determines what is good for us. For instance, the ideally good life according to desire satisfaction theory is not the life that many people actually achieve few of us are able to get all the things that we want, but it is an ideal that is fixed by what we really do want. Though these theories do give us something of an ideal, many will find these ideals wanting. Well-being is supposed to be one of the main goals of human life, that at which we aim in deliberation and planning when we think about how to live our lives. Could the mere satisfaction of our desires play such a role? Think about someone whose desires seem ill suited to living a good life, for example, someone who desires nothing but money and power, or a person with anorexia nervosa who desire to be thin above all else. We might think that a theory of well-being ought to allow us to question whether satisfying

these desires really is good for a person in any way, but actual desire satisfaction theory does not allow this. People tend to think that part of what it is to raise children well is to instill the right desires in them so that they want to be productive, decent people. Other theories of well-being allow the ideally good life for a person to move farther away from her psychology. Objective list theories of well-being say that a good life for a person is one in which she achieves certain objective goods such as friendship, knowledge and pleasure Arneson ; Finnis Such theories make well-being an ideal that could be far removed from what a person actually thinks about what is good for her. We can now see more clearly the trade-off that I mentioned in the introduction. Theories that make well-being a function of our actual psychology do not explain why well-being is a valuable goal of human life. Theories that idealize well-being away from our actual psychology do not explain why well-being should be our goal. To argue that one way is better than any other possible way is far beyond the scope of a single paper. Instead, I will take an approach that has seemed promising to many and put a new spin on it that makes it an even more compelling solution. In doing so, my starting assumption is that a theory of well-being must explain why well-being is a valuable ideal and also why it is a valuable ideal for each of us. They promise to explain how well-being is something valuable, because they do not take our desires and satisfactions at face value, but rather as these desires and satisfactions might be improved in accordance with norms of improvement such as rationality or authenticity. It seems to me that the promise of these idealized subjective theories as I called them in the introduction has not been fully appreciated. One reason for this is the serious objections to full information as a norm of improvement. Philosophers have argued that the ideal is at best alienating and at worst incoherent Rosati ; Velleman ; Tiberius Another reason has to do with the psychological states that have been at the center of these theories; critics have argued strenuously against the relevance of desire and life satisfaction to well-being Richard Kraut ; Haybron The theory I propose is an idealized subjective theory that takes values rather than desires or satisfactions as the key psychological state, and a model of a value full life rather than an informed or authentic agent as its ideal. In the remainder of this section I will explain the theory in more detail, in the hope that a good description of it will reveal its advantages. I believe that the aspect of our psychology it makes most sense to attend to in our theories of well-being is our values. For this reason, a theory of well-being that focuses on what people value is well suited to explain why well-being is something that people have a particular reason to care about. Moreover, values are held to standards in ways that desires or pleasures are not; it makes sense to talk about what it is appropriate to value and we tend to think that we should have reasons for valuing what we value. This gives values a leg up when it comes to well-being, because it allows them to make sense of how we can go wrong in pursuing our well-being. Accounting for how we could go wrong or make mistakes about what is good for us is needed to make sense of well-being as a normative notion. But values have a special status in our planning and evaluation, they have greater stability than mere preferences and they are emotionally entrenched in ways that desires might not be. She will also be inclined to take into account how well she is doing as a parent when she thinks about how well her life is going and how she could improve. In short, then, values are what we value, and to value is to have a coordinated pattern of emotions and motivations toward something that you take to be relevant to how your life goes. Not all values are fully realizedâ€”sometimes our motivations to act, our emotions and our judgments are out of sync with each other â€”but values in their most complete sense include all these elements. Values, as I intend them, then, are relative to subjects; different people may value different things. That said, there are many shared values, especially when it comes to relatively basic values: In short, we live well when we realize what matters to us over time. This includes achieving certain states of affairs such as career goals and also maintaining the positive affective orientation that comprises valuing something. What it is for a value to be fulfilled or realized and what it means to say that one life has more value fulfillment than another are obviously very important for VFT. Values, like desires, bring with them standards for success, and living up to these standards is part of value fulfillment. These standards are not always as obvious; some values are such that we succeed in their terms by having the right attitudes or being a certain kind of person. Nevertheless, there are standards for values in the sense that there are ways of responding appropriately or inappropriately given the nature of what is valued see Anderson Moreover, most values encompass standards that are objective in the sense that whether or not we fulfill them

is not a matter of whether we believe we are fulfilling them. There is something to meeting the standards that our values impose that goes beyond our subjective experience. In this respect, value fulfillment is similar to preference satisfaction: Finally, if we are going to achieve what matters to us, it is not only success in terms of what is valued that matters, but also the valuing attitudes themselves. We require some stability in our valuing attitudes if we are going to succeed by the standards we think are important. Of course, there is such a thing as too much stability: Value fulfillment, then, is succeeding by the standards of your values while continuing to think that these standards are important to how well your life goes. Assessing total value fulfillment requires attending to the relationships between values. We value some things largely as a means to others for example, you might value running marathons as a means to the values of health and fitness. We value some things as constitutive of other more abstract things for example, you might value playing the piano as a way of valuing music. Some values are more important to us than others and some values have a more central role in the whole system. These considerations must be taken into account when we evaluate total value fulfillment and we ask whether one life has more overall value fulfillment than another. Importantly, it is not necessarily the case that getting more fulfillment of a single value at the expense of fulfilling others to a smaller degree contributes to the best overall life. This is because of the ways in which values are related to each other. Consider a simple example to illustrate this point. Imagine Bob, a person whose main values are meaningful work and family life. As with most people, Bob finds that these two values often conflict with each other because of the amount of time they each demand. You might think that VFT implies that Bob would be better off quitting his job and attending to his family, or leaving his family and focusing on his career, but VFT implies no such thing. First of all, if work and family are really both important to Bob, he might very well get more total fulfillment by achieving each of these values to a lesser degree than he would by achieving either on its own. But more importantly, for a normal human being like Bob it is very unlikely that he could make great strides in one if the other were entirely abandoned. This is partly because of diminishing returns working all the time often does not lead to progress. And it is partly because of the role of other values that Bob like most normal human beings has: We can now see how the value fulfillment theory promises to accommodate both sides of the trade-off for theories of well-being. For example, the person with anorexia nervosa has values that are just not conducive to a value full life, since the value of thinness competes with other values physical and mental health and even with life itself a necessary pre-condition for value fulfillment. The compelling ideal of a value full life—“a life in which we do well by what matters to us”—does constrain which values it makes sense for a person to have. Nevertheless, the ideal does not impose external values on a person in a way that risks its appearing unrecognizable to someone as what is good for him or her. Applying the Value Fulfillment Theory:

## Chapter 3 : How Theories of Well-Being Can Help Us Help | Journal of Practical Ethics

*Carol Ryff was motivated by two things: firstly, well-being should not be restricted to medical or biological descriptions – instead it is a philosophical question about the meaning of a good life. 2 Secondly, current psychological theories of well-being at that time lacked empirical rigor – they had not been and could not be tested.*

Health, then, might be said to be a constituent of my well-being, but it is not plausibly taken to be all that matters for my well-being. So we may speak of the well-being of someone who is, and will remain in, the most terrible agony: Philosophically, its scope is more often wider, encompassing a whole life. The point is that some good things in their life made it a happy one, even though they lacked contentment. But this usage is uncommon, and may cause confusion. Is positive psychology about well-being? As yet, conceptual distinctions are not sufficiently clear within the discipline. And speaking of the happiness of a plant would be stretching language too far. But, in fact, eudaimonia seems to have been restricted not only to conscious beings, but to human beings: This is because eudaimonia suggests that the gods, or fortune, have favoured one, and the idea that the gods could care about non-humans would not have occurred to most Greeks. But this temptation should be resisted. Your well-being concerns how well your life goes for you, and we can allow that my well-being depends on yours without introducing the confusing notion that my well-being is constituted by yours. There are signs in Aristotelian thought of an expansion of the subject or owner of well-being. But this should be taken either as a metaphorical expression of the dependence claim, or as an identity claim which does not threaten the notion of well-being: It may be good for us to contemplate such serenity, but contemplating serenity is not the same as the serenity itself. Likewise, my giving money to a development charity may have moral value, that is, be morally good. And the effects of my donation may be good for others. But it remains an open question whether my being morally good is good for me; and, if it is, its being good for me is still conceptually distinct from its being morally good. Consider a possible world that contains only a single item: Leave aside any doubts you might have about whether paintings can be good in a world without viewers, and accept for the sake of argument that this painting has aesthetic value in that world. It seems intuitively plausible to claim that the value of this world is constituted solely by the aesthetic value of the painting. But now consider a world which contains one individual living a life that is good for them. How are we to describe the relationship between the value of this world, and the value of the life lived in it for the individual? Are we to say that the world has a value at all? This fails to capture the idea that there is in fact nothing of value in this world except what is good for the individual. Thoughts such as these led G. When I speak of, say, pleasure as what is good for me, he claimed, I can mean only either that the pleasure I get is good, or that my getting it is good. Nothing is added by saying that the pleasure constitutes my good, or is good for me. The claim that it is good that I get pleasure is, logically speaking, equivalent to the claim that the world containing the single Vermeer is good. Thus, the world containing the single individual with a life worth living, might be said to contain nothing good per se, but a life that is good for that individual. And this fact may give us a reason to bring about such a world, given the opportunity. At the end of the same century, a book was published in Cambridge, Mass. But in both cases the critiques stand independently. And, he adds, no such theory is ever likely to be available, since such matters depend so much on context. Scanlon does, however, implicitly make a claim about what unites these values: Scanlon suggests that we often make claims about what is good in our lives without referring to the notion of well-being, and indeed that it would often be odd to do so. And in some circumstances such a claim would anyway not be odd: Further, people do use the notion of well-being in practical thinking. For example, if I am given the opportunity to achieve something significant, which will involve considerable discomfort over several years, I may consider whether, from the point of view of my own well-being, the project is worth pursuing. And, he claims, there is no such sphere. But this does not chime with my own experience. When I donate blood, this feels to me like a sacrifice. But when I visit the dentist, it feels to me just as if I am weighing present pains against potential future pains. And we can weigh different components of well-being against one another. Consider a case in which you are offered a job which is highly paid but many miles away from your friends and family. Scanlon denies that we

need an account of well-being to understand benevolence, since we do not have a general duty of benevolence, but merely duties to benefit others in specific ways, such as to relieve their pain. And, again, comparisons may be important: And here the notion of well-being will again come into play. Jeremy Bentham, one of the most well-known of the more recent hedonists, begins his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* thus: We might call this substantive hedonism. A complete hedonist position will involve also explanatory hedonism, which consists in an answer to the following question: Consider a substantive hedonist who believed that what makes pleasure good for us is that it fulfills our nature. This theorist is not an explanatory hedonist. Hedonism—as is demonstrated by its ancient roots—has long seemed an obviously plausible view. Well-being, what is good for me, might be thought to be naturally linked to what seems good to me, and pleasure does, to most people, seem good. And how could anything else benefit me except in so far as I enjoy it? How do we measure the value of the two experiences? The two central aspects of the respective experiences, according to Bentham, are their duration, and their intensity. Bentham tended to think of pleasure and pain as a kind of sensation, as the notion of intensity might suggest. One problem with this kind of hedonism, it has often been claimed, is that there does not appear to be a single common strand of pleasantness running through all the different experiences people enjoy, such as eating hamburgers, reading Shakespeare, or playing water polo. Rather, it seems, there are certain experiences we want to continue, and we might be prepared to call these—for philosophical purposes—pleasures even though some of them, such as diving in a very deep and narrow cave, for example, would not normally be described as pleasurable. Hedonism could survive this objection merely by incorporating whatever view of pleasure was thought to be plausible. A more serious objection is to the evaluative stance of hedonism itself. One might make this point with a thought experiment. Imagine that you are given the choice of living a very fulfilling human life, or that of a barely sentient oyster, which experiences some very low-level pleasure. Imagine also that the life of the oyster can be as long as you like, whereas the human life will be of eighty years only. If Bentham were right, there would have to be a length of oyster life such that you would choose it in preference to the human. And yet many say that they would choose the human life in preference to an oyster life of any length. Now this is not a knockdown argument against simple hedonism. Indeed some people are ready to accept that at some length or other the oyster life becomes preferable. But there is an alternative to simple hedonism, outlined famously by J. Mill added a third property to the two determinants of value identified by Bentham, duration and intensity. The claim is that some pleasures, by their very nature, are more valuable than others. For example, the pleasure of reading Shakespeare, by its very nature, is more valuable than any amount of basic animal pleasure. If higher pleasures are higher because of their nature, that aspect of their nature cannot be pleasantness, since that could be determined by duration and intensity alone. Now it has to be admitted that Mill is sailing close to the wind here. But there is logical space for a hedonist position which allows properties such as nobility to determine pleasantness, and insists that only pleasantness determines value. But one might well wonder how nobility could affect pleasantness, and why Mill did not just come out with the idea that nobility is itself a good-making property. But there is a yet more weighty objection to hedonism of any kind: Imagine that I have a machine that I could plug you into for the rest of your life. You would not know you were on the machine, and there is no worry about its breaking down or whatever. Would you plug in? Would it be wise, from the point of your own well-being, to do so? Robert Nozick thinks it would be a big mistake to plug in: But this will not be enough for many anti-hedonists. But this is once again sailing close to the wind. If the world can affect the very content of my experience without my being in a position to be aware of it, why should it not directly affect the value of my experience? If I consciously try to maximize my own pleasure, I will be unable to immerse myself in those activities, such as reading or playing games, which do give pleasure. And if we believe that those activities are valuable independently of the pleasure we gain from engaging in them, then we shall probably gain more pleasure overall. These kinds of stand-off in moral philosophy are unfortunate, but should not be brushed aside. They raise questions concerning the epistemology of ethics, and the source and epistemic status of our deepest ethical beliefs, which we are further from answering than many would like to think. Certainly the current trend of quickly dismissing hedonism on the basis of a quick run-through of the experience machine objection is not methodologically sound. When

you are on the machine, many of your central desires are likely to remain unfilled. Take your desire to write a great novel. You may believe that this is what you are doing, but in fact it is just a hallucination. And what you want, the argument goes, is to write a great novel, not the experience of writing a great novel. Historically, however, the reason for the current dominance of desire theories lies in the emergence of welfare economics. The simplest version of a desire theory one might call the present desire theory, according to which someone is made better off to the extent that their current desires are fulfilled. This theory does succeed in avoiding the experience machine objection.

## Chapter 4 : Carol Ryff's Model of Psychological Well-being - Living Meanings

*The Six-factor Model of Psychological Well-being is a theory developed by Carol Ryff which determines six factors which contribute to an individual's psychological well-being, contentment, and happiness.*

It is certain that this model is quite a lot broader than what is on offer in the hedonic camp, but is it right? Ryff has run many studies which provided so-called empirical support for her model. They found that all six components can be accounted for by only two dimensions, one corresponding to hedonic, another to eudaimonic well-being. Whilst all the components of PWB seem important, they still appear somewhat arbitrary. Would the model really suffer if one or two of the elements were not there? Would it be enriched if something else, like inner harmony, was added? These basic psychological nutrients are: Competence – the need to feel confident in doing what one is doing. Relatedness – the need to have human connections that are close and secure, whilst still respecting autonomy and facilitating competence. SDT asserts that when these needs are satisfied, motivation and well-being are enhanced, and when they are limited, there is a negative impact on our well-functioning. Quite a number of psychologists agree that these three needs are the most basic ones, although self-esteem is also frequently mentioned. Ryan and Deci see a big difference between PWB and SDT in that autonomy, competence and relatedness are fostering well-being in their model, whereas Ryff uses these concepts to define it. Autotelic people are those who often engage in activities for their own sake, and experience flow states frequently. Martin Seligman and the Authentic Happiness Model The person behind the positive psychology movement, Martin Seligman, introduced an authentic happiness model, in which he distinguishes between the pleasant life, good life and meaningful life in an attempt to work out what well-being really is. The pleasant life is devoted to pursuit of positive emotions, and can be paralleled with hedonic well-being. Finally, meaningful life is about using your strengths in the service of something greater than yourself. The research of Seligman and his colleagues shows that when people engage in hedonic activities e. In fact, during these activities, they are happier than those who engage in eudaimonic pursuits. In the long run, however, those who lead a more eudaimonic existence work on developing their potentials and skills, learning something are more satisfied with their lives. Some researchers claim that eudaimonic well-being is best achieved through personal development and growth, others through finding meaning in their lives. One way or another, they agree that there must be something else out there in addition to pure pleasure and happiness. Some authors define eudaimonia as actualisation of human potential, while others associate it with frequent experiences of flow states. Other commonly used definitions include: Seligman defines eudaimonia as both flow and meaning. Can somebody please tell me what eudaimonic well-being is? Despite their attempts to shed light onto the construct of well-being, eudaimonic definitions make the picture even more complicated. Is realising your true nature the same as personal development? And what if your true nature is calling you to violence? Is growth the same as meaning? Carol Ryff is probably right to distinguish between them. Meaning may well be found in personal growth, yet it can also be found in serving others or in believing in God, which means that these two cannot possibly be identified. Are positive relationships important for eudaimonic well-being? Perhaps, but they also seem to be pretty important for happiness or hedonic well-being. The routes of personal development and growth lie in the actualising tendency, yet the tendency on its own is not enough. Growth is often an effortful process, involving overcoming challenges and barriers, which can be external or internal. Growth and personal life changes are not always experienced as pleasant. Researchers found that even positive subjective changes can decrease positive affect. For example, one study has established that therapy clients who perceived more improvement in their functioning reported more depressive symptoms and lower levels of self-acceptance, but more personal growth at the same time. This is because any change is associated with loss, even if what is lost is an unproductive or even negative pattern. When psychologists try to measure growth, they often look to what extent individuals are open to experiences or to what extent they are interested in learning. Yet, if we apply common sense, it becomes quite clear that openness to experience is needed not only in order to grow but also to experience pleasure, which is a facet of hedonic well-being. Whilst interest in learning may be a very important aspect, it is hardly a

sufficient indicator of human development. So how do we know whether the process of development is taking place; whether we are actually growing? We can look for several indicators of development. Transcendence Transcendence is related to dedication and commitment to something or somebody else but oneself. However, this meaning is necessarily related to transcending the personal without losing oneself for the sake of something larger than oneself it can be children, meaningful work, the wider community, or a spiritual pathway. Transcendence is a eudaimonic pathway to well-being that is independent of personal development although undoubtedly both can co-exist. For example, a mother who dedicates her life to raising rather than merely looking after her children as fully functioning human beings may not have much time to devote to her own personal development. I hope that introducing this common term would allow for greater integration between theories. The Very Last Note€ There is one more caveat to the story of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. The concept of satisfaction with life has been firmly allocated into the hedonic camp by the proponents of the eudaimonic paradigm, but it is actually questionable whether this needs to be the case. Do you want to be kept in the loop? Join the newsletter [Subscribe](#) to get our latest content by email. We will keep you posted. There was an error submitting your subscription. First Name Email Address We use this field to detect spam bots. If you fill this in, you will be marked as a spammer.

## Chapter 5 : What is Well-Being? | Authentic Happiness

*Some theories of well-being in philosophy and in psychology define people's well-being in psychological terms. According to these theories, living well is getting what you want, feeling satisfied, experiencing pleasure, or the like.*

Overall and domain specific life satisfaction. Top of Page What are some findings from these studies? Data from the NHANES I <sup>1</sup>, found that employed women had a higher sense of well-being and used fewer professional services to cope with personal and mental health problems than their nonemployed counterparts. Top of Page What are some correlates and determinants of individual-level well-being? There is no sole determinant of individual well-being, but in general, well-being is dependent upon good health, positive social relationships, and availability and access to basic resources e. Numerous studies have examined the associations between determinants of individual and national levels of well-being. Many of these studies have used different measures of well-being e. Pleasant emotions are more closely associated with having supportive relationships. Genes and Personality At the individual level, genetic factors, personality, and demographic factors are related to well-being. For example, positive emotions are heritable to some degree heritability estimates range from 0. Longitudinal studies have found that well-being is sensitive to life events e. Some personality factors that are strongly associated with well-being include optimism, extroversion, and self-esteem. While genetic factors and personality factors are important determinants of well-being, they are beyond the realm of public policy goals. Age and Gender Depending on which types of measures are used e. In general, men and women have similar levels of well-being, but this pattern changes with age,<sup>63</sup> and has changed over time. In general, associations between income and well-being usually measured in terms of life satisfaction are stronger for those at lower economic levels, but studies also have found effects for those at higher income levels. Countries differ substantially in their levels of well-being. Traditionally, health-related quality of life has been linked to patient outcomes, and has generally focused on deficits in functioning e. In contrast, well-being focuses on assets in functioning, including positive emotions and psychological resources e. Some researchers have drawn from both perspectives to measure physical and mental well-being for clinical and economic studies. Subjective well-being typically refers to self-reports contrasted with objective indicators of well-being. From this perspective, positive mental health is a resource, broadly inclusive of psychological assets and skills essential for well-being. However, in its broadest sense, well-being encompasses physical, mental, and social domains. The reasons why well-being and related constructs should be measured and evaluating how these domains can be changed should help inform which domains e.

*Psychology of Well-Being: Theory, Research and Practice* ceased to be published by SpringerOpen as of 31st December SpringerOpen will continue to host an archive of all articles previously published in the journal and all articles published in *Psychology of Well-Being* during its time with SpringerOpen will remain fully searchable via the SpringerOpen website.

Please use published version for citation when available. Ben Bradley 11 Objective Theories of Well-Being

According to a common formulation of utilitarianism, an act is morally permissible if and only if it maximizes total well-being. It is important for the utilitarian to investigate the theory of well-being, because many objections to utilitarianism are really objections to a particular theory of well-being rather than to the more general notion that we ought to maximize well-being. This chapter focuses on objective theories. I begin by attempting to explain what makes a theory objective; I then discuss some particular sorts of objective theories. What is an objective theory of well-being? Taxonomies of philosophical theories are not inherently interesting. But sometimes it can be useful to see that a bunch of theories have something important in common, so that when we see that a theory has that feature, we will know that the theory is likely to be vulnerable to a particular kind of objection. In this case, put very roughly, subjectivists about well-being argue that all objective theories face a worry about alienation: But surely, says the objectivist, we can be mistaken about what is good for us. But what is it that makes a theory subjective or objective? This turns out to be trickier than one might think. Here is how Dan Haybron characterizes subjectivism: Subjectivism about well-being version 1: Objectivism about well-being version 1: But there are different ways well-being might depend on, or be determined by, subjective psychological states. One way would be for subjective psychological states to themselves be the constituents of well-being. Haybron mentions pleasure as an example of the sort of psychological state that a subjectivist thinks determines well-being. On the other hand, subjective psychological states might determine well-being by picking out the constituents of well-being. If desire is the relevant psychological state, then what is good for someone is the object of the desire, not the desire itself. These are importantly different ways a psychological state can determine well-being, and it is the second way that subjectivists typically have in mind. Before making a second pass at the distinction, let us distinguish between different sorts of subjective psychological states. On the one hand, there are feelings, such as heat, coldness, pressure, and perhaps pleasure and pain. On the other hand, there are attitudes, such as belief, desire, fear, hope, and the like. Attitudes are about something. Sometimes they are about propositions, such as when Jeff believes that his pants are on fire; sometimes, perhaps, they are about objects, such as when Buffy desires a new bowling ball. Perhaps when the object of a desire seems to be a physical object such as a bowling ball, we should really think that it is a proposition, such as that I have a bowling ball. In this way attitudes are unlike feelings. The feeling of heat may be caused by a fire, but it is not about the fire. It is natural to think that both feelings and attitudes are among the subjective states that a subjectivist thinks are relevant to well-being, and this is suggested by the quotation from Haybron. In fact, however, it is more typical for the subjectivist to say that only attitudes, and not feelings, are directly relevant to well-being. Sumner and Richard Arneson: Subjectivism about well-being version 2: All the things that are good for an individual are good for her in virtue of her attitudes about them e. Objectivism about well-being version 2: Some of the things that are good for an individual are good for her independently of her attitudes about them. This will do for a start. But it may be easier to tell where the distinction should be drawn after we have seen examples of objective theories and how the subjectivist objects to them. So at the end of this chapter I will return to the classificatory question. I turn now to some specific sorts of objective theories. Hedonism Hedonism is the view that the only components of well-being are pleasure and pain. On one way of thinking about pleasure, however, hedonism turns out to be a version of subjectivism. On this view, what makes a feeling a feeling of pleasure is that the person having the feeling desires that it continue. This is an attractive view; it is certainly true that, in general, we want our pleasures to continue. But do we always want this? These are difficult questions. For the purposes of this chapter I will assume that pleasure is a distinct sort of

feeling, not reducible to desire; thus I will take hedonism to be a sort of objectivism. Hedonism has a good deal of initial plausibility and explanatory power. First, it is very plausible that at least some pleasures increase our well-being, and that at least some pains decrease it. This perhaps puts some pressure on the anti-hedonist to explain how it could be that some pleasures and pains do not affect our well-being in this way. Second, concerning many of the things that we think of as being good or bad in some way, a plausible story can be told that links those things to pleasure or pain. This perhaps puts pressure on the anti-hedonist to show that there are some things about which no such story can be told. So anti-hedonists have 3 Forthcoming in the Cambridge Companion to Utilitarianism ed. It is often claimed that false pleasures are not good for us. While in the machine you would think that everything that was happening was real as in many science fiction movies. You would think you were dating famous models, playing center field for the Dodgers, climbing Mount Everest, or whatever would give you the most pleasure. Of course, you would not be doing any of those things. Many people say that they would not choose to be hooked up to such a machine. Perhaps they think that the pleasures they would get while in the machine would not be valuable. We can also think of less fanciful deceptions; if someone believes her spouse loves her and takes pleasure in this belief, while in fact, unbeknownst to her, her spouse only married her for the money and is cheating on her at every opportunity, we might think that the pleasure she takes in her marriage is not valuable to her. It is also often claimed that immoral pleasures are not good for us. For example, the serial killer who derives great pleasure from torturing and murdering his innocent victims, and never gets caught or feels guilty about his actions, is not thereby well-off. Hedonists might not be bothered by such objections. Or they might say that, although people would prefer not to be plugged into an experience machine, this is not because they think they would be worse off if they did; rather, it is because they prefer to sacrifice some of their own well-being for the sake of other things, such as genuine relationships, commitments, or knowledge. Mill famously claimed that pleasures come in different qualities, in addition to different quantities. Perhaps Mill would have thought of immoral and false pleasures as low quality pleasures. More recently, several philosophers have endorsed impure or hybrid forms of hedonism in an effort to avoid these objections; I discuss these views below. There is another, stronger objection to hedonism. It seems that some things other than pleasures are good for us. To see what sorts of things those might be, it is helpful to think about the experience machine again. What would a life on the experience machine be lacking? There are many candidates, including knowledge, achievement, virtue, and friendship. These things all seem to be good for us. However, the hedonist will argue that such things are good for us only if, and to the extent that, they improve the hedonic status of our lives. Imagine someone who has immense knowledge about the universe, but gets no enjoyment at all from this knowledge; or someone who has many friends, but does not enjoy any of these friendships even a little bit. Are these people well off? We will not resolve them here, so let us now turn to other objective theories, and see what sort of objective view we might hold if we are convinced by the anti-hedonist arguments. Objective List Theories Why think that only one thing can be good for us? Why not two, or ten? According to what is sometimes called the objective list theory, or pluralism, there are several things that are good or bad for us; when we arrive at a list of these things, we have reached rock-bottom in our investigation into the fundamental elements of well-being. For there are many possible lists. Pleasure and pain are obvious candidates for the list. Other prominent candidates include achievement and failure, knowledge and false belief, virtue and vice, and friendship and loneliness. Or we might think that it is better to have a life that improves over time than to have one that deteriorates, even if the sum of goods is the same: The objective list theory has some obvious strengths. It is immune to the objection that it leaves something out of the good life. Thus it seems to be invulnerable to, e. If you think something has been left out of the theory, then just add that thing to the list. As a result, many find the objective list theory more intuitively plausible than hedonism or other monistic theories. There are certain sorts of cases where it seems particularly important to employ an objective list theory. For example, consider a society in which women are systematically oppressed; they cannot go outside without being accompanied by a man, cannot go to school, have a job outside the home, etc. This seems like a deprived existence. But sometimes people can adapt to such situations. They sometimes find a way to be happy and satisfied even while being oppressed; they might even come to prefer such a lifestyle to one in which they would have more

opportunities. Still, we want to say that not everything is all right. Even though they would not agree, their lives would be better if they had more freedom to acquire knowledge and achieve things. Yet from the perspective of the content- but-oppressed person, everything is fine and nothing is lacking. The most obvious question is why these things, rather than some other 5 Forthcoming in the Cambridge Companion to Utilitarianism ed. This question cannot, in principle, be answered by the objective list theory.

### Chapter 7 : Well-Being (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

*aspects of positive functioning emphasized in theories of health and well-being. For more than 20 years, the study of psychological well-being has been guided by two primary conceptions of positive func-*

### Chapter 8 : Well-being - Wikipedia

*Well-being theory is plural in method as well as substance: positive emotion is a subjective variable, defined by what you think and feel. Meaning, relationships, and accomplishment have both subjective and objective components, since you can believe you have meaning, good relations, and high accomplishment and be wrong, even deluded.*

### Chapter 9 : University of Wisconsin - Madison Institute on Aging, Madison, Wisconsin

*"Well-being theory denies that the topic of positive psychology is a real thing: rather the topic is a construct - well-being - which in turn has several measurable elements, each a real thing, each contributing to well-being, but none defining well-being." (p).*