

# Linking Peoples' Pursuit of Eudaimonia and Hedonia with Characteristics of their Parents: Parenting Styles, Verbally Endorsed Values, and Role Modeling

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**Abstract** Research on eudaimonia (seeking to use and develop the best in oneself) and hedonia (seeking pleasure, enjoyment, comfort), two dominant ways of pursuing the good life, has previously focused on their well-being consequences and correlates. Little is known about their predictors. Two retrospective studies with undergraduates began investigating the links between the behavior of one's parents when one was a child, and the degree to which one pursues eudaimonia and/or hedonia and derives well-being from these pursuits. Study 1 (n = 105) showed that participants engaged in eudaimonic pursuits if their parents had been high on responsiveness and/or demandingness, the two dimensions that define positive parenting. Hedonic pursuits did not relate to either parenting dimension. Study 2 (n = 110) showed that people engaged in eudaimonic pursuits if their parents had either verbally endorsed eudaimonia or actually role modeled it by pursuing eudaimonia themselves. However, people derived well-being from eudaimonic pursuits only if their parents had role modeled eudaimonia, not if their parents had merely verbally endorsed it. The same pattern was found for engaging in hedonic pursuits and deriving well-being from them. It was also found that parents who role modeled eudaimonia had children who grew up to derive well-being not only from eudaimonia but also from hedonia. Parents who role modeled hedonia had children who grew up to derive well-being only from hedonia and not from eudaimonia.

**Keywords** Eudaimonia · Hedonia · Well-being · Parenting · Role models

## 1 Introduction

The topic of eudaimonic and hedonic pursuits is crucial both for positive psychology and for the human condition in general. It deals with what we are after in life, what we consider to be desirable, what gives our lives direction. Engaging in eudaimonic pursuits, or simply

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*eudaimonia*, means being motivated and committed to use and develop the best in oneself, in a way that is congruent with one's true self, and it includes concepts such as striving for excellence, acting with virtue, and having concerns beyond the self and beyond the immediate moment. Engaging in hedonic pursuits, or *hedonia*, means seeking personal pleasure, enjoyment, and comfort, whether through physical means or emotional-cognitive means, such as enjoyment of social interaction or art (Huta in press). Eudaimonia and hedonia are two of the main ways that people seek well-being in life (Ryan and Deci 2001).<sup>1</sup>

Much has been learned about eudaimonia and hedonia in recent years. What was once a theoretical distinction now has empirical support. Factor analysis and canonical correlation analysis has shown that eudaimonia and hedonia are distinct and coherent ways of behaving (Huta and Ryan 2010; Joshanloo and Ghaedi 2009; McGregor and Little 1998; Peterson et al. 2005; Ruini et al. 2003).

Moreover, eudaimonic and hedonic pursuits are indeed linked to well-being. One or both pursuits have been correlated with greater psychological well-being, lower mental illness, and greater physical health (Bauer and McAdams 2010; Chan 2009; Friedman et al. 2007; Huta and Ryan 2010; Joshanloo and Ghaedi 2009; Kafka and Kozma 2002; Keyes and Annas 2009; Keyes et al. 2002; Nave et al. 2008; Park et al. 2009; Peterson et al. 2005; Ruch et al. 2010; Ruini et al. 2003; Ryff and Keyes 1995; Ryff et al. 2006; Steger et al. 2008; Urry et al. 2004; Vella-Brodrick et al. 2009; Vittersø et al. in press; Waterman 1993; Waterman et al. 2008; Waterman et al. 2003, 2010; Wood and Joseph 2010). A few studies have also provided intervention or longitudinal data, demonstrating that eudaimonia and/or hedonia do indeed *lead* to greater well-being (Bauer and McAdams 2010; Huta and Ryan 2010; Steger et al. 2008; Wood and Joseph 2010).

Yet eudaimonia and hedonia differ in the strengths of their relations with certain well-being outcomes, and thus fit somewhat different niches in a well-rounded picture of well-being. Thus far, there is agreement that eudaimonia relates more to a sense of meaning, elevation and inspiration, personal expressiveness, interest, and variables characterizing flow experience; hedonia relates more to feeling carefree, and also to high positive affect and low negative affect (Huta and Ryan 2010; McGregor and Little 1998; Steger et al. 2008; Vittersø et al. in press; Waterman 1993). A number of studies have found that a combination of both eudaimonia and hedonia relates to greater well-being than either pursuit alone (Huta and Ryan 2010; Keyes and Annas 2009; Peterson et al. 2005).

Thus, there is growing evidence that both eudaimonia and hedonia are important for well-being, but that they contribute to well-being in somewhat different ways. A natural question arises: What leads people to choose eudaimonic and/or hedonic lives in the first place? If, as researchers, we are to provide information that helps people lead fulfilling lives, we need to investigate the origins of peoples' life paths.

One of the biggest influences on peoples' life paths is their parents. This paper therefore provides initial retrospective evidence on how the behavior of one's parents when one was growing up influences one's degree of eudaimonia and/or hedonia as an adult. The focus is on the following parental variables: parenting styles, using the well-established dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness; the degree to which one's parents verbally endorsed eudaimonia and/or hedonia; and the degree to which one's parents actually role modeled eudaimonia and/or hedonia.

<sup>1</sup> Note that eudaimonia and hedonia are clearly defined in this paper as ways of behaving, and thus as predictors of well-being, not as well-being outcomes. The importance of defining eudaimonia and hedonia in this way is detailed in Huta and Ryan (2010).

## 1.1 Hypotheses

### 1.1.1 Parenting Style

According to the dominant model of parenting, parents' styles can be summarized in a circumplex defined by two orthogonal dimensions: demandingness and responsiveness (Baumrind 1989; Maccoby and Martin 1983). Demandingness represents "the claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys" (Baumrind 1991, pp. 61–62). Responsiveness represents "the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children's special needs and demands" (Baumrind 1991, p. 62).

It was hypothesized that eudaimonia would be promoted by both parental demandingness and parental responsiveness. Past research suggests that parenting which is high on both dimensions—also called authoritative parenting (Baumrind 1991)—promotes characteristics linked to the pursuit of excellence, personal growth, and virtue, which are core characteristics of eudaimonia. For example, authoritative parenting is known to foster higher levels of moral identity, maturity, work ethic, academic aspiration and achievement, and social and other competencies, as well as lower levels of substance abuse, aggression, delinquency, and risky sexual behavior (e.g., Baumrind 1991; Darling and Steinberg 1993; Hardy et al. 2010; Maccoby and Martin 1983; Slicker 1998; Steinberg et al. 1989). In addition, it makes theoretical sense to expect eudaimonia to be based on both demandingness and responsiveness. Demandingness cultivates many of the qualities needed for eudaimonia, including structure, self-discipline, responsibility, and vision. Responsiveness satisfies the basic psychological need for autonomy, which also supports eudaimonia by promoting initiative, effort, and persistence; integration of one's behaviors, values, and true self; and self-actualization (Deci and Ryan 1985, 2000; Koestner et al. 1992; Ryan and Deci 2000).

It was hypothesized that hedonia would be promoted by parental responsiveness. Attachment theory states that responsive parenting gives the child an implicit message, affirming the child's right and worthiness to pursue what the child needs (Bowlby 1969, 1973). From this perspective, responsiveness should build within the child a feeling that it is natural and justified to pursue personal enjoyment (and eudaimonia as well). Demandingness was not expected to foster hedonia, as hedonia was not considered conceptually related to characteristics such as structure and responsibility.

### 1.1.2 Parents Endorsed vs. Role Modeled Eudaimonia and/or Hedonia

This paper also investigated parental behaviors with respect to eudaimonia and hedonia in particular. A distinction was made between parents verbally advocating the importance of eudaimonia/hedonia, and parents actually role modeling eudaimonia/hedonia by engaging in the pursuit themselves. It was hypothesized that both the advocating of eudaimonia/hedonia and the role modeling of eudaimonia/hedonia would encourage a child to pursue eudaimonia/hedonia. However, it was hypothesized that only parental role modeling of a pursuit would lead a child to derive well-being from the pursuit, while mere verbal endorsement of the pursuit by parents would not help the child to derive well-being from the pursuit. This prediction was based on findings in self-determination theory research that people will adopt a value or increase a behavior due

to a wide range of motives—from autonomous ones like genuine identification with the activity, to controlled ones like conditional regard from parents or in some cases verbal praise—but people only derive well-being from the behavior if they do it for autonomous reasons, not controlled ones (Assor et al. 2004; Knafo and Assor 2007; Roth et al. 2009; Henderlong and Leper 2002). Actual role modeling has been found to promote autonomous motivation (Gardner et al. 2005), while verbal endorsement is likely to evoke a range of responses from the child, from autonomous to controlled, depending on how the endorsement is done and how the child interprets it (Henderlong and Leper 2002).

## 2 Study 1

Study 1 tested whether one's degree of eudaimonia and/or hedonia relates to the parenting style of one's parents when one was a child. A variety of parenting characteristics were summarized using the frequently obtained dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness.

### 2.1 Method

#### 2.1.1 Participants

Participants were 105 undergraduates at a Canadian university. They were 68% female; mean age was 20.0 (SD = 3.8); 63% were White, 14% Asian, 9% Middle Eastern, 7% Black, 2% Hispanic, and 6% of mixed ethnic origin; 7% were majoring in psychology, 16% in other social sciences, 37% in biology, chemistry, or health sciences, 23% in arts, languages, or music, 12% in engineering, physics, computer sciences, or geography, and 5% in economics, marketing, advertising, or accounting.

#### 2.1.2 Procedure

Participants completed the study on a research website used by the department of psychology. They received course credit for completing it.

#### 2.1.3 Measures

*2.1.3.1 Current Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities (HEMA, Huta and Ryan 2010)* The participant's eudaimonia and hedonia were assessed as motives for activities, using the measure developed by Huta and Ryan (2010). The instructions to this measure read: "To what degree do you typically approach your activities with each of the following intentions, whether or not you actually achieve your aim?" Participants gave ratings on various eudaimonic and hedonic motives, which were intermixed. The four eudaimonic motives were "Seeking to pursue excellence or a personal ideal?," "Seeking to use the best in yourself?," "Seeking to develop a skill, learn, or gain insight into something?," and "Seeking to do what you believe in?" The five hedonic motives were "Seeking enjoyment?," "Seeking pleasure?," "Seeking fun?," "Seeking relaxation?," and "Seeking to take it easy?" The items were rated from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). Huta and Ryan (2010) showed that the eudaimonic and hedonic items cleanly separated into two factors;

the eudaimonic and hedonic subscales had Cronbach alphas in excess of .80, were unrelated to social desirability, and were unrelated to age, gender, or ethnicity.

*2.1.3.2 Most Influential Female and Male Caregivers* In recognition of the fact that some children are not raised by their biological or adoptive mothers and fathers, participants were first asked to indicate who their most influential female and male caregivers had been. For their most influential female caregiver, the instructions were: “When you were growing up, who was your most influential female caregiver?”; the options were mother, step-mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, other relative, nanny/daycare worker, friend, and other. A parallel question was given for the person’s most influential male caregiver. It was found that 93% of participants reported that their mother was their most influential female caregiver, and 86% reported that their father was their most influential male caregiver. Participants were instructed that whenever they would be asked about their “parents” later in the survey, they should give ratings about the two individuals they identified as their most influential caregivers.

*2.1.3.3 Self-Report Adaptation of Parent Behavior Ratings (Baumrind 1971)* Parenting style was assessed using an adaptation of Baumrind’s Parent Behavior Rating interview to a questionnaire format. The questionnaire was completed by the participants about their parents, and began with the following instructions: “Please rate to what degree each of the following was true of your parents as a whole, while you were growing up.” The Baumrind interview consists of 75 ratings organized into 15 subscales. The questionnaire used in this study contained the same 75 topics intermixed, and the wording was kept similar to the interview (e.g., “Make demands upon child which have educational value” was rewritten as “They made demands on me which had educational value,” and “Solicits child’s opinions” was rewritten as “They solicited my opinions”). The items were rated from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). Although various briefer self-report measures of parenting style have been developed since Baumrind’s pioneering (1971) work, her original measure was used because it was considered particularly comprehensive.

To distill parenting styles to fundamental dimensions, a principal components analysis was performed on the fifteen subscales of the questionnaire. The two orthogonal dimensions that have so often been identified in previous studies—demandingness and responsiveness—were expected to emerge (Baumrind 1989; Maccoby and Martin 1983). The expectation was clearly confirmed. The first two eigenvalues were much higher than the rest (5.61 and 3.32), while the rest were similar (1.32, .94, .65, etc.). The first two factors together explained a good proportion of the variance (61%), and ensured adequate communalities (all above .34, and the majority above .6). Following Varimax rotation, the subscales loaded on the factors as expected, as shown in Table 1. The two Varimax rotated factor scores were saved as variables labeled demandingness and responsiveness, and these were the variables used in analyses. Note that, even when oblique rotation was used (Direct Oblimin,  $\Delta = 0$ ), the variables separated in the same way and the correlation between the two factors was only  $-.06$ .

## 2.2 Results and Brief Discussion

The predictions regarding eudaimonia were supported. As shown in Table 2, eudaimonically oriented individuals reported that their parents had been both demanding and responsive towards them. A multiple regression showed that demandingness and

**Table 1** Aspects of parenting that formed demandingness and responsiveness

Subscale	Factor I—demandingness	Factor II—responsiveness
Were comfortable enforcing directives	.84	
Expected responsibility for chores	.75	
Expected obedience	.75	-.47
Discouraged infantile behavior	.72	
Were confident as parents	.69	.47
Had a clear parenting vision	.66	
Provided an enriching and challenging environment	.63	.58
Set rules	.61	
Discouraged dependency	.59	
Solicited opinions		.86
Provided rationales		.80
Promoted individuality		.78
Shared decision power		.77
Were nurturant		.60
Were willing to express anger and displeasure		-.47

Loadings shown are those above .40

**Table 2** Links between parents' characteristics and degree to which grown child is eudaimonic and/or hedonic

	Characteristic of parents when participant was a child	Pursuits of participant as an adult		
		Eudaimonic pursuits	Hedonic pursuits	t test for difference
Study 1	Demanding	.48**	.09	3.27**
	Responsive	.27**	.15	.89
Study 2	Verbally endorsed eudaimonic pursuits	.20*	.03	1.41
	Verbally endorsed hedonic pursuits	.05	.29**	-2.04*
	Role modeled eudaimonic pursuits	.31**	.27**	.35
	Role modeled hedonic pursuits	.19*	.40**	-1.88

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

responsiveness together explained as much as 28% of the variance in eudaimonia, suggesting that parenting played a major role in the development of this pursuit ( $F = 18.40$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This supported the expectation that eudaimonia is cultivated when parents encourage internal structure, self-discipline, responsibility, and vision, and simultaneously fulfill a child's needs for autonomy. We can tentatively conclude that parents will help their children to pursue excellence if they use the authoritative parenting style.

Hedonia was expected to relate to parental responsiveness, because responsiveness presumably teaches the child that they deserve to pursue personal satisfaction. However, hedonia was unrelated to responsiveness. A person's hedonia was unrelated to the demandingness of their parents, supporting the expectation that hedonia would not depend

on the development of structure and responsibility. A multiple regression showed that demandingness and responsiveness together explained only 3% of the variance in hedonia, indicating that these defining dimensions of parenting played little role in the development of this pursuit ( $F = 1.33, p > .05$ ). Perhaps the development of hedonia is based on environmental circumstances other than parenting, such as peer influences. Or perhaps a person's degree of hedonia is more based on innate tendencies than on environmental circumstances, just as extraversion, positive affectivity, reward sensitivity, and the behavioral activation system appear to have substantial genetic components (Bouchard and Loehlin 2001; Eid et al. 2003; Pincombe et al. 2007).

The last column of Table 2 has paired-correlation *t*-tests that compare the correlations for eudaimonia versus hedonia. These comparisons allow us to see where parental variables have differential effects on eudaimonia and hedonia, and where the effects are similar. It was found that people who pursued eudaimonia had significantly more demanding parents than people who pursued hedonia, reinforcing the idea that if parents want their children to choose a path of excellence, they may need to provide structure, vision, and challenges early in the child's life.

### 3 Study 2

Study 1 had investigated the predictive role of parenting styles. Study 2 examined two parenting behaviors that related specifically to eudaimonia/hedonia—the degree to which one's parents verbally endorsed eudaimonia/hedonia, and the degree to which one's parents actually role modeled eudaimonia/hedonia. The study also expanded the outcomes studied, to include not only eudaimonia and hedonia but also the well-being derived from each pursuit.

#### 3.1 Method

##### 3.1.1 Participants

Participants were 110 undergraduates at an American university. They were 83% female; mean age was 19.8 ( $SD = 1.2$ ); 75% were White, 19% Asian, 2% Black, 2% Hispanic, 1% Middle Eastern, and 1% of mixed ethnic origin; 52% were majoring in psychology, 12% in other social sciences, 15% in arts, languages, or music, 13% in biology, chemistry, or health sciences, and 6% in economics, marketing, advertising, or accounting, and 3% in engineering, physics, computer sciences, or geography.

##### 3.1.2 Procedure

Participants completed the study on a research website used by the department of psychology. They completed the study in two sessions, separated by a week. All 110 participants completed the first session, while 87 completed the second session. There were no differences between those who did not complete the second session and those who did complete the second session on any of the variables measured in the first session. The second session contained the measures of well-being derived from eudaimonia and hedonia (detailed below), and thus analyses with these outcomes were based on this slightly smaller sample size. Participants received course credit for completing the study.

### 3.1.3 Measures

**3.1.3.1 Current Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities (HEMA)** This was the same measure as in Study 1.

**3.1.3.2 Most Influential Female and Male Caregivers** This was the same pair of items as in Study 1. It was found that 93% of participants reported that their mother was their most influential female caregiver, and 91% reported that their father was their most influential male caregiver.

**3.1.3.3 Degree to Which Parents Endorsed Eudaimonia and Hedonia** One item was used to determine the degree to which one's parents endorsed eudaimonia: "When you were growing up, to what degree did your parents say it was important to pursue excellence, e.g., do what you believe is right, do your best on tasks, act virtuous, or develop your abilities (even if they didn't do it in practice)?" One item was used to determine the degree to which one's parents endorsed hedonia: "When you were growing up, to what degree did your parents say it was important to pursue enjoyment, e.g., seek enjoyment or pleasure, savor experiences, or take it easy (even if they didn't do it in practice)?" Both items were rated on a Likert-type scale from 1 (not much) to 7 (extremely).

**3.1.3.4 Degree to Which Parents Role Modeled Eudaimonia and Hedonia** Participants completed the HEMA regarding their parents' eudaimonic and hedonic pursuits when the participants were growing up.

**3.1.3.5 Well-Being One Currently Derives from Eudaimonia and Hedonia** Participants were asked to indicate how much they experienced various forms of well-being as a result of eudaimonic or hedonic activity. For eudaimonia, the instructions were "People have different experiences when they pursue excellence, e.g., doing what they believe is right, doing their best on tasks, acting virtuous, or developing their abilities. Please indicate how much you have the following experiences, at those times when you are pursuing excellence, e.g., doing what you believe is right, doing your best on tasks, acting virtuous, or developing your abilities." For hedonia, the instructions were "People have different experiences when they pursue enjoyment, e.g., seek enjoyment or pleasure, savor experiences, or take it easy. Please indicate how much you have the following experiences, at those times when you are pursuing enjoyment, e.g., seeking enjoyment or pleasure, savoring experiences, or taking it easy."

Participants then completed a series of intermixed well-being items, rated on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). Most of these items were based on previously developed scales, but had a phrase such as "it makes me...", "it gives me...", or "it feels..." added. The *positive affect* scale (e.g., "it makes me happy," "it makes me joyful") and *negative affect* scale (e.g., "it makes me unhappy," "it makes me worried/anxious") were based on the nine items developed by Diener and Emmons (1984); *self-esteem* was assessed using the well-validated single-item measure by Robins et al. (2001), and read "it gives me high self-esteem"; the *vitality* scale (e.g., "it energizes me," "it makes me feel alive and vital") was based on the six items in Bostic, Rubio, and Hood (2000); the *meaning* scale (e.g., "it feels meaningful," "it feels valuable," "I feel that it plays an important role in some broader picture") was based on the 12 items developed by Huta and Ryan (2010); the *elevating experience* scale (e.g., "it makes me feel in awe," "it



inspires me,” “it makes me feel part of something greater than myself”) was based on the 13 items developed by Huta and Ryan (2010); and the *carefreeness* scale (e.g., “it makes me carefree,” “it makes me easygoing”) was based on the six items developed by Huta and Ryan (2010). In the publications cited for each scale above, all multi-item scales had Cronbach alphas above .80.

Lastly, *self-connectedness* was a new scale in this study. It consisted of the five items “it connects me with myself,” “it makes me feel that I know who I am,” “it gives me a clear sense of my values,” “it makes me aware of how I feel,” and “it makes me aware of what matters to me.” This measure was included because it was considered a distinct and potentially important marker of well-being. In preliminary work with 621 participants (a merging of Studies 1 and 2 from Huta and Ryan 2010), factor analysis was performed on individual items reflecting the above seven well-being concepts—positive affect, negative affect, self-esteem, vitality, meaning, elevating experience, carefreeness, and self-connectedness. Six factors had eigenvalues above 1 and a seventh factor had an eigenvalue close to 1 (.95). The scree plot did not show substantial notches beyond the second factor, so a seven-factor solution was forced, based on the theoretical expectation that seven different concepts were being assessed. The items separated very cleanly into seven groups as predicted, including the items assessing self-connectedness; only three items (from scales other than self-connectedness) loaded above .40 on more than one factor, but all three loaded more on the factor they were meant to represent. There was therefore good support for treating self-connectedness as a distinct concept. Cronbach alpha for the scale had been .81 in the preliminary analysis, and was .86 for eudaimonia and .87 for hedonia in the present study.

### 3.2 Results and Brief Discussion

People were expected to pursue eudaimonia/hedonia if their parents had verbally endorsed it and/or if their parents had engaged in it themselves, since both approaches can stimulate a behavior. As shown in Table 2, this was confirmed for both eudaimonia and hedonia. Thus, people pursued the eudaimonic and/or hedonic path in life either because their parents had role modeled it or because their parents had said it was important.

Interestingly, parents who role modeled eudaimonia had children who pursued not only eudaimonia but also hedonia, and to similar degrees. Conversely, parents who role modeled hedonia had children who pursued not only hedonia but also eudaimonia, also to similar degrees. However, parents who verbally endorsed one pursuit did not have children who grew up to have the other pursuit. Thus, the role modeling approach appears to have broader benefits, encouraging a life which combines eudaimonia and hedonia, and which has been associated with greater well-being than either pursuit alone (e.g., Huta and Ryan 2010; Peterson et al. 2005). Perhaps role modeling either pursuit promotes both pursuits because there is a general motive to seek fulfillment that underlies both eudaimonia and hedonia, which is fostered when parents demonstrate a proactive approach to life.

Furthermore, people were expected to derive greater well-being from eudaimonia/hedonia if their parents had actually role modeled it than if their parents had merely said it was important, because role modeling presumably promotes internalized and autonomous motivation, which in turn leads to greater well-being. As shown in Table 3, there was reasonable support for this prediction. The results were especially pronounced and consistent for eudaimonia. The more one’s parents had role modeled eudaimonia, the more one derived all the forms of well-being from eudaimonia; but if one’s parents had verbally endorsed eudaimonia, one did not derive any more well-being from eudaimonia than the

**Table 3** Links between parents' characteristics and degree to which grown child derived well-being from eudaimonic or hedonic pursuits

Characteristic of parents when participant was a child	Positive affect	Negative affect	Self-esteem	Vitality	Meaning	Elevating experience	Carefreeness	Self-connectedness	Median correlation
Well-being obtained from eudaimonic pursuits by participant as an adult									
Verbally endorsed eudaimonic pursuits	-.06	.01	-.04	-.02	-.12	.00	-.07	-.04	-.04
Role modeled eudaimonic pursuits	.37**	-.30**	.37**	.38**	.31**	.34**	.27*	.43**	.36
t test for endorsed vs. role modeled	-.3.65**	2.55*	-.3.47**	-.3.39**	-.3.59**	-.2.83**	-.2.78**	-.4.10**	
Verbally endorsed hedonic pursuits	.13	-.24*	.10	.21	.12	.12	.10	.20	.13
Role modeled hedonic pursuits	.14	-.14	.25*	.17	.12	.16	.15	.15	.15
Well-being obtained from hedonic pursuits by participant as an adult									
Verbally endorsed hedonic pursuits	.16	-.14	-.02	.17	.21	.00	.06	.07	.11
Role modeled hedonic pursuits	.27**	-.25*	.04	.20	.17	-.06	.21	.00	.19
t test for endorsed vs. role modeled	-1.06	1.05	-.56	-.29	.38	.56	-1.42	.65	
Verbally endorsed eudaimonic pursuits	.23*	-.18	.13	.02	-.14	.00	.12	-.04	.07
Role modeled eudaimonic pursuits	.29**	-.24*	.12	.22*	.21	.13	.30**	.23*	.23

Each median correlation is a summary across the eight well-being variables. When obtaining the median correlations, the signs for analyses with negative affect were reversed  
 \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

average person. Furthermore, the t-tests comparing paired correlations—i.e., the correlation with verbal endorsement versus the correlation with role modeling—were all significant, showing that role modeling was significantly more powerful in helping people derive well-being from eudaimonia. Note that the significant result for carefreeness was a little surprising, since eudaimonia has not related to carefreeness very often, though it has related to carefreeness on occasion (Huta and Ryan 2010).

For hedonia, people derived greater than average well-being in two domains (greater positive affect and lower negative affect) to the degree that their parents had role modeled hedonia; they did not derive any additional well-being from hedonia if their parents had simply talked about its importance. None of the t-tests were significant for hedonia, indicating that the added benefit of having parental role models was not as great as for eudaimonia. Thus, where differences did occur for hedonia, they were in the expected direction, though they were not as consistent or as large as initially expected. The fact that the benefits of parental role modeling appeared for positive affect and low negative affect was consistent with previous research, though links with carefreeness and vitality might also have been expected—the four well-being outcomes that have most consistently related to hedonia are positive affect, low negative affect, carefreeness, and vitality (Huta and Ryan 2010). Perhaps the links with vitality and carefreeness might have been significant with a greater sample size. Or perhaps the well-being derived from hedonia depends largely on other variables, such as genetic predisposition, and there is limited room for boosting this benefit through parental behavior.

One additional set of exploratory analyses was performed, to determine whether parental behavior regarding one pursuit—eudaimonia or hedonia—influenced well-being derived from the other pursuit. As shown in Table 3, verbally advocating either eudaimonia or hedonia had little effect on the well-being derived from the other pursuit (though there were a couple of exceptions). Interestingly, while role modeling hedonia had little effect on the well-being derived from eudaimonia (with one exception), role modeling eudaimonia helped people derive the majority of well-being outcomes from hedonia, and these benefits were specifically in the domains that have previously been most linked with hedonia (Huta and Ryan 2010). This suggested an additional benefit provided by eudaimonically oriented parents.

The median correlations in the last column of Table 3 are summaries across the eight well-being variables, and provide a quick overview of the general pattern of findings.

#### 4 General Discussion

In sum the following was found across the two studies. Parental demandingness and responsiveness each related to eudaimonia, and they together explained nearly 30% of the variance in eudaimonia; in contrast, neither parenting dimension related to hedonia. Whether parents stated that eudaimonia was important or actually pursued eudaimonia themselves, their child went on to pursue eudaimonia. However, only parents who actually role modeled eudaimonia helped their child to derive a wide range of well-being outcomes from eudaimonia, not parents who merely verbally endorsed eudaimonia—these well-being outcomes included positive affect, low negative affect, self-esteem, vitality, meaning, elevating experience, carefreeness, and self-connectedness. Similarly, whether parents endorsed or role modeled hedonia, their child pursued hedonia; but only parents who role modeled hedonia helped their child to derive well-being from hedonia, not parents who verbally endorsed hedonia, though the greater well-being occurred in a narrower range of

domains—high positive affect and low negative affect. In addition, when parents role modeled eudaimonia, their child pursued not only eudaimonia but also hedonia, and when parents role modeled hedonia, their child pursued not only hedonia but also eudaimonia. In contrast, when parents verbally endorsed eudaimonia, their child pursued only eudaimonia and not hedonia, and when parents verbally endorsed hedonia, their child pursued only hedonia and not eudaimonia. Finally, the more parents role modeled eudaimonia, the more their child derived several forms of well-being from hedonia, and the scope of well-being benefits was somewhat greater than when parents role modeled hedonia—positive affect, low negative affect, vitality, carefreeness, and self-connectedness. In contrast, parents who role modeled hedonia had little effect on the well-being their child derived from eudaimonia.

Some overall patterns emerge from these findings. First, we can tentatively conclude that if parents wish to help a child pursue and achieve well-being, they need to truly be role models themselves, it is not sufficient to merely talk about such pursuits.

Second, it seems that children derive somewhat broader well-being benefits if their parents are eudaimonic than if their parents are hedonic. Parents should not have to choose between eudaimonia and hedonia—as past research indicates, people themselves are likely to benefit most if they pursue both paths to well-being (e.g., Huta and Ryan 2010; Peterson et al. 2005). What the positive links with parental eudaimonia do imply is that eudaimonia can contribute positively to the lives of other people. A common misconception about eudaimonia, as the pursuit of personal excellence and the expression of the true self, is that it must be selfish and detrimental to the world around the individual. Research has shown the opposite (Gagné 2003; Waterman 1981).

Third, the findings in this paper suggest that eudaimonia and its resulting well-being depend more heavily on parenting than do hedonia and its resulting well-being. Eudaimonia likely requires more scaffolding than does the pursuit of pleasure and comfort—it requires a long-term process of identifying and developing one's values and true self, effort and commitment to align one's actions with these values and true self, and insight to fully appreciate and enjoy the actions (Huta in press). Hedonic pursuits and our ability to derive well-being from them may be more pre-wired, in part likely arising from a universal mechanism that leads us to seek what our bodies and minds find pleasant, and in part perhaps arising from individual differences in the genetics underlying reward sensitivity (Eid et al. 2003). Of course, the suggestion that eudaimonia is sensitive to environmental circumstances implies that parents need to invest effort if they want their children to pursue excellence—effort to be high on both demandingness and responsiveness, and effort to be genuinely eudaimonic themselves. Happily, eudaimonia and generative contributions bring personal well-being as by-products, so that the parents are enriched as well (Huta and Zuroff 2007).

The initial studies presented here have several limitations that will need to be addressed in follow-up research. Probably the greatest limitations are the fact that the grown children rather than their parents reported on the parental variables, and that the studies were retrospective and correlational rather than providing longitudinal and true causal data. In addition, of course, the undergraduate participants represented a narrow and young age range, and a restricted range of educational levels, so that their characteristics may not generalize to other populations. It would also be ideal to supplement the self-report measures by other sources of information, such as reports by knowledgeable informants or behavioral observation.

Nevertheless, this paper begins to shed light on a crucial question: What can parents do to help their children to pursue eudaimonia and hedonia, two of the dominant ways that

people pursue well-being? Parents want what is best for their children, and research can clarify which strategies make a difference.

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