Purpose in Life in Emerging Adulthood: Development and Validation of a New Brief Measure

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Abstract

Accruing evidence points to the value of studying purpose in life across adolescence and emerging adulthood. Research though is needed to understand the unique role of purpose in life in predicting well-being and developmentally relevant outcomes during emerging adulthood. The current studies (total $n = 669$) found support for the development of a new brief measure of purpose in life using data from American and Canadian samples, while demonstrating evidence for two important findings. First, purpose in life predicted well-being during emerging adulthood, even when controlling for the Big Five personality traits. Second, purpose in life was positively associated with self-image and negatively associated with delinquency, again controlling for personality traits. Findings are discussed with respect to how studying purpose in life can help understand which individuals are more likely to experience positive transitions into adulthood.

Keywords

purpose in life; personality traits; Big Five; emerging adulthood; development

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Researchers have consistently pointed to the widespread value of feeling a sense of purpose in life, with respect to physical, cognitive, and emotional health outcomes (e.g., Boyle, Buchman, Barnes, & Bennett, 2009; Burrow & Hill, 2011; Hill & Turiano, 2014; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). Though typically considered a benchmark of adult development,

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accruing research has pointed to the value of assessing purpose prior to the adult years (see Hill, Burrow, & Sumner, 2013 for a review). For instance, with respect to emerging adulthood, a period characterized by identity exploration and potential "crises" (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968), the literature has noted the importance of feeling purposeful to facilitate individuals with the identity development process (Hill & Burrow, 2012). Additional work posits that a sense of purpose can be considered "identity capital," or one of the several benefits that individuals accrue following the making of strong identity commitments (Burrow & Hill, 2011).

Accordingly, it may prove important to consider purpose through the lens of identity development rather than as solely a marker of well-being. Purpose has been defined as "a central, self-organizing life aim that organizes and stimulates goals, manages behaviors, and provides a sense of meaning" (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009). Themes of goal-setting and providing a sense of direction are prevalent across other definitions of purpose (e.g., Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003; Ryff, 1989), even when adolescents are asked to provide their personal definitions (Hill, Burrow, O'Dell, & Thornton, 2010), to the point that purpose has been described as a "lighthouse" in the literature (Hill, Burrow, & Sumner, 2013). Accordingly, researchers thus have made a distinction between purpose and identity by suggesting that committing to a purpose for life may answer the question, "Where am I going?" while identity commitments may help to resolve the question of "Who am I?" (Sumner, Burrow, & Hill, 2014). Clearly though, progress along one front likely helps to provide resolution to the alternate question. As such, one can understand how previous research has demonstrated both that identity and purpose commitment levels are strongly correlated, as well as the potential for these commitments to differentially predict important outcomes (Hill & Burrow, 2012; Sumner et al., 2014). Hence, purpose in life and identity commitments probably develop in tandem and may mutually reinforce one another during the emerging adult years.

This previous work provides a starting point for two important claims. First, though the constructs are distinguishable, purpose in life is not wholly independent of identity development, particularly during the emerging adult years. Second, further work is needed to understand whether and how a sense of purpose operates during this developmental period uniquely from other characteristics of the self. A clear candidate for study is personality, given that research suggests that purpose scores positively correlate with a more adaptive personality profile in emerging adulthood (e.g., being more agreeable, conscientious, extraverted, open to new experiences, and emotionally stable; Hill & Burrow, 2012). Further, research has frequently demonstrated that personality and identity development often co-occur during adolescence and emerging adulthood (e.g., Hill, Allemand, Grob, Peng, Morgenthaler, & Käppler, 2013; Klimstra, 2013; Luyckx, Teppers, Klimstra, & Rassart, 2014). In other words, research needs to examine whether purpose scores predict important outcomes during emerging adulthood when considering the role of personality.

In addition to considering well-being outcomes in emerging adulthood, past work points to the potential for purpose scores to predict developmentally-specific outcomes of interest, such as externalizing and internalizing issues prominent in adolescence. For instance,

research suggests that purposeful youth in at-risk environments appear less likely to report taking part in violent acts (DeRant, Cadenhead, Pendergrast, Slavens, & Linder, 1994). Moreover, a lack of meaning and purpose in life has been connected to substance use and suicidal ideation among adolescents (e.g., Brassai, Piko, & Steger, 2011; Harlow, Newcomb, & Bentler, 1986). When considering additional outcomes of interest for the current work, research suggests that delinquency (e.g., Emler & Reicher, 1995; Moffitt, 1993) and self-image concerns (e.g., Abramowitz, Petersen, & Schulenberg, 1984; Simmons, Rosenberg, & Rosenberg, 1973) could be particularly prevalent during the adolescent and emerging adult years.

Furthermore, particularly important to the emerging adult years is the perception that one has obtained adult status, which could indicate that an individual will be more likely to experience a healthy transition into adulthood. Previous work has suggested that, like purpose, sense of adulthood is another component of identity capital (Côté, 1997, 2002; Luyckx, De Witte, & Goossens, 2011). Moreover, perceived adult status appears linked to having a sense of coherence during emerging adulthood (Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, & Pollock, 2008), a conceptual correlate of purpose in life. Accordingly, having a sense of purpose also may provide benefits during emerging adulthood in the form of helping individuals believe they are prepared for adulthood.

Current Studies

Across two studies, we sought to develop and examine the measurement properties of a brief measure of purpose in life, using samples from the United States and Canada. Our scale development focused on conceptualizing purpose in life during emerging adulthood, wherein it appears closely linked to identity development (Bronk, 2014; Burrow & Hill, 2011; Hill & Burrow, 2012). As part of scale development and validation, the two studies tested whether purpose in life was predictive of emotional and psychological well-being (positive affect, negative affect, perceived stress, and depression), given the past literature showing clear linkages between purpose and emerging adult well-being (Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib, & Finch, 2009; Sumner et al., in press). Study 1 also provided the opportunity to validate our new measure with respect to an existing measure of purpose, along with empirical and conceptual correlates (hope, self-agency, and consideration of future consequences). Study 2 then allowed us to investigate whether purposeful emerging adults were less likely to report delinquency and behavioural issues, as well as if they were more likely to perceive themselves as having achieved adult status. Across both studies, we assessed the Big Five traits, allowing us to investigate whether purpose predicted emerging adult outcomes above and beyond the role of these prominent personality dimensions.

Study 1

Method

Participants—Students at a mid-sized public university in Mid-eastern Canada took part in an online survey in exchange for course credit. Analyses were restricted to the 179 students who were 25 years or younger (M_{age} = 19.4 years, SD = 1.62). Most participants

were female (86%), identified primarily as White (73%), and were in their first two years of school (83%).

Measures

Brief Purpose Measure: To develop the purpose measure, we started with a pool of items from a well-known measure of identity development (Luyckx, Schwartz, Berzonsky, Soenens, Vansteenskiste, Smits, & Goossens, 2008), capitalizing on the close association between identity and purpose development during adolescence and emerging adulthood (Bronk, 2013; Burrow & Hill, 2011; Hill & Burrow, 2012). Additional items then were added to reflect the notion of having a direction and foundation for goals, allowing the measure to better capture the primary theme nominated by adolescents when asked to define what it means to have a purpose (Hill et al., 2010). From this item pool, we asked three published experts in the field of purpose development to rate the appropriateness of the items with respect to their view of purpose in life. Each of these experts rated 30 different items on a seven-point scale with respect to "how much they assess whether one has a purpose in life, in your expert opinion of the construct." Five items received an average rating of at least 6 out of 7, though two overlapped significantly in item content. Therefore, we eliminated one of the overlapping items and proceeded to examine the four-item measure in two validation samples.

Participants rated their agreement to the four items shown in Table 1 on a five-point scale. Reliability was strong in the current sample ($\alpha = 0.84$). Table 1 also presents the corrected item-total correlations for the items across both samples, as well as their factor loadings onto a one-factor principal components solution. Average inter-item correlations were .56 (range: .46 to .69) in Study 1, and .54 (range: .29 to .80) in Study 2.

Purpose in Life: Purpose also was assessed using the Life Engagement Test (Scheier, Wrosch, Baum, Cohen, Martire, Matthews, Schulz, & Zdaniuk, 2006). Participants completed the six-item measure by rating their agreement on a five-point scale to items such as "To me, the things I do are all worthwhile." This scale has demonstrated strong measurement properties across multiple types of samples (Scheier et al., 2006), and exhibited strong reliability in the current work ($\alpha = .87$). This measure provides a reliable assessment of purpose, though one less couched within the identity literature.

Conceptual Correlates of Purpose: First, participants completed the eight-item Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991), by rating their agreement on an eight-point scale. This scale can be broken into two distinct facets: pathways, or the sense that one can find a way around obstacles ("I can think of many ways to get out of a jam", $\alpha = .81$), and agency, or the belief in one's ability to pursue goals ("I meet the goals that I set for myself", $\alpha = .84$). Second, the extent to which participants focus on the long-term outcomes associated with their behaviours was assessed using the Consideration of Future Consequences Scale (Strathman, Gleicher, Boninger, & Edwards, 1994). Participants rated how characteristic to the self each of the twelve descriptors was on a five-point scale ("I consider how things might be in the future, and try to influence those things with my day to day behaviour", $\alpha = .81$).

Personality Traits: Participants completed a 25-item Big Five measure created by Goldberg (1992), using a five-point scale. Participants were asked to rate how descriptive each adjective was for themselves, in comparison to people of similar sex and age; each trait was measured by five separate items. Reliabilities were fair to strong for all Big Five personality traits: extraversion (sample item: "talkative", α = .81); agreeableness ("kind", α = .73); conscientiousness ("tidy", α = .64); emotional stability ("calm", α = .64); openness ("original, creative", α = .68).

Well-being: Four measures were employed as indicators of psychological well-being, or potential negative symptomatology. First, participants completed the Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), by rating how frequently they experience 20 different emotions on a five-point scale. Reliability was strong for both positive affect (α= .89; sample item: "excited") and negative affect (α = .90; sample item: "irritable"). Second, participants completed a brief 4-item version of the perceived stress scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983), in which they rate how often they feel a certain way (sample item: "you were unable to handle your personal problems") on a five-point scale (α = .80). Third, participants completed the 20-item CESD depressive symptom inventory (Radloff, 1977), by rating how each of the items reflected how they felt over the past week on a four-point scale (α = .92; sample item: "I felt depressed"). Fourth, participants completed a six-item version of the Offer Self-Image Questionnaire (Offer, Ostrov, & Howard, 1982), by rating each item on a five-point scale (α = .78; sample item: "I am proud of my body"). Across these scales, higher scores reflect greater positive or negative affect, perceived stress, depressive symptoms, or a more positive self-image.

Results

Bivariate Correlations with Developed Measure—First, we examined the brief purpose scale with respect to a previous measure and the conceptual correlates of purpose. Table 2 presents the correlations and descriptive statistics for Study 1. The brief purpose measure correlated strongly with the Life Engagement Test of purpose (*r* = .60), as well as both aspects of hope, self-agency (.56) and pathways (.38), and consideration of future consequences (.41). Second, we examined whether our measure correlated in the expected direction with the well-being indicators of interest. Participants with higher scores on our brief measure reported greater positive affect (.43) and more positive self-images (.48), but lower levels of negative affect (−.32), perceived stress (−.29), and depressive symptoms (−. 34). Finally, in line with previous research with emerging adults (Hill & Burrow, 2012), higher scores on purpose were linked to a more adaptive personality profile across the Big Five traits.

Multiple Regressions Predicting Conceptual Correlates—Given these expected relations, we proceeded to test whether our purpose measure predicted the conceptual correlates of purpose, even when controlling for age, gender, and the Big Five personality traits. Full results are presented in Table 3. The brief purpose measure significantly and independently predicted self-agency and consideration of future consequences in these models, though it was a non-significant unique predictor of the hope-pathways scale.

Multiple Regressions Predicting Well-being—Finally, we examined the unique predictive value of purpose with respect to our five well-being outcomes. Full results are presented in Table 4. In three of the five cases, purpose remained a significant predictor of well-being, even when controlling for the Big Five, age, and gender. The two exceptions were with respect to negative affect and perceived stress, which were strongly related to emotional stability. It is worth noting that purpose predicted depressive symptoms above and beyond emotional stability, even though depression has been viewed as a subfacet of that trait (Costa & McCrae, 1995).

Discussion

Study 1 provided initial evidence along three important fronts. First, it showed evidence for the reliability, psychometric properties, and predictive validity for the new brief purpose measure. These results thus support both the expected construct validation for our new measure, as well as the contention that purpose might better reflect the self-agency component of hope than pathways (see e.g., Hill et al., 2013). Second, it demonstrated the ability for purpose in life scores to uniquely predict important well-being outcomes and conceptual correlates, even when controlling for personality dimensions. Specifically, it uniquely predicted participants' sense of agency and the consideration of future consequences, as well as positive affect and depression. Third, it provided support that purpose could help buffer against problems prevalent during the adolescent and emerging adult years, such as negative self-images.

Study 2

Study 2 sought to replicate these findings by again examining the psychometric properties of the brief measure, and its role in predicting well-being, relative to personality. Moreover, we sought to extend the results of Study 1 by testing whether purpose scores predicted propensity for delinquency.

Method

Participants—Participants were contacted as part of the most recent wave from the longitudinal Oregon Youth Substance Use Project (OYSUP; Andrews, Tildesley, Hops, Duncan, & Severson, 2003), and participated in return for $30. The overall sample predominantly identified as White (86%). This post-high school assessment was the first in the study to include the purpose items, and not all participants in the wave received all items. Current analyses focus on the 490 participants who completed the purpose questionnaire (55% female; M_{age} = 19.4 years; SD = 0.43). All participants fell within the typical age range for emerging adulthood (range: 18.4 to 20.7 years).

Measures—Participants completed the same purpose in life measure as in Study 1, which again evidenced strong reliability (α = .82). Participants also completed the same 25-item measure of the Big Five, which again evidenced moderate to strong reliabilities across the traits (Extraversion: α = .80; Agreeableness: α = .61; Conscientiousness: α = .68; Emotional Stability: α = .67; Openness: α = .63). With respect to well-being, participants completed the same stress (α = .75) and depressive symptoms (α = .92) measures as in Study 1. Finally,

participants completed a shortened three-item version of the self-image scale used in Study 1, which still demonstrated good reliability (α = .82).

Delinquency: In addition, participants also completed a six-item measure of delinquent acts and potential substance use, using items adapted from the Youth Self-Report employed by Achenbach (1991). Participants rated each self-descriptor from 0 (Not True) to 2 (Very True), including items like "lies or cheats," "steals," or "has been in trouble with the law." The measure demonstrated strong reliability in the current sample (α = .77).

Adult Status: Finally, participants rated their agreement to three items previously employed to assess perceived adulthood (Côté, 1997): "I consider myself to be an adult," "I feel I have matured fully," and "I feel respected by others as an adult". Participants responded to these items on a five-point scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), and the three-item measure demonstrated strong reliability in the current sample (α = .79).

Results

Bivariate Correlations with Developed Measure—Table 5 presents the correlations between the measures of interest in Study 2. Replicating Study 1, purpose in life was negatively correlated with stress and depression, but positively correlated with self-images and the same adaptive profile on the Big Five traits observed in Study 1. Extending the results of Study 1, purpose also was negatively correlated with the delinquency scale (*r* = −.24), but positively correlated with perceived adulthood (*r* = .33).

Multiple Regressions Predicting Well-being—The top three panels of Table 6 present the full results for predicting the three well-being constructs when controlling for age, gender, and the Big Five personality traits. With respect to stress, results indicated that purpose, extraversion, and emotional stability were significant negative predictors. These three remained significant in the prediction of depressive symptoms as well. However, when accounting for age and gender, only extraversion and emotional stability proved significant positive predictors of self-image.

Multiple Regressions Predicting Delinquency and Perceived Adulthood—The bottom panel of Table 6 presents the multiple regression results for predicting delinquency from age, gender, purpose, and the Big Five. Purpose again demonstrated unique predictive validity, along with emotional stability and agreeableness. To further break down this effect on delinquency, we performed the analyses separately for the six items focusing on breaking rules and the two items focused on substance use. For both rule-breaking (B = −.05, s.e. = .02, *t* = −2.86, *p* = .004) and substance use (B = −.06, s.e. = .03, *t* = −2.27, *p* = .024) subscales, purpose in life remained a significant unique predictor.

Discussion

Across two studies using American and Canadian samples, we investigated the role of purpose in life during emerging adulthood, providing at least three primary advances to the literature. First, support was found for the use of a brief measure of purpose in life couched within theory and research on identity development, which proved reliable and had strong

construct and predictive validity. Second, purpose in life predicted developmentally important outcomes such as a positive self-image and reduced propensity for delinquency. Third, the current studies found support that assessing purpose in life predicts emerging adult outcomes including positive self-images, reduced delinquency, and perceived adult status, above and beyond the role of Big Five personality traits.

A wealth of research has focused on studying how individual characteristics develop and change during the adolescent and emerging adult years. One catalyst is that these developmental periods provide some of the first opportunities for individuals to learn about who they are, absent their parental safeguards (Blos, 1962). Though research typically focused on identity and personality development, studies have turned toward understanding how individuals find a purpose or direction for life during this timeframe. The current studies provide further support that purpose in life scores correlate with a seemingly adaptive personality profile (e.g., more conscientious, agreeable, emotional stable, extraverted, and open to new experiences; see also Hill & Burrow, 2012; Lounsbury et al., 2007). These findings are among the first to show purpose predicts important well-being outcomes even when controlling for personality dimensions. These tests provide additional support for the added utility of studying purpose during adolescence and emerging adulthood, as well as evidence that purpose is related to but not synonymous with a variety of personality dimensions.

Moreover, purpose scores correlated with a more positive self-image across both samples, and a diminished likelihood for two aspects of delinquency: rule-breaking and substance use. Combined with evidence that increases in purpose commitment often coincide with positive changes in identity commitment (Hill & Burrow, 2012), the broader picture painted is one where finding a purpose in life may be vital to adolescent development across several important fronts. The interpretation of these findings is limited by the cross-sectional nature of our data. Future research needs to (a) test whether purpose precedes or follows these developmentally relevant outcomes, within a longitudinal framework, and (b) evaluate whether the associated benefits of purpose (e.g., reduced self-image issues and delinquent tendencies) ultimately allow purposeful individuals a more adaptive transition into the adult years, as would be expected given the clear connection between sense of purpose and adult status perceptions. Moreover, Study 2 detected a strong gender effect on self-image, an effect less evident in Study 1 likely due to the predominantly female sample, which led to purpose failing to demonstrate a significant unique influence on self-image in the multiple regression analyses. As such, future research should investigate the role of purpose on self-image development separately for males and females, particularly given the differing role expectations for the two groups during emerging adulthood.

In addition to the cross-sectional nature of the current work, the sole employment of self-reports for data collection represents a second limitation. Addressing this concern may be particularly challenging for research on purpose, as it may prove difficult for observers to accurately assess another person's sense of purpose (though see Schmutte & Ryff, 1997), and aspects of purpose may be inherently subjective. However, future research should employ measures of depression, delinquency, and well-being from observer perspectives. Such work may prove particularly important for studying depressive symptoms and

delinquency, as these variables had relatively low means in the current samples. Finally, though several participants in the current studies were still in their teenage years, further work is needed to examine whether our brief measure of purpose would prove valid across adolescence and emerging adulthood. In particular, research is needed that links the current purpose measure to markers of adaptive identity development during these periods.

Those caveats aside, the current studies provide both methodological and theoretical advances for the burgeoning literature on purpose development prior to adulthood. These findings provide further insight into whether and how elements of the self uniquely contribute to well-being and developmental outcomes of interest. Moreover, they set clear directions for future research, targeting the need for longitudinal work on whether purposeful youth fare better during the typically difficult transition to adulthood. Evidence for this claim may be evident through measuring well-being outcomes, or assessing adaptive relations with others given the fluctuations in relationships evident during emerging adulthood, a benefit that would fall in line with the inherently social nature of purpose (Damon et al., 2003). Further progress along this front can further substantiate the primary claim herein, namely that taking a developmental perspective for research on purpose in life can help us understand its unique and changing role across the life course.

Acknowledgements

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Table 1

Final items for the brief measure of purpose in life, along with corrected item-total correlations, and factor loadings onto a one-factor principal components solution.

Item	Mean (s.d.)		Item-Total r		Factor Loading	
	S1	S2	S1	S2	S1	S2
There is a direction in my life.	3.79 (0.96)	4.05 (0.88)	.73	.80	.86	.92
My plans for the future match with my true interests and values.	3.73 (0.91)	3.85 (1.00)	.56	.38	.74	.56
I know which direction I am going to follow in my life.	3.52 (1.01)	3.90 (0.97)	.73	.75	.86	.90
My life is guided by a set of clear commitments.	3.44 (0.98)	3.73 (1.03)	.65	.67	.80	.85

Note: In Study 1, the single-factor solution accounted for 66.93% of the total variance between items (eigenvalue: 2.68), while in Study 2 it accounted for 66.88% of the variance (eigenvalue: 2.68).

Table 2

Correlations and descriptive statistics for variables of interest in Study 1.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Brief Purpose (1)	---														
LET (2)	.60	---													
Hope-Agency (3)	.56	.62	---												
Hope-Pathways (4)	.38	54	.68	---											
CFC (5)	.41	.37	.46	.46	---										
Positive Affect (6)	.43	.58	.63	.55	.38	---									
Negative Affect (7)	−.32	−.53	−.33	−.45	−.29	−.29	---								
Perceived Stress (8)	−.29	−.53	−.42	−.49	−.27	−.55	.56	---							
Depression (9)	−.34	−.61	−.39	−.45	−.33	−.51	.74	.71	---						
Self-Image (10)	.48	.57	.47	.40	.33	.59	−.47	−.44	−.54	---					
Extraversion (11)	.20	.27	.29	.24	.13	.37	−.14	−.15	−.15	.33	---				
Agreeableness (12)	.39	.43	.45	.42	.33	.28	−.42	−.26	−.28	.25	.04	---			
Conscientious. (13)	.50	.47	.56	.47	.32	.39	−.33	−.21	−.30	.40	.08	.51	---		
Emot. Stability (14)	.37	.43	.45	.50	.30	.54	−.54	−.48	−.47	.49	.13	.46	.52	---	
Openness (15)	.38	.35	.46	.42	.42	.38	−.20	−.13	−.22	.35	.18	−.36	.36	.22	---
Mean	*3.62*	*3.75*	*5.76*	*5.68*	*3.38*	*3.22*	*2.26*	*2.76*	*2.03*	*3.45*	*3.32*	*4.01*	*3.74*	*3.31*	*3.99*
SD	*0.79*	*0.78*	*1.25*	*1.19*	*0.55*	*0.74*	*0.76*	*0.76*	*0.58*	*0.71*	*0.87*	*0.66*	*0.65*	*0.69*	*0.64*

Note. All correlations with magnitudes of |.15| or greater are significant at the *p* < .05 level, and those with magnitudes of .25 or greater are significant at the *p* < .001 level. Sample sizes for analyses range from 170 to 176. LET refers to the Life Engagement Test and CFC refers to the Consideration of Future Consequences.

Table 3

Multiple regressions predicting conceptual correlates from brief purpose, age, gender, and the Big Five in Study 1. Full model statistics are presented by each subheading.

Predictor	B	SE	β	T-test
Hope Agency: F(8, 164) = 22.77*, Adj. R^2 = .50				
Age	−.05	.04	−.06	1.10
Gender	.41	.20	.12	2.00*
Purpose	.39	.10	.25	3.73*
Extraversion	.26	.08	.18	3.27*
Agreeableness	.12	.13	.06	0.92
Conscientiousness	.43	.14	.23	3.13*
Emotional Stability	.25	.12	.14	2.12*
Openness	.41	.12	.21	3.40*
Hope Pathways: F(8, 164) = 14.77*, Adj. R^2 = .39				
Age	−.10	.05	−.13	−2.14*
Gender	−.06	.22	−.02	−0.29
Purpose	.07	.11	.05	0.64
Extraversion	.18	.09	.13	2.13*
Agreeableness	.14	.14	.08	1.03
Conscientiousness	.30	.15	.17	2.05*
Emotional Stability	.52	.13	.30	4.10*
Openness	.43	.13	.23	3.35*
Consideration of Future Consequences: F(8, 162) = 7.78*, Adj. R^2 = .24				
Age	−.01	.02	−.03	−0.47
Gender	−.11	.11	−.07	−0.95
Purpose	.15	.06	.22	2.74*
Extraversion	.01	.04	.02	0.25
Agreeableness	.08	.07	.10	1.21*
Conscientiousness	.01	.08	.01	0.16
Emotional Stability	.08	.07	.10	1.20
Openness	.23	.07	.27	3.43*

Note:

*
indicates p < .05.

Table 4

Multiple regressions predicting well-being indicators from brief purpose, age, gender, and the Big Five in Study 1. Full model statistics are presented by each subheading.

Predictor	B	SE	β	T-test
Positive Affect: F(8, 162) = 16.98*, Adj. R² = .46				
Age	−.03	.03	−.06	−0.98
Gender	.10	.13	.05	0.78
Purpose	.16	.07	.17	2.41*
Extraversion	.21	.05	.25	4.11*
Agreeableness	−.11	.08	−.10	−1.28
Conscientiousness	.04	.09	.04	0.49
Emotional Stability	.44	.08	.42	5.85*
Openness	.23	.08	.20	3.01*
Negative Affect: F(8, 164) = 11.45*, Adj. R² = .33				
Age	−.07	.03	−.14	−2.10*
Gender	.06	.15	.03	0.40
Purpose	−.09	.07	−.10	−1.25
Extraversion	−.06	.06	−.06	−0.97
Agreeableness	−.28	.09	−.25	−3.08*
Conscientiousness	.06	.10	.05	0.58
Emotional Stability	−.44	.09	−.41	−5.22*
Openness	.04	.09	.03	0.41
Perceived Stress: F(8, 166) = 7.67*, Adj. R² = .23				
Age	.04	.03	.08	1.08
Gender	.05	.15	.03	0.35
Purpose	−.15	.08	−.16	−1.94
Extraversion	−.06	.06	−.07	−0.97
Agreeableness	−.04	.10	−.04	−0.42
Conscientiousness	.15	.10	.13	1.43
Emotional Stability	−.52	.09	−.47	−5.76*
Openness	.01	.09	.01	0.08
Depression: F(8, 166) = 7.28*, Adj. R² = .22				
Age	−.01	.03	−.02	−0.25
Gender	−.01	.12	−.01	−0.07
Purpose	−.13	.06	−.18	−2.18*
Extraversion	−.04	.05	−.05	−0.75
Agreeableness	−.02	.08	−.02	−0.24
Conscientiousness	.03	.08	.03	0.38

Predictor	B	SE	β	T-test
Emotional Stability	−.33	.07	−.39	−4.69[*]
Openness	−.05	.07	−.06	−0.76

Self-Image: $F(8, 167) = 15.09$[*], Adj. $R^2 = .39$				
Age	.02	.03	.05	0.73
Gender	.08	.13	.04	0.63
Purpose	.24	.07	.27	3.71[*]
Extraversion	.17	.05	.21	3.42[*]
Agreeableness	−.11	.08	−.10	−1.37
Conscientiousness	.07	.09	.06	0.76
Emotional Stability	.36	.08	.34	4.70[*]
Openness	.17	.08	.15	2.16[*]

Note:

[*] indicates $p < .05$.

Table 5

Correlations and descriptive statistics for variables of interest in Study 2.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Brief Purpose (1)	---										
Perceived Stress (2)	−.35	---									
Depression (3)	−.28	.73	---								
Self-Image (4)	.16	−.37	−.34	---							
Delinquency (5)	−.24	.26	.33	−.04	---						
Adult Status (6)	.33	−.25	−.19	−.11	−.14	---					
Extraversion (7)	.30	−.35	−.32	.28	−.10	.21	---				
Agreeableness (8)	.19	−.16	−.25	.07	−.29	.19	.26	---			
Conscientiousness (9)	.34	−.25	−.27	.13	−.30	.30	.22	.48	---		
Emotional Stability (10)	.33	−.54	−.56	.36	−.29	.28	.35	.44	.52	---	
Openness (11)	.21	−.25	−.23	.24	−.09	.15	.36	.32	.27	.37	---
Mean	3.87	1.31	0.73	2.47	0.22	3.83	3.74	4.15	3.83	3.73	4.22
SD	0.78	0.79	0.54	0.95	0.28	0.79	0.80	0.56	0.68	0.69	0.55

Note: All correlations with magnitudes of |.09| or greater were significant at the .05 level.

Table 6

Multiple regressions predicting well-being from brief purpose, age, gender, and the Big Five in Study 2. Full model statistics are presented by each subheading.

Predictor	B	SE	β	T-test
Perceived Stress: F(8, 473) = 32.20, Adj. R² = .34*				
Age	.05	.07	.02	0.61
Gender	.06	.06	.04	0.94
Purpose	−.17	.04	−.17	−4.14*
Extraversion	−.15	.04	−.15	−3.64*
Agreeableness	.16	.06	.11	2.45*
Conscientiousness	.05	.06	.04	0.86
Emotional Stability	−.55	.06	−.48	−9.61*
Openness	−.04	.06	−.03	−0.69
Depression: F(8, 473) = 30.28, Adj. R² = .33*				
Age	−.02	.05	−.02	−0.44
Gender	−.01	.05	−.01	−0.11
Purpose	−.07	.03	−.10	−2.45*
Extraversion	−.08	.03	−.12	−2.86*
Agreeableness	−.01	.04	−.01	−0.23
Conscientiousness	.05	.04	.06	1.15
Emotional Stability	−.40	.04	−.51	−10.12*
Openness	.01	.04	.01	0.25
Self-Image: F(8, 467) = 19.39, Adj. R² = .24*				
Age	.10	.10	.04	1.03
Gender	−.52	.08	−.27	6.14*
Purpose	.03	.05	.03	0.63
Extraversion	.23	.06	.19	4.24*
Agreeableness	.18	.08	.10	2.14*
Conscientiousness	.06	.07	.04	0.73
Emotional Stability	.34	.08	.24	4.49*
Openness	.15	.08	.09	1.92
Delinquency: F(8, 475) = 11.12, Adj. R² = .14*				
Age	.02	.03	.03	0.67
Gender	−.04	.03	−.08	−1.67
Purpose	−.05	.02	−.14	−3.04*
Extraversion	.02	.02	.06	1.24
Agreeableness	−.08	.03	−.16	−3.15*
Conscientiousness	−.04	.02	−.09	−1.65

Predictor	B	SE	β	T-test
Emotional Stability	−.08	.02	−.18	−3.19[*]
Openness	.03	.03	.06	1.23

Adult Status: F(8, 473) = 11.72[*], Adj. R² = .15

Age	.17	.08	.09	2.06[*]
Gender	.00	.07	.00	0.02
Purpose	.21	.05	.21	4.60[*]
Extraversion	.09	.05	.09	1.82
Agreeableness	.03	.07	.02	0.36
Conscientiousness	.18	.06	.16	2.87[*]
Emotional Stability	.09	.07	.08	1.40
Openness	.00	.07	.00	−0.04

Note:

[*] indicates p < .05.