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Broad Dispositions, Broad Aspirations: The Intersection of Personality Traits and Major Life Goals

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Do personality traits predict the goals a person chooses to pursue in life? The present study examined the relation between personality traits and major life goals, which are broad, far-reaching agendas for important life domains (N = 672). The authors used both theoretical and empirical procedures to organize a set of life goals into thematic content clusters (economic, aesthetic, social, relationship, political, hedonistic, religious); the resulting goal clusters constitute a preliminary taxonomy of motive units based on the fundamental value domains identified in the literature. The authors examined gender differences on each goal cluster and related the goal clusters to individual differences in the Big Five and narcissism. High extraversion and low agreeableness (e.g., narcissism) was the most common profile associated with major life goals, and neuroticism was essentially unrelated to the importance of major life goals. Findings confirmed expectations derived from previous research and from Socioanalytic and narcissism theories.

As individuals, we often wrestle with the tension between who we are and what we want to become. This tension also is manifested within the field of personality psychology. Over the past few decades, two distinct lines of research—one focused on who people are (dispositions) and the other on what people desire to become (motives or goals)—have traveled separate paths (Winter, John, Stewart, Klohnen, & Duncan, 1998). Dispositional researchers have searched for a generalizable taxonomy of personality trait terms and have emphasized issues of personality structure. In recent years, dispositional researchers have achieved a milestone in developing a superordinate taxonomy of trait terms labeled the Five-Factor Model (FFM) (Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & John, 1992; Wiggins & Trapnell, 1997). This taxonomy

provides a much-needed integration of trait terms and facilitates the task of integrating dispositions with other constructs, such as motives.

Proponents of the FFM argue that the dimensions of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to Experience account for the interrelations among most trait terms (Goldberg, 1993). The Big Five are conceptualized at the broadest level that retains descriptive utility (John, Hampson, & Goldberg, 1991). Possibly because of this breadth, the Big Five are relatively consistent over the life course (Costa & McCrae, 1988; Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000); generalize across many different cultures (McCrae & Costa, 1997b); and predict a wide range of outcomes, including job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hogan & Hogan, 1989), occupational status (Roberts, 1994), academic achievement (Robins, John, & Caspi, 1994), delinquency (John, Caspi, Robins, Moffitt, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1994), and divorce (Cramer, 1993). Although the FFM has been criticized (Block, 1995; Pervin, 1994), researchers have yet to develop a compelling alternative to the FFM.

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As a descriptive taxonomy, the FFM provides a way to organize and categorize the myriad traits studied by personality psychologists into five broad content categories. At present, there is no taxonomy that serves the same function in the motive domain. Several content-oriented taxonomies have been offered, including Murray's list of needs and the more recent set of "Big Three" motives—Achievement, Affiliation, and Power (Smith, 1992)—but none of the existing taxonomies of motives has proved entirely satisfactory to the field. That is, there is no set of content domains into which motive units can be classified in the same way that the Big Five domains serve as a classificatory taxonomy for trait terms.

Instead, many motive and goal researchers have focused on the hierarchical structure of the motive domain (e.g., Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Rounds, 1995; Winnel, 1987). At the top of these hierarchical systems one finds global aspirations for a certain worldview (e.g., Royce & Powell, 1983) and idealized notions of the self (Beach, 1990). At the next level down are more concrete principles of what individuals see as desirable, expressed most often as values (e.g., Rokeach, 1973). These values in turn subsume important life goals such as career and relationship aspirations (Winnel, 1987). At an even more specific level are contextualized goals, described as midlevel units, such as personal strivings (Emmons, 1989). Finally, at the lowest level of the hierarchy are goals for immediate actions and discrete events, such as wanting to have a good day at work.

A distinctive feature of personality research on motives is the recent focus on midlevel conceptual units, including personal projects (Little, 1983), life tasks (Cantor, Norem, Niedenthal, Langston, & Brower, 1987), personal strivings (Emmons, 1989), life commitments (Novacek & Lazarus, 1990), and wishes (King, 1995; King & Broyles, 1997). These highly contextualized cognitive-motivational units reflect individuals' conscious intentions to shape or adapt to their current environment or life situation. The modal level of analysis for these goal units is the day-to-day choices and actions in one's life (for a review, see Cantor & Zirkel, 1990; Emmons, 1997).

Integrating midlevel cognitive-motivational units and the dimensions of the FFM is problematic for several reasons. First, they are conceptualized at different levels of breadth (Kaiser & Ozer, 1994)—traits are relatively broad (e.g., conscientiousness) and midlevel units are relatively narrow in breadth (e.g., striving to get a good grade in a class); it would make more conceptual sense to compare units at similar levels of abstraction. Second, midlevel goal units are generated idiographically and assessed ipsatively (rather than normatively). For example, in a typical study, participants generate their own set of personal strivings and then rate them relative to each

other on a set of dimensions such as conflict (e.g., How much does this goal conflict with your other goals?). Thus, much of the research linking traits and midlevel goals has not examined the overlap in content between goals and traits but instead has examined how personality traits relate to various dimensions of responding to idiographically generated goals. (e.g., Do introverts perceive more conflict among their goals than do extraverts?). Third, because there is no existing taxonomy of goals, there are no agreed on content categories into which a participant's idiographic goals can be classified. This makes it difficult to compare findings across studies.

To overcome these problems, we adopted the following approach to examining the relation between traits and goals. First, we moved up the goal hierarchy to a more broad-based conceptualization of goals. Specifically, we examined the relation between personality traits and a set of motivational units ignored in recent years by personality psychologists. These motivational units, referred to by Allport (1961) as "major goals," are conceptualized at a broad level similar to the dimensions of the FFM. Second, we obtained normative ratings of a standardized set of major life goals, that is, all participants rated the importance of the same set of goals. Third, we used a combination of conceptual and empirical procedures to organize the life goals into thematic content clusters based on fundamental values; the resulting content clusters constitute a preliminary taxonomy of life goals. Fourth, we related the goal clusters to personality trait differences, including the Big Five dimensions and narcissism. This allowed us to address the question, "Do individual differences in personality traits predict the major life goals a person chooses to pursue in life?"

ORGANIZING MAJOR LIFE GOALS

Major life goals involve a person's aspirations to shape their life context and establish general life structures such as having a career, a family, a certain kind of lifestyle, and so on. In contrast to midlevel motivational units, major life goals have a longer time line and influence an individual's life throughout years and decades rather than days and weeks. For example, a typical life goal would be to attain a high status career, whereas an analogous midlevel goal would be to get a good grade on an exam. Major life goals entail the construction of concrete social contexts such as having a large family, being married, or attaining an affluent lifestyle. These contexts reflect the type and characteristics of roles that people enact. These roles are often interpersonal in nature and may reflect achievements that are associated with different stages of life (e.g., Erikson, 1959).

Major life goals are similar to Markus and Nurius's (1986) concept of possible selves in that both are future oriented and serve a motivational function. However, life goals and possible selves differ in several ways. First, life goals are necessarily desirable outcomes for the individual, whereas possible selves include both desired and feared outcomes. We do not set a goal to achieve something that we do not desire; however, our possible selves can cover the evaluative spectrum from positive to negative. Life goals also tend to be less evaluative in general than possible selves. For example, a representative life goal might be "being a parent," whereas the related feared self would be "being a bad parent." Finally, life goals are more context bound than are possible selves. For example, possible selves might include global, decontextualized identities, such as "being lonely when older" (for a review, see Markus & Cross, 1990). Thus, although we are somewhat hesitant to add yet another conceptual unit to the current panoply of motive units, we believe that major life goals are an important and distinct motivational construct.

In our attempt to explore the personality correlates of major life goals, we faced two obstacles. As we noted above, there are no generally agreed on categories into which life goals can be organized thematically, and there is no standardized set of life goals that could serve as a starting point for developing a content-oriented taxonomy. The FFM taxonomy was developed empirically through factor analyses of trait terms derived from the natural language. However, this empirically oriented (bottom-up) approach is not viable in the life goal domain because there is no equivalent source for exhaustively identifying the universe of life goals, and motive researchers have not developed a comprehensive set of life goals because their focus has been on idiographic goals.

Thus, rather than attempting to develop a taxonomy of major life goals empirically, we instead adopted a theory-driven (i.e., top-down) approach. Specifically, we used value domains, which are theoretically one step up the motive hierarchy, to organize major life goals into conceptually related clusters (Rounds, 1995; Winnel, 1987). In the same way that the Big Five dimensions represent a basic level in personality trait description (John et al., 1991), we believe values represent a basic level in the motive domain.

We reviewed previous taxonomies of values to identify the primary value domains that could be used to organize major life goals. We focused on identifying domains consistent with Rokeach's (1973) "terminal" values, which he defined as values associated with circumstances and situations partially external to the self often achieved in social roles (e.g., an exciting life, social recognition, salvation).¹ In addition to Rokeach's list of ter-

minal values, we reviewed the value systems described in Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey's (1960) *Study of Values*; Hofstede's (1984) work-related values; Schwartz' (1992) system of universal human values (also see Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987); Hogan and Hogan's (1996) Motives, Values, and Preferences system; and related studies (Braithwaite & Law, 1985; Emmons, 1997; Ford & Nichols, 1987). Focusing on terminal values only, we identified 10 relatively conceptually independent value domains: theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, religious/spiritual, physical well-being, relationship, hedonistic, and personal growth.

To address the lack of a standardized set of goals, we searched the literature for an existing life goal instrument. The only relatively comprehensive instrument that we could find that was also assessed normatively rather than idiographically was the set of life goals developed by Richards (1966). Although Richards' set of goals is extensive, it is not clear how exhaustive it is, that is, do the goals cover all of the thematic content domains captured by the fundamental value domains? Thus, as a first step in our study, we conceptually classified the major life goals identified by Richards (as well as some additional goals dealing with contemporary issues) into the 10 value domains derived from our review of the literature. We then used a combination of internal consistency and factor analyses to determine whether the life goals could be used to develop scales related to each of the 10 value domains. These scales could then be used to explore gender differences in the importance of the goal domains and to examine the personality correlates of major life goals.

LINKING MAJOR LIFE GOALS AND PERSONALITY TRAITS

What is the conceptual relation between personality traits and goals? Some theorists make a clear distinction between traits—our consistent, patterned ways of behaving—and goals—our aspirations for who we want to become and what kind of life we want to live (McAdams, 1994). Others see them as inseparable (Allport, 1961). For example, Cantor (1990) described life tasks as constructs that bridge the gap between dispositions and behavior (see also Little, Lecci, & Watkinson, 1992). Cantor (1990) argued that life tasks represent the cognitive strategies individuals often employ to express their underlying dispositions. Likewise, Costa and McCrae (1994) view life pursuits as causal outcomes of dispositions, that is, goals are directly or indirectly expressions of traits.

Drawing on Socioanalytic Theory (Hogan, 1983; Hogan & Roberts, in press), we conceptualize major life goals as the central link between dispositions and the many social contexts people choose in their lives.

According to the Socioanalytic model, most behavior is motivated by three primary needs: social acceptance (getting along), status (getting ahead), and personal meaning. In pursuit of these three primary needs, people develop consistencies in their behaviors and life choices that are captured in three basic units: what people think of themselves (identity), what others think of them (reputation), and the roles they enact at different stages of the life course (Hogan & Roberts, in press). By establishing consistent patterns of relations to other people and to the social roles in which they participate, people develop identities that reflect how they manage social acceptance, status negotiations, and meaning in their lives.

We propose that major life goals provide a link between people's identities and the roles they enact. According to Socioanalytic Theory, people will attempt to choose roles that reinforce their identity. Most goals concern choices we make about what roles to acquire (e.g., "Should I become a parent?") or about how we will enact these roles (e.g., "Should I pursue a lucrative job or one that provides the opportunity for personal growth?"). Thus, an individual who sees himself or herself as an intellectual will pursue work that challenges his or her intellect, choose partners with whom he or she can have intellectual discussions, and participate in intellectual leisure activities (e.g., attending public lectures). By selecting roles that reinforce his or her identity, he or she will solidify a reputation of being an intellectual and in fact become behaviorally more intellectual. Thus, there is a reciprocal relation between major life goals and broad dispositions—major life goals allow people to select and shape their social environments in ways that reinforce their existing dispositions.

Although the conceptual link seems clear, researchers have not examined the relation between major life goals and the Big Five. What little research has been done on goals and dispositions has focused on the relation between midlevel units and the Big Five (or personality traits such as narcissism that reflect a blend of several Big Five traits). For example, Kaiser and Ozer (1994) showed that affiliative strivings were associated with ratings of Agreeableness and that achievement-related strivings were associated with Conscientiousness. King (1995) categorized personal strivings into achievement, affiliation, and power domains and found that they were associated with the achievement, affiliation, and power scales of the Personality Research Form (Jackson, 1974).

Based on these research studies and the Socioanalytic connection between self-reported traits (identity) and major life goals, we expected the Big Five traits of Extraversion and Conscientiousness to be related to "getting ahead" goals. For example, achievement-

related goals such as desiring a high-status job or entry into graduate school should be related to a person's seeing himself or herself as hard-working, persevering, and motivated (e.g., conscientious). Furthermore, we expected the Big Five trait of Agreeableness to be related to "getting along" goals. People who desire to develop an identity reflecting warmth and kindness are likely to pursue social goals such as helping the needy. Finally, we expected Openness to Experience to be related to aesthetic goals, such as the desire to pursue creative activities. Previous research has shown strong links between Openness to Experience and the pursuit of creative careers (Helson, Roberts, & Agronick, 1995; McCrae & Costa, 1997a) and artistic interests (Costa, McCrae, & Holland, 1984).

In addition to the Big Five trait domains, we examined how life goals relate to individual differences in narcissism. Narcissism is relevant to life goals for several reasons. According to theoretical accounts of narcissism, narcissistic individuals are "preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, and beauty"; "exaggerate their achievements and talents, and expect to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements"; and have "a grandiose sense of self-importance" (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 661; see also Freud, 1914/1953; Kohut, 1971). Emmons (1989) notes that "narcissism is a rich, multifaceted construct consisting of attitudes toward the self and others, characteristic interpersonal orientations, and chronic emotional reactions. Therefore, narcissism should have considerable relevance for understanding the motivational facets of a person's life" (p. 33). More recently, Emmons (1998) has argued that narcissism is characterized by a spiritual emptiness in which an excessive preoccupation with self-centered goals comes at the expense of goals and interests external to the self. Consistent with this, Wink (1991) characterized the narcissistic personality as "self-directed" (as opposed to "other-directed"), suggesting that the life pursuits of narcissists are oriented around goals related to power, success, and pleasure rather than prosocial concerns. Thus, in the context of Socioanalytic theory, narcissists are oriented toward getting ahead rather than getting along, and we would expect this orientation to be reflected in the life goals they pursue.

In addition to the theoretical connections, narcissism has been linked to goals in previous research. Emmons (1989) examined the relation between narcissism and both implicit (assessed by Thematic Apperception Test [TAT] responses) and explicit motives (assessed by content coding of personal strivings). Narcissistic individuals tended to be high in power motivation and low in intimacy motivation, regardless of whether motives were assessed implicitly or explicitly. Despite the clear theoret-

ical and empirical link, the relation between narcissism and long-term life goals has yet to be examined.

METHOD

Participants

The participants were 672 1st and 2nd-year undergraduate students from a large West Coast university; 59% of the sample was female, and the median age was 19. Participants were given partial course credit for completing the questionnaire packet.

Measures

Major life goals. Participants rated the importance of 38 life goals on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not important to me*) to 5 (*very important to me*). Most goals were adapted from Richards's (1966) list of 35 life goals. Of the 35 goals, 27 were used in their original form or with slight modifications in wording. We consolidated three goals having to do with scientific achievements into one generic item reflecting the desire to pursue graduate education. Five of Richards's original goals were not used because they referred to goals for changing one's personality (e.g., "become a mature and well-adjusted person"). We added 11 goals that reflected more contemporary issues, such as balancing career and family (e.g., "being married to someone who has a career in addition to my own"), lifestyle choices (e.g., "having fun" and "living in aesthetically pleasing surroundings"), and additional career issues (e.g., "having a career" and "having a high-status career"). The complete list of goals is shown in Table 3.

Big Five dimensions. The 60-item NEO-Five Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992) was used to measure the Big Five personality dimensions: Extraversion ($\alpha = .83$), Agreeableness ($\alpha = .76$), Conscientiousness ($\alpha = .81$), Neuroticism ($\alpha = .84$), and Openness to Experience ($\alpha = .77$).

Narcissism. The 33-item version of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) (Raskin & Terry, 1988) was used to assess narcissism ($\alpha = .80$). The NPI is the best-validated self-report measure of overt narcissism for nonclinical populations and has been shown to predict psychologists' ratings of narcissism (e.g., John & Robins, 1994). The NPI was available for a subset of the total sample ($N = 469$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Organizing Major Life Goals Using Value Domains

Conceptual classification of life goals. As described above, after reviewing the literature we identified 10 value

domains to be used to categorize the life goals: theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, religious, physical well-being, relationship, hedonistic, and personal growth. To classify the life goals into the value domains, three judges independently rated the prototypicality of each goal for each domain on a 10-point scale ranging from 1 (*least prototypical*) to 10 (*most prototypical*). Agreement among the judges was high for all 10 domains (α s ranging from .73 to .98). Of the 38 goals, 36 were classified into 1 of the 10 value domains based on the aggregated judges' ratings (mean prototypicality rating of 7 or above); 2 goals were not rated as highly prototypical of any of the 10 domains.

Internal consistency of major life goal clusters. To empirically validate the theoretical classifications of the goals, we examined the internal consistency of the goal clusters. Of the 10 goal clusters, 7 had acceptable alpha reliabilities (ranging from .65 to .83): economic, religious, social, aesthetic, political, relationship, and hedonism. The largest cluster concerned economic goals, which were a blend of career and status-oriented aspirations. The smallest clusters were the religious and political clusters, with 2 goals each. Goal clusters reflecting the theoretical, physical well-being, and personal growth value domains were not computed because they had alpha reliabilities less than .45; the 7 goals classified into these domains were analyzed individually. In addition, several goals were eliminated from each cluster because internal consistency analyses indicated that the alpha reliability would increase if they were eliminated. The resulting goal clusters included 25 goals.

Factor structure of major life goal clusters. To test the relative independence of the goal clusters, we performed a principal components analysis on the 25 goals that make up the 7 internally consistent goal clusters (see Table 1). Seven components were extracted and varimax rotated. All but one goal loaded cleanly onto the component to which it was theoretically assigned (the goal "make my parents proud" was originally assigned to the relationship cluster but the component analysis indicated that it was more appropriately categorized in the economic cluster). In general, though, most factor loadings exceeded .60, and there were few substantial cross-loadings.

The reliable goal clusters were aggregated into unit-weighted scales (see Table 1). Correlations among these scales were all low to moderate in magnitude (see Table 2). The economic, relationship, political, and hedonistic clusters were positively correlated (r s ranged from .20 to .35). The religious and social clusters also were positively correlated ($r = .32$). Alpha reliabilities for each cluster are shown on the diagonal of Table 2.

TABLE 1: Factor Structure of Major Life Goals Clustered By Value Domain

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Economic goals							
Having a high-status career	.89						
Having an influential and prestigious occupation	.83						
Having a high standard of living and wealth	.69	-.33					
Having a career	.66			.23			
Becoming a business executive	.50	-.42			.36		.31
Make my parents proud	.45			.37			.25
Owning my own business	.38	-.33			.31		
Aesthetic goals							
Producing good artistic work	.83						
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts	.77						
Be an accomplished musician	.70						
Supporting artistic activities and the fine arts	.70						
Write good fiction and prose	.60				.23		
Social goals							
Working to promote the welfare of others			.84				
Helping others in need			.79				.23
Taking part in volunteer community and public service			.75		.25		
Relationship goals							
Having a satisfying marriage/relationship				.78			
Having children				.77			
Having harmonious relationships with my parents and siblings				.64		.26	
Political goals							
Be influential in public affairs					.84		
Becoming a community leader			.24		.81		
Hedonistic goals							
Having new and different experiences						.76	
Having fun						.76	
Having an exciting lifestyle	.33					.61	
Religious goals							
Participating in religious activities							.82
Devoting attention to my spiritual life			.21				.78

NOTE: *N* = 672. Primary loadings are shown in bold. Loadings greater than .20 are shown.

Mean Level and Gender Differences of Major Life Goals

Table 3 shows mean ratings of the importance of each goal, grouped by value domain. Goals related to the relationship (*M* = 4.4) and hedonistic (*M* = 4.3) domains were rated as most important, followed by the social (*M* = 3.7) and economic (*M* = 3.5) domains and then the political (*M* = 2.8), religious (*M* = 2.7), and aesthetic (*M* = 2.5)

TABLE 2: Intercorrelations Among Major Goal Clusters

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Economic	(.81)						
2. Aesthetic	-.20*	(.77)					
3. Social	-.17*	.10*	(.82)				
4. Relationship	.26*	-.04	.20*	(.65)			
5. Political	.31*	.16*	.29*	.20*	(.83)		
6. Hedonistic	.35*	.13*	.09*	.26*	.30*	(.65)	
7. Religious	.03	.08	.32*	.19*	.15*	-.04	(.77)

NOTE: *N* = 672. Alpha reliabilities are given on the diagonal. **p* < .01.

domains. The most important individual goals were “having a satisfying marriage/relationship” (*M* = 4.8), “feeling a real purpose in life” (*M* = 4.6), “having a career” (*M* = 4.5), and “having fun” (*M* = 4.5); most people rated these goals as very important.

The least important goals tended to be narrow in scope, traditional in orientation, or socially undesirable. For example, goals with a low probability of being achieved (e.g., “becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts,” “being an accomplished musician,” and “becoming an outstanding athlete”) were considered relatively unimportant by many students. Two goals that may be considered too traditional by some college students (to “participate in religious activities” and to “be in a traditional marriage”) also were low in importance. Finally, the goal “avoiding hard work” was rated rather low, which may reflect the pejorative nature of admitting to being lazy. Many of the goals rated low in importance also had the highest standard deviations, indicating less agreement about their importance.

Men and women had somewhat different major life goals. Most notably, men felt it was more important to pursue economic goals (e.g., “have a high standard of living and wealth,” “own your own business”), whereas women felt it was more important to pursue social goals (e.g., “work to promote the welfare of others,” “help others in need”). This gender difference suggests that men place greater value on the superordinate goal of “getting ahead,” whereas women place greater value on the superordinate goal of “getting along.” This is consistent with previous research showing gender differences in wishes (King & Broyles, 1997) and with evolutionary explanations for gender roles (Buss, 1995).

Women also rated goals related to personal growth as more important than did men. For example, women felt it was more important to “feel a real purpose in life” and “have a job that is personally satisfying even if it does not make me rich.” Thus, although both men and women placed value on having an influential and prestigious occupation, women indicated less willingness to sacrifice personal growth for money in their work, for example, they were more likely to have the goal of “earning

TABLE 3: Mean Importance Ratings of Major Life Goals

<i>Major Life Goals</i>	<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Major Life Goals</i>	<i>Total Sample</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Economic goals	3.5 (.8)	3.6 (.8)*	3.5 (.8)	Hedonistic goals	4.3 (.7)	4.3 (.7)	4.2 (.7)
Having a career	4.5 (.8)	4.5 (.8)	4.5 (.8)	Having fun	4.5 (.8)	4.5 (.8)	4.5 (.8)
Make my parents proud	4.1 (1.1)	4.1 (1.1)	4.2 (1.1)	Having new and different experiences	4.3 (.8)	4.3 (.8)	4.3 (.8)
Having an influential and prestigious occupation	3.9 (1.1)	3.9 (1.1)	3.8 (1.1)	Having an exciting lifestyle	4.0 (1.1)	4.1 (1.1)	4.0 (1.1)
Having a high-status career	3.6 (1.2)	3.7 (1.2)	3.5 (1.2)	Religious goals	2.7 (1.3)	2.6 (1.3)	2.8 (1.2)
Having a high standard of living and wealth	3.5 (1.2)	3.7 (1.2)*	3.4 (1.2)	Devoting attention to my spiritual life	3.0 (1.4)	2.9 (1.4)	3.1 (1.4)
Owning my own business	2.7 (1.4)	3.0 (1.5)*	2.6 (1.4)	Participating in religious activities	2.5 (1.4)	2.4 (1.4)	2.5 (1.4)
Becoming a business executive	2.3 (1.4)	2.5 (1.4)	2.3 (1.3)	Personal growth goals ^a			
Aesthetic goals	2.5 (.9)	2.5 (1.0)	2.4 (.9)	Feeling a real purpose in life	4.6 (.8)	4.4 (.8)*	4.7 (.7)
Supporting artistic activities and the fine arts	3.1 (1.2)	3.0 (1.3)	3.1 (1.2)	Having a job that is personally satisfying even if it does not make me rich	4.1 (1.1)	3.8 (1.2)*	4.3 (.9)
Produce good artistic work	2.5 (1.4)	2.5 (1.4)	2.5 (1.3)	Be well read	3.9 (1.2)	3.7 (1.2)*	4.0 (1.1)
Write good fiction and prose	2.4 (1.4)	2.5 (1.4)	2.4 (1.4)	Physical well-being goals ^a			
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts	2.2 (1.3)	2.2 (1.3)	2.2 (1.2)	Being in good physical condition	4.4 (.9)	4.3 (.9)	4.4 (.8)
Be an accomplished musician	2.1 (1.3)	2.3 (1.4)*	1.9 (1.2)	Becoming an outstanding athlete	2.3 (1.4)	2.8 (1.4)*	2.0 (1.2)
Social goals	3.7 (.9)	3.4 (.9)*	3.9 (.8)	Theoretical goals ^a			
Helping others in need	4.0 (1.0)	3.7 (1.1)*	4.2 (.9)	Preparing myself for graduate school	4.1 (1.1)	4.1 (1.1)	4.1 (1.1)
Working to promote the welfare of others	3.8 (1.1)	3.5 (1.1)*	3.9 (1.0)	Become an authority on a special subject in my field	3.7 (1.1)	3.7 (1.1)	3.7 (1.2)
Taking part in volunteer community and public service	3.4 (1.1)	3.1 (1.1)*	3.7 (1.0)	Unclassified goals ^b			
Relationship goals	4.4 (.7)	4.4 (.7)	4.4 (.7)	Living in aesthetically pleasing surroundings	4.0 (.9)	4.1 (.9)	4.0 (1.0)
Having a satisfying marriage/relationship	4.8 (.7)	4.8 (.7)	4.8 (.7)	Being married to someone who has a career in addition to my own	3.7 (1.2)	3.2 (1.2)*	4.1 (1.1)
Having harmonious relationships with my parents and my siblings	4.4 (.9)	4.4 (.9)	4.5 (.9)	Earning enough to be comfortable, and no more	3.2 (1.1)	3.1 (1.2)*	3.3 (1.0)
Having children	4.0 (1.2)	4.1 (1.2)	4.0 (1.3)	Having an easy life	3.1 (1.1)	3.3 (1.1)*	3.0 (1.1)
Political goals	2.8 (1.1)	2.8 (1.1)	2.7 (1.2)	Avoiding hard work	2.2 (1.0)	2.4 (1.1)*	2.1 (.9)
Be influential in public affairs	2.8 (1.2)	2.8 (1.2)	2.8 (1.2)	Being in a traditional marriage where the husband is the primary wage earner and the wife primarily cares for children	1.7 (1.0)	1.9 (1.1)*	1.5 (.9)
Becoming a community leader	2.7 (1.2)	2.8 (1.2)	2.7 (1.3)				

NOTE: $N = 672$. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses.

a. These categories were not internally consistent enough to compute unit-weighted scales.

b. Unclassified goals either failed to be classified into 1 of the 10 value dimensions or were dropped from the 10 categories based on internal consistency analyses.

* Indicates that means are significantly different at $p < .01$.

enough to be comfortable, and no more.” Men (somewhat paradoxically given their emphasis on economic goals) were more likely to state as a goal the desire to “avoid hard work” and to “have an easy life.” Finally, men thought it was more important to “be in a traditional marriage where the husband was the primary wage earner and the woman primarily cares for the children,” whereas women thought it was more important to be “married to someone who had a career in addition to their own”—a difference that seems to reflect a traditional or neotraditional perspective on gender roles.

Despite these differences, it is noteworthy that men and women did not differ in their ratings of most of the life goals. In fact, men and women ordered the impor-

tance of the major life goals in a very similar manner; the correlation (computed across goals) between men and women in their mean importance ratings was .94. Consistent with Freud’s contention that love and work are the dominant themes of life, goals for having a satisfying relationship and for having a career were two of the most important major goals defining the life pursuits of both men and women. Consistent with a Maslovian perspective, both men and women desired to have a real purpose in life, have fun, and enjoy new and different experiences. Such goals also are consistent with Erikson’s (1959) conception of late adolescence and early adulthood as a time in which individuals explore different identities, ideas, and values.

Do the Big Five Predict Major Life Goals?

Table 4 shows the results of multiple regression analyses predicting major life goals from the Big Five dimensions.² The standardized partial beta weights for each Big Five scale are given for the goal clusters and for each individual goal.³ Also listed are the multiple *R*s for each goal cluster, which reflect the multiple correlation of all of the Big Five variables.⁴

We hypothesized that the Big Five traits of Extraversion and Conscientiousness would be positively related to goals for achievement, power, and social ascension. The economic and political goal clusters most closely tap the domain of getting ahead in life because they reflect the acquisition of positions of power, wealth, and leadership. The pattern of Big Five multiple correlations for economic goals was consistent with our expectations. Both Extraversion ($\beta = .28$) and Conscientiousness ($\beta = .15$) were positively related to the economic goal scale. Interestingly, people who saw themselves as less Agreeable ($\beta = -.19$) and less Open to Experience ($\beta = -.27$) also desired highly successful and influential careers.⁵ Thus, economic goals were related to a profile of personality traits rather than one or two traits. We also examined the relationship between the Big Five and the single-item ratings of economic goals. High Extraversion and low Openness was the most consistent personality pattern across the individual items of the economic cluster, although one goal—"having a career"—correlated most highly with Conscientiousness. The configuration of personality correlates of economic goals is consistent with the picture of an energetic, hard-driven individual who prefers concrete activities to symbolic, abstract ideas and who tends to be less concerned about other people.

As hypothesized, Extraversion was positively associated with political aspirations ($\beta = .30$). However, we did not find support for the hypothesis that Conscientiousness would predict political goals. Instead, we found that Agreeableness was negatively related to political goals ($\beta = -.12$). Thus, the desire to lead and to wield power entails social facility and engagement, combined with a lower capacity for close connection with others.

We also hypothesized that Agreeableness would be positively related to goals for establishing closer ties to other people. The social and relationship goal clusters best exemplified the aspirations to "get along" with others. As expected, Agreeableness was positively related to social goals ($\beta = .27$). Similar to the pattern for economic goals, the pattern of Big Five correlates of social goals was configural. In addition to Agreeableness, social goals also were predicted by neuroticism ($\beta = .16$) and Openness ($\beta = .17$). This pattern of correlates was replicated for each of the items making up the social goal cluster. The positive association between neuroticism and social goals may reflect an elevated empathy and heightened

interpersonal sensitivity on the part of individuals with high levels of negative affect (cf. Aron & Aron, 1997). Because of their own needs, they may have an acute understanding of other people's problems and thus desire to help them.

Also consistent with our hypotheses, individuals high in Agreeableness tended to have higher relationship goals ($\beta = .13$). In addition, Extraversion ($\beta = .26$) predicted relationship goals. However, this pattern was not consistent across the individual goals comprising the domain. The desire to have a satisfying marriage or relationship was not predicted by any of the Big Five dimensions, which was most likely the result of the extremely skewed distribution and lack of variability in ratings of this goal. Finding it important to have children was related to higher levels of Extraversion, whereas desiring harmonious relationships with family members was associated with both Extraversion and Agreeableness. This pattern is consistent with the interpersonal nature of the relationship goals and the fact that interpersonal behaviors are associated with the Extraversion and Agreeableness domains (Wiggins & Trapnell, 1997).

As expected, Openness to Experience was strongly related to aesthetic goals ($\beta = .40$). Individuals high in Openness desired to participate in creative and aesthetic activities. The strongest relations at the item level were with goals to produce and support artistic activities, not with goals to become accomplished in the arts. This pattern indicates that Openness may be a better predictor of participation in creative cultural activities than a predictor of becoming an artist or musician.

We did not make predictions for hedonistic or religious goals; however, the findings were conceptually coherent. Hedonistic goals showed a complex set of associations with the Big Five. People who were more Extraverted ($\beta = .39$), more Open to Experience ($\beta = .12$), and less Agreeable ($\beta = -.13$) wanted to pursue more hedonistic activities. At the item level, the desire to have new and different experiences was related to being more Open and Extraverted. The desire to have fun was only associated with being Extraverted and the desire to have an exciting lifestyle was associated with high Extraversion and low Agreeableness. Religious goals showed little relation to the Big Five. At the item level, the goal to participate in religious activities was positively related to Extraversion and negatively related to Openness. The desire to devote attention to one's spiritual life was not predicted by any of the Big Five.

Together, the pattern of associations between the Big Five and major life goals suggests three conclusions. First, the magnitude of associations was modest; thus, researchers should not assume that life goals can be subsumed by personality traits or that personality traits can be subsumed within motive domains. Rather, they

TABLE 4: Multiple Correlation of Big Five Dimensions and Importance Ratings of Major Life Goals

Major Goal Clusters	NEO Big Five Dimensions					Multiple R
	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness to Experience	
Economic	.28*	-.19*	.15*	.04	-.27*	.42*
Having a high-status career	.23*	-.16*	.16*	.05	-.24*	
Having an influential and prestigious occupation	.27*	-.15*	.17*	.05	-.21*	
Having a high standard of living and wealth	.22*	-.24*	.09	.00	-.17*	
Having a career	.11*	-.06	.24*	.03	-.09	
Becoming a business executive	.17*	-.10	.05	.01	-.26*	
Make my parents proud	.21*	.01	.09	.09	-.17*	
Owning my own business	.15*	-.16*	.00	-.03	-.14*	
Aesthetic	-.02	-.08	-.06	-.03	.40*	.42*
Produce good artistic work	-.03	-.02	-.08	.00	.37*	
Becoming accomplished in one of the performing arts	.04	-.05	-.10	.01	.16*	
Be an accomplished musician	.01	-.06	-.05	-.07	.13*	
Supporting artistic activities and the fine arts	-.02	-.07	.03	-.03	.39*	
Write good fiction and prose	-.07	-.08	-.03	-.03	.37*	
Social	.07	.27*	.04	.16*	.17*	.39*
Working to promote the welfare of others	.00	.26*	.03	.13*	.16*	
Helping others in need	.10	.23*	.03	.14*	.14*	
Taking part in volunteer community and public service	.08	.21*	.06	.13*	.13*	
Relationships	.26*	.13*	.04	.03	-.06	.32*
Having a satisfying marriage/relationship	.09	.07	.08	.06	-.05	
Having children	.30*	.08	-.01	.00	-.09	
Having harmonious relationships with my parents and my siblings	.15*	.15*	.06	.02	-.04	
Political influence	.30*	-.12*	.03	-.04	.05	.32*
Be influential in public affairs	.29*	-.09	.03	-.04	.03	
Becoming a community leader	.26*	-.12*	.02	-.03	.06	
Hedonistic	.39*	-.13*	.03	.01	.12*	.43*
Having new and different experiences	.19*	-.07	.06	.02	.24*	
Having fun	.31*	-.07	-.03	-.02	.03	
Having an exciting lifestyle	.39*	-.15*	.04	.02	.02	
Religious	.08	.09	.01	.08	-.09	.16
Participating in religious activities	.12*	.08	.04	.08	-.19*	
Devoting attention to my spiritual life	.02	.09	-.03	.06	.03	
Personal growth goals ^a						
Feeling a real purpose in life	.16*	.05	.13*	.13*	.15*	
Having a job that is personally satisfying, even if it does not make me rich	-.04	.24*	-.03	.01	.25*	
Be well read	-.03	-.05	.06	.04	.36*	
Physical well-being goals ^a						
Being in good physical condition	.24*	.03	.14*	-.02	-.07	
Becoming an outstanding athlete	.22*	-.13*	-.05	-.12*	-.13*	
Theoretical goals ^a						
Preparing myself for graduate school	.07	-.04	.19*	-.02	-.03	
Become an authority on a special subject in my field	.16*	-.16*	.06	.03	.07	
Unclassified goals ^b						
Living in aesthetically pleasing surroundings	.16*	-.16*	.15*	-.01	.02	
Avoiding hard work	.02	-.13*	-.14*	.10	-.22*	
Having an easy life	.10	-.15*	-.08	.04	-.22*	
Earning enough to be comfortable, and no more	-.03	.13*	.00	.10	.06	
Being married to someone who has a career in addition to my own	.15*	.03	.11	.20*	-.04	
Being in a traditional marriage where the husband is the primary wage earner and the wife primarily cares for children	.05	-.12*	-.06	-.05	-.27*	

NOTE: $N = 630$.a. Multiple R s were not computed for the personal growth, physical well-being, or theoretical goals because these clusters were not internally consistent enough to compute unit-weighted scales.

b. Unclassified goals either failed to be classified into 1 of the 10 value dimensions or were dropped from the 10 categories based on internal consistency analyses.

* $p < .01$.

should be seen as complementary units of analysis. Second, the majority of life goals were associated with multiple Big Five dimensions. Thus, a configuration or profile of personality traits best predicted different values and life pursuits. Third, the most consistent pattern of correlates was high levels of Extraversion and low levels of Agreeableness. This pattern reflects a narcissistic personality profile (John & Robins, 1994).

What Kind of Major Life Goals Do Narcissistic Individuals Have?

Narcissism was a strong predictor of many major life goals. Consistent with previous research and theory, narcissism was positively correlated with hedonistic goals ($r = .38, p < .01$), economic goals ($r = .31, p < .01$), and political goals ($r = .30, p < .01$) and negatively correlated with social goals ($r = -.15, p < .01$). These relations reflect the self-directed orientation of narcissists and are consistent with the Big Five correlates reported above.⁶ Narcissism was not associated with relationship goals ($r = .11, p > .01$), religious goals ($r = -.03, p > .01$), or aesthetic goals ($r = .04, p > .01$).

To further explore the goals of narcissistic individuals, we also correlated narcissism with each of the individual goals. The highest positive correlations were to have a high standard of living and wealth ($r = .37, p < .01$), to have an exciting lifestyle ($r = .36, p < .01$), and to have an influential and prestigious occupation ($r = .30, p < .01$). The largest negative correlates of narcissism were to earn enough to be comfortable and no more ($r = -.22, p < .01$) and working to promote the welfare of others ($r = -.20, p < .01$). The overall pattern suggests that narcissistic individuals emphasize getting ahead more than getting along.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present study examined major life goals and their relation to individual differences in personality traits. We used value domains to organize goals into thematic clusters, examined mean levels and gender differences in life goals, and related life goals to the Big Five and narcissism. The successful classification of the majority of goals into one of the value domains suggests that values provide a good starting point for the development of a taxonomy of life goals. We showed that 7 independent value domains could be reliably assessed with a preexisting measure of major life goals. Subsequent investigations should explore whether reliable scales can be constructed for all 10 domains. This would provide a comprehensive set of nomothetic life goal domains, which would provide the basis for enhancing our understanding of the links between values, goals, and personality traits.

Generally, the students in our sample pursued goals centered on three central themes: love (getting along), work (getting ahead), and play. The most important goals were consistent with the life tasks and context of college-age students. The students' highest priorities were to have satisfying relationships and to have fun. Nonetheless, these students also had important aspirations for their career, personal growth, and maintaining their physical well-being. Thus, their goal profile was an appropriate combination of hedonistic aspirations and serious plans for the future.

Although we did find gender differences across the goals, the overall pattern for men and women was quite similar. The differences that we did find revealed subtle but potentially meaningful differences in goals related to gender-role attitudes. For example, women were more willing than men to sacrifice earnings for personally satisfying work. Combined with their high social goals, this may help explain why women are more likely to aspire to enter helping professions such as teaching and nursing, which tend to earn less than typically male-dominated work. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to endorse economic goals, which is consistent with the argument that men's "mate value" is defined by their earnings and status (Buss, 1995).

The pattern of results confirmed expectations drawn from the Socioanalytic model and from previous research; the goals that people pursue in life could be predicted by their personality traits. For example, all of the Big Five scales were significant predictors of at least one of the life goal clusters. Conversely, all of the life goal clusters, except for the religious cluster, were significantly correlated with at least one of the Big Five dimensions. These findings are consistent with research showing a link between the Big Five and midlevel motivational constructs (Kaiser & Ozer, 1994; King, 1995). Our findings showed that this relation exists for broader motivational constructs as well.

Drawing on Socioanalytic theory (Hogan, 1983; Hogan & Roberts, in press), we argued that major life goals are a critical link between dispositions and the many social contexts that people choose in their lives. According to Socioanalytic theory, people attempt to select roles that reinforce their identity. The links that we found between goals and traits were consistent with the Socioanalytic perspective that motivational components of one's identity mediate the relationship between personality traits and the life roles people choose. For example, the trait of Openness to Experience was strongly related to aesthetic goals, suggesting that creative individuals seek to confirm their identities through supporting and participating in concrete creative activities such as writing fiction and producing art. In addition, agreeable, open-minded individuals desired to support their

community, do volunteer work, and help the needy, thus reinforcing their identity as warm, caring individuals.

Two general patterns emerged across the goals. First, high Extraversion and low Agreeableness was the most common profile associated with major life goals. For example, highly extraverted and disagreeable individuals desired higher economic and political status and found prosocial activities undesirable. This goal-oriented personality profile maps onto the dimensions of high agency and low communion, otherwise known as unmitigated agency (Spence, 1984), and to the competitive-narcissistic quadrant of Leary's (1957) original conceptualization of the interpersonal circumplex. This interpretation was supported by the correlations between narcissism and life goals; narcissistic individuals strive for visible positions of power and influence and place relatively little importance on supporting others through prosocial activities. We see two possible interpretations of these findings. The first, consistent with the Socioanalytic interpretation above, is that narcissists have an identity that revolves around being the center of attention and taking credit for success, often to the detriment of their interpersonal relationships. Alternatively, narcissists may simply endorse more goals and have more extreme endorsement of goals than others as a way of fulfilling their sense of grandiosity. Therefore, the relatively strong pattern of correlations between the narcissistic personality profile and life goals could reflect narcissistic inflation rather than a deeper commitment to pursuing a wide range of life goals.

Which interpretation is correct will depend on the long-term outcomes associated with both goal striving and narcissism. Recently, researchers have debated the implications of narcissism, with some researchers favoring the traditional clinical view of narcissism as fundamentally maladaptive and others proposing that narcissistic illusions promote happiness and success. Clearly, extreme levels of narcissism (e.g., Narcissistic Personality Disorder) have maladaptive consequences in both interpersonal and work domains. However, even subclinical levels of narcissism have been associated with deficits in interpersonal relations and psychological well-being (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Colvin, Block, & Funder, 1995; Paulhus, 1998; Robins & Beer, 1999; Robins & John, 1997; Shedler, Mayman, & Manis, 1993; Wink, 1991). Furthermore, the economic goals pursued by narcissists are ultimately not as satisfying as interpersonal goals (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). Yet, in some contexts, narcissistic illusions and goal strivings may promote well-being and contribute to positive performance outcomes (Taylor & Brown, 1988). Hogan and Roberts (in press) argued that many features of the narcissistic personality are viewed favorably for leadership positions (e.g., charismatic, decisive). Combined with their aspira-

tions for positions of power, narcissists may be more likely to acquire leadership positions. Moreover, Feist (1993) showed that eminent scientists were characterized as being arrogant and hostile, that is, narcissistic, illustrating quite nicely that narcissistic tendencies, combined with the appropriate skills and goals, may be quite adaptive in some work contexts. Overall, then, the research literature paints an inconsistent portrait of narcissism and suggests that core aspects of narcissism such as self-enhancement are best viewed as "a mixed blessing" (Paulhus, 1998, p. 1207). It thus remains to be seen whether the high aspiration level of narcissistic individuals will ultimately translate into successful life accomplishments or simply dashed hopes and expectations and associated feelings of failure.

The second general pattern of relations between personality traits and life goals was the conspicuous absence of strong correlations between the Big Five trait of Neuroticism and major life goals. We attribute this to the fact that most of the goals reflect approach tendencies, which are more strongly associated with positive affect than negative affect. This also could help to explain the strong associations with Extraversion; Extraversion is associated with positive affect, whereas Neuroticism is associated with negative affect (Watson & Clark, 1992). This raises the possibility that individuals high in Neuroticism might orient their goal strivings toward life goals associated with avoidance (e.g., "Try to avoid conflict with my relationship partner," "Avoid being perceived as a failure by my parents") rather than toward the approach goals included in the present research.

Given the potential role that life goals play in shaping people's life paths, we feel that they deserve increased attention in longitudinal studies. Life goals are explicit, concrete intentions for future activities and thus should prove to be powerful predictors of how people structure their lives. As Holland (1997) noted, the occupation a person desires is one of the best predictors of future career choices and pursuits. The long-term implications of life goals are likely to be mediated by the everyday pursuits captured by personal strivings and other midlevel motives. Thus, fleshing out the full range of motivational units and establishing taxonomies of these units will provide valuable information for understanding how individuals attempt to construct their lives through who they are (traits) and who they want to be (goals).

NOTES

1. Rokeach also discussed "instrumental" values, which he defined as self-focused values emphasizing desired personality characteristics (e.g., valuing ambition, honesty, imagination). However, because terminal values are conceptually closer to life goals, we focused our review on these and similar value domains.

2. Before examining the relation between the Big Five and major life goals, we checked for content overlap. We found two items on the

NEO-Five Factor Inventory that refer to goals. Both items concern being goal oriented in general and have no specific content relevant to any of the life goals domains ("I work hard to accomplish my goals" and "I have a clear set of goals and work toward them in an orderly fashion"). The other 58 NEO items do not refer explicitly or implicitly to life goals but rather to specific behaviors, thoughts, and feelings.

3. In some studies of goals and values, the importance ratings are ipsatized to control for people indicating that all goals or values are important (e.g., Kasser & Ryan, 1996), essentially ipsatizing controls for overall level of aspiration in goal ratings. When we ipsatized the goal ratings, it mostly affected the patterns of correlations with Extraversion. In some cases, it reduced the magnitude of the Extraversion effects (economic, relationship, political influence, and hedonistic goal clusters), whereas in others it resulted in larger effects (e.g., aesthetic goal cluster). However, we think ipsatizing is not the best way to go because level of aspiration is meaningful (see Pomerantz, Saxon, & Oishi, 1999). Therefore, we report the results using the nonipsatized goal importance ratings.

4. Gender did not substantially moderate or mediate any of the relations between goals and the Big Five domains or narcissism.

5. The correlation between Conscientiousness and economic goals was lower than we expected. This, in part, may be the result of the NEO-Five Factor Inventory Conscientious scale confounding what Paulhus and John (1998) described as alpha and gamma facets of conscientiousness. The alpha facet of conscientiousness reflects a more agentic orientation (e.g., goal-directed, achievement oriented), whereas the gamma facet reflects a more communal orientation (e.g., conforming and doing socially appropriate activities). To test this idea, we conceptually sorted the Conscientiousness items into agentic and communal clusters and reran the multiple regression predicting economic goals. As suggested by Paulhus and John (1998), the economic goal cluster was more strongly related to the agentic facet of Conscientiousness ($\beta = .23$) than to the overall Conscientiousness scale ($\beta = .15$) or the communal facet of Conscientiousness ($\beta = .08$).

6. To test whether the Big Five dimensions mediated any of these effects, we conducted a series of multiple regression analyses predicting each life goal cluster from narcissism and the Big Five. The effect of narcissism was slightly lower in these analyses but it continued to have an independent effect on hedonistic ($\beta = .27$), economic ($\beta = .32$), and political goals ($\beta = .22$); the independent effect of narcissism on social goals was $-.08$ (*ns*). Thus, controlling for the Big Five did not substantially alter the narcissism findings.

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