

Research article

Quantifying self-motives: Functional links between dispositional desires

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Abstract

Previous research has sought to establish the existence, or gauge the relative strength, of key self-evaluation motives (i.e., self-enhancement, self-verification, self-assessment, self-improvement). Here, we attempted, across five samples, to quantify individual differences in self-motive strength and explore their empirical ramifications. We devised brief self-report indices for each self-motive and checked their factor structure, reliability, and validity. We found that self-enhancement covaried mainly with self-verification, and that self-assessment covaried mainly with self-improvement, thus validating key hypotheses regarding their functional links. Moreover, self-enhancement and self-verification covaried with positive personality traits, as well as with preferences for receiving positive feedback and perceptions of its accuracy. In sum, self-reported variations in dispositional self-motive strength form theoretically meaningful patterns. Copyright © 2011 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Self-consciousness, the hallmark of the human mind, is suffused with motivation. People do not merely cognize themselves as abstract entities; they also are swayed by self-relevant strivings. In philosophical jargon, the self is not only a Cartesian ego, politely pondering, but also a Schopenhauerian *Wille*, constantly craving. Inspired by this insight, empirically oriented psychologists have identified and investigated four cardinal *self-evaluation motives* (or *self-motives*) relevant to the development, maintenance, and modification of self-views. These are *self-enhancement*, *self-assessment*, *self-verification*, and *self-improvement* (Sedikides & Strube, 1995, 1997).¹

SELF-MOTIVES

Self-enhancement denotes the desire to *see oneself positively* (Alicke & Sedikides, 2011a; Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). It can involve either self-promotion (playing up one's positive attributes) or self-protection (playing down one's negative attributes). One commonly cited manifestation of self-enhancement is that, in defiance of statistical logic, most people rate themselves above-average on most personally important traits (Alicke & Govorun, 2005; Guenther & Alicke, 2010; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003).

Self-verification denotes the desire to *confirm a pre-existing view of self* (Swann, 1997; Swann, Rentfrow, & Guinn, 2003). The idea is that, by verifying that one is who

one already thinks one is, one can bolster the predictability and controllability of the social world, both epistemically—by making oneself more understandable—and pragmatically—by making one's social interactions smoother. A seeming manifestation of self-verification is that people with negative self-views choose to interact with those who corroborate their self-views rather than with those who dispute them (Giesler, Josephs, & Swann, 1996; Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989; Swann, Stein-Seroussi & Giesler, 1992).

Self-assessment denotes the desire to *know the truth about the self* (Trope, 1982, 1986). It involves an impartial search for objective facts about oneself rather than a biased search for preferred facts. One manifestation of self-assessment is that people choose difficult tasks that can yield accurate information about themselves over easy tasks that can only yield congenial information (Gregg, Sedikides, & Gebauer, 2011; Trope, 1979, 1980).

Finally, self-improvement denotes the desire to *make the self better than it currently is* (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Goldenberg, 2003; Taylor, Neter, & Wayment, 1995). It involves developing skills, abilities, and capacities in domains that are deemed to be personally important or central (Markus, 1977). One manifestation of self-improvement is that people often effortfully delay immediate gratification to achieve a long-term goal, for example, by forsaking fattening snacks to secure a svelte physique (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Heatherton & Nichols, 1994; Sedikides & Hepper, 2009).

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¹We do not suggest that these four motives constitute an exhaustive list. Additional motives (see Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Gollidge, & Scabini, 2006, for a review) include the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), the need to be effective and autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and the need to find existential meaning (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, & Schimel, 2004). However, the four motives on which we focus constitute a coherent class in that they are all *epistemologically* oriented: they shape the process whereby beliefs about the self form or change (Gregg et al., 2011).

PRIOR RESEARCH ON FEEDBACK-SEEKING

How then do people go about satisfying self-motives? One primary means of doing so is to solicit *feedback* likely to provide the desired information (Brown & Dutton, 1995; Hepper, Hart, Gregg, & Sedikides, in press; Sedikides, 1999). Hence, the operation of self-motives can be *indirectly inferred* from the sort of feedback that people seek. Thus, feedback-seeking provides an empirical lens through which to inspect the intrapsychic motivations of the self.

To date, several lines of research have sought, by examining patterns of feedback-seeking, to infer the presence or absence, or to gauge the relative priority, of self-evaluation motives (Hepper & Sedikides, in press; Sedikides & Hepper, 2009; Swann et al., 2003; Trope & Neter, 1994). For example, when self-reflecting in a neutral setting, people ask themselves questions whose answers predominantly (though not invariably) suggest they wish to self-enhance rather than self-verify, and self-verify rather than self-assess (Sedikides, 1993). This might be taken as showing that self-enhancement is *the* cardinal motive. However, self-enhancement is also demonstrably curtailed by a variety of factors. These range from plausibility constraints (Van Lange & Sedikides, 1998) to social norms (Tice, Butler, Muraven, & Stillwell, 1995), and from melancholy moods (Sedikides, 1992) to explanatory introspections (Sedikides, Horton, & Gregg, 2007). Moreover, the preference for self-enhancement over self-assessment is contingent: people prefer accurate feedback before making a decision but positive feedback after making it (Gollwitzer & Kinney, 1989) and prefer accurate feedback about malleable traits but positive feedback about stable ones (Dauenheimer, Stahlberg, Spreeman, & Sedikides, 2002). Equally contingent is the preference for self-enhancement over self-verification: depressed people opt for critical feedback that confirms their negative self-view over flattering feedback that refutes it (Giesler et al., 1996), people who like themselves nonetheless disdain excessive praise (Kwang & Swann, 2010), and couples report greater (and presumably, desired) intimacy to the extent that they share each others' self-views, positive or negative (De la Ronde & Swann, 1998).

Crucially, however, most of the above research has been of an experimental or quasi-experimental nature. Changes in some dependent variable—feedback-seeking or otherwise—have been interpreted as showing that, within a particular context, a self-motive is or is not operating, or is either stronger or weaker than some other self-motive. That is, evidence has been obtained either for the *bare existence*, or for the *relative dominance*, of some particular self-motives, in particular situations. However, this evidence does not bear on the issue of whether self-motives *vary at an individual level*. Do people differ in how much they desire to self-enhance, self-assess, self-verify, and self-improve?

To our knowledge, only two investigations have so far examined individual differences in self-motive strength. Neiss, Sedikides, Shahinfar, and Kupersmidt (2006) compared and contrasted, in a small sample of incarcerated male adolescents, the type of feedback that different participants ideally sought from several sources (e.g., parents, peers, partners). Participants generally preferred accurate to confirming feedback, with liking for positive and constructive feedback falling in

between. In a similar vein, Cai, He, Sedikides, and Gaertner (2010) compared and contrasted, in American and Chinese samples, the type of feedback undergraduate students wanted from various sources (e.g., parents, partners, teachers, peers). Here, participants in both cultures preferred positive feedback over accurate, improving, or confirming feedback.

Nonetheless, in research by Neiss et al. (2006) and Cai et al. (2010), the emphasis was restricted to quantifying average *levels* of motive strength: no attempt was made to explore *variations* in motive strength from a dispositional perspective. Clearly, however, such variations are likely to predict consequential variations in other key variables (e.g., personality traits, self-judgments, behavioral preferences), given that self-motives are theorized to exert a powerful psychological impact. Although attempts to quantify other individual differences in motivation are commonplace within social psychology (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein, & Jarvis, 1996; Cialdini, Trost, & Newsom, 1995; Dunton & Fazio, 1997; Emmons & McAdams, 1991; Robinson & Sedikides, 2009), no study has yet explored the nature or implications of similar differences in self-motive strength. The objective of the present research is to begin to remedy this deficiency.

OVERVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

We sought to create brief self-report scales to assess individual differences in self-motives (cf. Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001). To this end, we conducted five multipurpose studies (A, B, C, D, E). We began by testing whether our items exhibited the predicted factor structure (A, B, D). Next, we tested whether the scales they yielded possessed adequate inter-item consistency (A), test–retest reliability (B, D), content validity (C), and predictive validity (D). Finally, we examined how the four self-motives related to other key personality variable associated with positive self-views (i.e., high self-esteem, life satisfaction, extraversion) and negative self-views (i.e., low self-esteem, neuroticism) (A, B, E), and predicted the desired and perceived accuracy of vignettes featuring hypothetical feedback (B). In the latter two cases—and when examining the correlations between different self-motives (A, B)—we tested how well the data fit two general hypotheses about interrelated self-motive functions: the *assessment-with-improvement* hypothesis and the *verification-with-enhancement* hypothesis.

Assessment-with-Improvement

Sedikides and Skowronski (1997, 2003; see also Sedikides, Skowronski, & Dunbar, 2006) proposed that, over the course of human evolution, self-motives functioned adaptively to elicit information that promoted survival and reproduction. More specifically, they proposed that self-assessment and self-improvement functioned as an interactive pair of *learning* motives, the former leading to the acquisition of information about how one currently is, the latter to the acquisition of information about how to become better in future (Sedikides & Skowronski, 2000, 2009). They furthermore speculated (Sedikides & Skowronski, 2000, p. 104) that dispassionate

self-assessment might facilitate objective self-improvement. If this evolutionary theorizing is correct—and indeed, it is hard to imagine how effective self-improvement could take place in the absence of accurate appraisals of one's true status—then the two motives should converge empirically. In addition, a priori reasoning suggests that people might also seek to self-improve to self-assess. For example, pushing the boundaries of one's ability would be one way of obtaining feedback about those abilities. Admittedly, self-improvement does not seem to be a precondition for self-assessment in the same way that self-assessment does for self-improvement. Nonetheless, such reverse functionality, if present, should push for even greater empirical convergence between the motives.

Relation to Self-Views

How might the motives to self-assess and self-improve relate to people's self-views? Everyday intuition suggests that the more negatively people view themselves, the more they should seek to self-improve. However, this intuition may be mistaken. Research indicates that people with negative self-views disdain opportunities to endorse positive self-beliefs and to self-induce positive moods (Heimpel, Wood, Marshall, & Brown, 2002; Swann et al., 2003; Wood, Heimpel, & Michela, 2003), even though they would especially stand to benefit from such intrapsychic remedies. Their aversion to positive psychological change may stem from their belief that achieving change is unlikely (McFarlin & Blascovich, 1981; Wood, Heimpel, Newby-Clark, & Ross, 2005) and that therefore attempts at change are too ambitious (Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989; Josephs, Larrick, Steele, & Nisbett, 1992). In light of these findings, there are also grounds for predicting that, the more negatively people view themselves, the *less* they should seek to self-improve. If both processes operate, then the result may be a wash: the motives may not be strongly related either to personality traits associated with positive self-views (e.g., extraversion, high self-esteem) or with personality traits associated with negative self-views (e.g., neuroticism, low self-esteem).

Relation to Preferences for and Perceptions of Self-Descriptions

Finally, how should the motives to self-assess and self-improve relate to people's preferences that differentially favorable descriptions of themselves be true or false, and to perceptions that such descriptions are actually true or false? If self-assessment is about discovering the objective truth about oneself, then the motive should relate neither to truth-preferences nor to truth-perceptions: it should neither shape the former nor bias the latter. Moreover, if self-improvement is about making oneself better in the light of how one actually is, then the motive may inherit from self-assessment the same lack of relation with truth-perceptions. Still, one might predict that the motive to self-improve would correlate with truth-preferences—in particular, with preferring favorable descriptions of oneself to be true, and unfavorable ones false.

Verification-with-Enhancement

Self-verification theory (Swann et al., 2003) does not specify how the motives to self-enhance and self-verify functionally interrelate. The default assumption is that they should operate independently. If so, they should sometimes concur (i.e., among people with positive self-views) and sometimes conflict (i.e., among people with negative self-views). Indeed, Sedikides and Skowronski (2000) speculated that the two motives evolved to assist in the acquisition of very different types of adaptive information. Whereas self-enhancement yielded information promoting affective well-being, thereby fostering endurance and sociability, self-verification yielded information preserving stable self-views, thereby fostering prudence and continuity.

We suggest here, however, that the motives to self-enhance and self-verify often operate *in concert*. Suppose one views oneself positively, as most people do (Alicke & Sedikides, 2009; Sedikides & Alicke, in press; Sedikides & Gregg, 2008). If so, one can readily self-enhance by seeking feedback that verifies one's self-view, because that feedback is positive. Hence, the more one seeks to self-enhance, the more one should seek to self-verify—and vice versa. True, this functional interconnection may not obtain for people with starkly negative self-views. However, such people are in the minority. Hence, the motives to self-enhance and self-verify should be, normatively speaking, correlated.

The reverse dynamic may also underlie this correlation: that is, people seek self-enhancing feedback to self-verify. Specifically, if one's self-view is already positive, then one could, in principle, attempt to verify that self-view by seeking positive feedback, so as to “bolster [...] feelings of psychological coherence” (Swann et al., 2003, p. 369). However, given that people with positive self-views are already high in self-certainty (Campbell et al., 1996; De Cremer & Sedikides, 2005), the need for any such defensive bolstering may be less acute. Hence, this latter dynamic is liable to be of lesser importance (but see Swann & Pelham, 2002).

Relation to Self-Views

How might the motives to self-enhance and self-verify relate to people's self-views? Consider the motive to self-enhance. People with positive self-views self-enhance to greater extent or more successfully (Hepper, Gramzow, & Sedikides, 2010; Sedikides & Gebauer, 2010; Sedikides & Gregg, 2003). This should partly reflect a stronger motive to self-enhance, just as greater achievement partly reflects a stronger motive to achieve (McClelland, 1987). On the contrary, people with negative self-views, vexed by self-effacement, may also be keener to self-enhance, just as people previously poor can sometimes be more materialistic (Kasser, 2002). On balance, we expect that self-enhancement should covary directly with traits associated with positive self-views and inversely with traits associated with negative self-views—but only modestly and inconsistently.

As for the motive to self-verify, self-verification theory (Swann et al., 2003) makes no a priori prediction about its relative strength in people with positive versus negative self-views. The default assumption would appear to be that the

strength of the motive to self-verify does not covary with the valence of self-views: whatever one's self-view is, one should strive to maintain it to safeguard intrapersonal coherence and interpersonal harmony. However, if the motives to self-verify and self-enhance are functionally related in the majority of people, then one would expect the motive to self-verify to covary directly with traits associated with positive self-views, and inversely with traits associated with negative self-views.

Relation to Preferences for and Perceptions of Self-Descriptions

How should the motives to self-enhance and self-verify relate to people's preferences that differentially favorable descriptions of themselves be true or false, and perceptions that such descriptions are actually true or false? If self-enhancement is about wanting the truth about oneself to be positive, then the motive should relate both to truth-preferences and to truth-perceptions. In particular, the motive should (i) increase preferences for favorable descriptions and decrease preferences for unfavorable ones and (ii) bias perceptions that favorable descriptions are true and unfavorable ones are false. Moreover, if self-verification serves the same function as self-enhancement does, a similar pattern should emerge.

METHOD

Participants

All participants were University of Southampton undergraduates, except those in Study C, who were volunteers recruited from the internet. In studies A, D, and E, they were psychology students taking part for course credit; in Study B, they were mathematics students taking part for confections. Note that participants in studies A and D—drawn from the same pool in the same semester—partially overlapped (i.e., 22 participants took part in both studies).

For each of the studies, sample size, percentage of females, and mean age were as follows: Study A ($n=251$; 81%; 19.4); Study B ($n=102$; 30%; 19.3); Study C ($n=40$; 70%; 30.4); Study D ($n=96$; 90%; 19.8); and Study E ($n=195$; 85%; 20.5). Additional inquiries indicated that, in studies A and E, most participants were white (>94%) and British (>95%), whereas those in Study C (i.e., the internet sample) were mostly from USA (60%) with the remainder being from Canada, United Kingdom, or Australia.

Design and Procedure

Study A involved a single session, administered on computer. Participants completed measures of self-motives and personality traits as part of a larger battery of measures.

Study B involved three sessions, administered in class on successive days. During the first session, participants completed measures of self-motives; during the second, participants completed measures of self-motives and personality traits; and during the third, participants completed a criterion

measure involving the preferred truth and perceived accuracy of four differently valenced self-descriptions.

Study C involved a single session, administered online. Participants read four standardized descriptions, each corresponding to one self-motive (Appendix A). The content of the descriptions was crafted to articulate the meaning of each self-motive in accordance with its current and consensual scientific understanding. Each motive (neutrally designated by a capital letter) was characterized as involving a desire to meet some self-relevant goal, and as prompting people (i) to prefer partners or tasks conveying some type of feedback; (ii) to care about personally being some way; and (iii) to hope that their future would turn out some way. Care was taken to avoid linguistic overlap or semantic redundancy between the descriptions and their corresponding self-motive items. Initially, the four descriptions were shown one-by-one, in random order, to familiarize participants with them. Next, each description was again shown, in a different random order, accompanied by the eight self-motive items. Participants were instructed to rate each item in terms of how well it "capture[d] the meaning" of the motive described on a seven-point scale ranging from *very poorly* to *very well*.

Study D involved two sessions, administered between 1 and 4 days apart, the first on computer, the second in the laboratory. During the first session, participants completed the self-motive items, unobtrusively embedded in a large battery of unrelated measures. During the second session, they completed a problem-solving task in pairs. This involving 30-minute task required participants to build a bridge using only newspaper and adhesive tape. They were told that they would shortly receive feedback (never actually provided) about their individual task performance. Participants were then presented with summaries of four different types of feedback that were ostensibly available, each designed to satisfy one of the four self-motives. On the basis of the summaries, they rated how much they wanted to receive each feedback type. A subset of 60 participants from Study D (98% female, $M_{AGE}=19.3$) completed the self-motive items again as part of a battery of measures in a different study between 5 and 9 months later ($M_{MONTHS}=7.87$).

Finally, Study E involved three sessions, administered on computer on successive days. During the first session, participants completed measures of self-motives and all personality traits except self-esteem. During sessions 2 and 3, participants completed measures of self-esteem, which were subsequently averaged to enhance simplicity and reliability.

Measures

Self-Motives

Eight self-motive items were administered. Each featured a seven-point scale with descriptors ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Four items inquired into the type of *feedback* people *liked to hear* about themselves,² another four into the type of *facts* people *wanted to discover* about themselves (Appendix B). Thus, two items were designed to measure each self-motive. For brevity, we will use the prefixes

²Study E featured only these four items.

H- (for “hear”) and D- for (“discover”) to denote these two types of items.

Self-Esteem

Participants completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), a 10-item questionnaire balanced for positive and negative items ($\alpha \approx .90$).³ Each item featured either a seven-point scale (studies A and B) or a four-point scale (Study E). Sample item: “I feel that I have a number of good qualities.”

Life Satisfaction

Participants in studies A, B, and E also completed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Pavot & Diener, 1993; $\alpha \approx .85$). This five-item measure featured a seven-point scale, with descriptors ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Sample item: “The conditions of my life are excellent.”

Extraversion and Neuroticism

Participants in Study E completed two 7-item subscales, one assessing extraversion ($\alpha \approx .87$), the other neuroticism ($\alpha \approx .88$), drawn from the 44-item version of the Big Five Inventory (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998). In studies A and B, a briefer instrument, featuring two items per subscale (adjusted split-halves: extraversion $r \approx .77$; neuroticism $r \approx .68$) was administered (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003). All items featured a seven-point scale, with descriptors ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Sample items: [I see myself as someone who] “...is enthusiastic” (extraversion), “...can be moody” (neuroticism).

Impression Management

Participants in Study E completed the 20-item impression management subscale ($\alpha = .74$) of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding, Version 7 (Paulhus, 1998), an index of socially desirable responding. Items featured a seven-point scale ranging from *not at all like me* to *very much like me*. Sample item: “I never cover up my mistakes.”

Criterion Variables

Desire for Expected Feedback (Study D)

In their follow-up session, participants in Study D were notified that they would receive feedback about their problem-solving abilities on the basis of their videotaped task performance. Specifically, they were notified that expert raters would provide feedback later in the form of short written summaries, and that they would now have the opportunity to request none, some, or all of the summaries for subsequent perusal. Four types of summary were identified on the basis of their titles. Each summary ostensibly contained information designed to satisfy one of the four self-motives.

³Internal consistency coefficients are given approximately, given sample multiplicity.

Participants were offered summaries whose titles promised to provide feedback: “... [about] the ways in which you are a particularly *excellent* problem-solver” (self-enhancement); “... [providing] an *honest* assessment of the type of problem-solver you *really* are” (self-assessment); “... that *confirms* what you *already believe* about your problem-solving abilities” (self-verification); and “...[about] your problem-solving *potential*” (self-improvement). Participants indicated how much they wanted to receive each feedback summary on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*a very great deal*).

Self-Descriptions: Truth Preferences and Accuracy Perceptions (Study B)

In their follow-up session, participants in Study B read four descriptions “of the sort that a clinical psychologist might write” and imagined that each had been written about them (see Bosson, Brown, Zeigler-Hill, & Swann, 2003, for the full text). The descriptions ranged from depicting someone with a definite “negative attitude” towards themselves (*very unfavorable*), to someone who has “some difficulty” liking themselves (*unfavorable*), to someone who feels “pretty good” about themselves (*favorable*), to someone which thinks “extremely highly” of themselves (*very favorable*). For each description, participants rated on seven-point scales (i) how much they ideally wanted it to describe themselves and (ii) how accurately they believed that, in fact, it described themselves.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Structure of Self-Motive Items

If each item pair adequately assessed a distinct self-motive, then a four-factor model should fit the data best. We duly performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test this model. To obtain a sufficiently large sample, we combined the data from studies A, B, and D.⁴ The total sample, after removing participants with missing data, numbered 426 (74.6% female; $M_{\text{AGE}} = 19.50$). For the CFA, each self-motive was modeled as a latent variable with two indicators (the H-item and D-item). All four self-motives were let correlate freely. This model fit the data exceedingly well, $\chi^2(14) = 20.69$, $p = .11$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .03, SRMR = .03. All items loaded significantly onto their respective factors, $\beta_s > .63$, $ps < .001$, and the estimated correlations between factors were low-to-moderate in size (Table 1). In addition, the four-factor model fit the data significantly *better* than both (i) a single-factor model in which all items defined a single factor, $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 185.59$, $p < .001$, and (ii) a two-factor model in which self-assessment and self-improvement items defined one factor, and self-enhancement and self-verification the other, $\Delta\chi^2(5) = 78.66$, $p < .001$. This structural evidence provides discriminant validity for the four self-motive indices, and suggests that,

⁴Data from Study E could not be used in CFA because participants completed H-items only. For the 22 participants who completed both studies A and D, data were retained for the study which they completed *first* chronologically (resulting in use of Study A data from 10 participants and Study D data from 12 participants). By the same logic, data from Session 1 (not Session 2) of studies B and D were used here.

Table 1. Correlations between self-motive latent factors

	Enhancement	Assessment	Verification
Enhancement	—		
Assessment	.02	—	
Verification	.37***	.27***	—
Improvement	.01	.58***	.11

Note: $n = 426$, combined across non-redundant and non-missing data in studies A, B, and D. Correlations are estimated from the confirmatory factor analysis solution.

*** $p < .001$.

despite significant interrelations, they are indeed distinct constructs (Kline, 2005).

Reliability of Self-Motive Indices

Inter-Item Correlations

We measured each self-motive with one H-item and one D-item. If item pairs were internally consistent, then correlations between conceptually corresponding H-items and D-items should be generally greater than those between conceptually *non*-corresponding H-items and D-items, even allowing for the possibility of some meaningful examples of the latter (e.g., particular correlations predicted by the assessment-with-improvement and verification-with-enhancement hypotheses, further discussed below).

Table 2 depicts the relevant correlation matrices for studies A and B.⁵ In both studies, the on-diagonal correlations, reflecting item pair internal consistency, exceeded the off-diagonal correlations. In particular, the ratio of the mean on-diagonal correlation to the mean off-diagonal correlation was 4.9:1 in Study A and 2.8:1 in Study B. Moreover, the within-motive inter-item correlations were comparable with those reported for other published two-item scales, such as the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (Gosling et al., 2003: on-diagonal $r_{\text{MEAN}} = .66$; off-diagonal $r_{\text{MEAN}} = .26$; ratio = 2.5:1).

Thus, the H-items and D-items converged coherently. That is, in terms of item phrasing, what people liked to hear about themselves, they also wanted to discover about themselves. Together with the excellent-fitting CFA model, this gave us sufficient grounds for averaging across each pair of self-motive items in all subsequent analyses. For brevity, we label the resulting indices *enhancement*, *assessment*, *verification*, and *improvement*. Descriptive statistics for these indices in studies A and B are also shown in Table 2.

Test-Retest Reliability

In Study B, self-motives were measured on two occasions, 2 days apart ($n = 57$). Moreover, in Study D, self-motives were

⁵Here and elsewhere, we report only a subset of the possible analyses that could be run on our data. These subsets are selected to address optimally questions of interest. In the present case, for example, we excluded data from Study D because Study A featured a higher n (given their partial overlap, only one could be chosen), and we excluded data from Study E because it featured H-items only. In addition, we used data from Session 2 rather than Session 1 of Study B, because they were administered as part of a larger data collection, just as in Study A. Nonetheless, the corresponding analyses for studies B and D yielded nearly identical results (Study B, session 1: on-diagonal $r_{\text{MEAN}} = .45$, off-diagonal $r_{\text{MEAN}} = .07$, ratio_{ON-OFF} = 6.24:1; Study D: on-diagonal $r_{\text{MEAN}} = .53$, off-diagonal $r_{\text{MEAN}} = .10$, ratio_{ON-OFF} = 5.16:1).

measured on two occasions, an average of 7 months apart ($n = 60$). We computed two indices of test-retest reliability for each sample: one *raw* index, reflecting the simple correlation between self-motive indices across occasions; and one *disattenuated* index, reflecting that correlation adjusted for the internal consistency of each index (Table 3). The internal consistency was computed as the inter-item correlation adjusted upwards in line with the Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991, pp. 74–117).

Overall, the raw test-retest correlations across 2 days were similar in size to the corresponding inter-item correlations. Those across 7 months were smaller but nonetheless statistically significant. However, given that test-retest correlations are attenuated by random error in each measured index, disattenuated correlations arguably provide a better estimate of the stability of the latent construct. For all self-motive indices except improvement, the estimated stability of the latent constructs across 2 days approached unity, and for all self-motive indices, the estimated stability over 7 months was moderate in size. This suggests that the self-motives, with the exception of self-improvement, vary only modestly over a 2-day period, and may even remain reasonably stable over a 7-month period.

Validity of Self-Motive Items

Having established that our self-motive items exhibited a sound factor structure, and that the self-motive indices exhibited adequate levels of reliability, we sought evidence of their validity. In particular, we investigated the content of the items and the predictive validity of the indices.

Content Validity

Study C examined how closely online raters linked each self-motive item with a theoretical description of the motive it was designed to measure (Table 4). If participants judged that each self-motive item fit the corresponding description well but fit the three *non*-corresponding descriptions poorly, then that would be evidence that the content of the items reflected the meaning of the constructs they were designed to measure. To test this, we first conducted, on the eight ratings associated with each of the self-motive descriptions, a within-subjects analysis of variance with 2 (item type: H-item versus D-item) $\times$ 4 (self-motive assessed: enhancement versus assessment versus verification versus improvement) design. For all four descriptions, a significant effect emerged for self-motive (range $F_{s[3,177]}$: 27.63–45.29; all $ps < .0005$) but not for item type (range $F_{s[3,177]}$: 3.95–0.46; all $ps > .05$). Given the latter finding, we averaged H-item and D-item ratings for subsequent analyses.

Next, for each self-motive description, we averaged the ratings accorded to *non-corresponding* items (e.g., for the enhancement description, we averaged the ratings for items designed to measure assessment, verification, and improvement). We then statistically compared these averaged non-corresponding ratings with the ratings for *corresponding* items (e.g., for the enhancement description, the ratings for items designed to measure enhancement). In all four cases, a significant difference emerged (range $F_{s[3,177]}$: 41.73–81.22; all

Table 2. Studies A and B: intercorrelations between H-items and D-items and descriptive statistics for the four self-motive indices

	H-Enh	H-Asm	H-Ver	H-Imp	Mean <i>r</i> on-diagonal	Mean <i>r</i> off-diagonal	Mean (<i>SD</i>) for index
Study A							
D-Enh	.48***	-.02	.14*	-.04	0.49	0.10	5.66 (1.00)
D-Asm	-.04	.45***	.13*	.27***			5.55 (0.94)
D-Ver	.11	.18**	.58***	.04			5.22 (1.15)
D-Imp	-.00	.34***	.05	.45***			5.04 (1.13)
Study B							
D-Enh	.46***	.07	.32**	.14	0.59	0.21	5.90 (0.88)
D-Asm	.18	.72***	.30**	.24*			5.67 (0.96)
D-Ver	.38***	.11	.62***	.11			5.16 (1.02)
D-Imp	.18	.34**	.12	.55***			5.22 (1.02)

Note: The prefix "H-" denotes items beginning "I like to hear...". The prefix "D-" denotes items beginning "I want to discover...". "Enh", "Asm", "Ver", and "Imp" respectively denote items designed to assess the enhancement, assessment, verification, and improvement self-motives. Inter-item reliabilities for each self-motive pair are listed in the diagonals extending from the top left to the bottom right, both on the upper (Study A, $n = 251$) and lower (Study B, $n = 102$) parts of the table. Means (standard deviations in parentheses) refer to the combined index (i.e., average across H-item and D-item) for each self-motive.

Values rendered in bold represent within-construct correlations; values rendered in regular font represent between-construct correlations.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 3. Studies B and D: internal consistency and test-retest reliability of self-motive indices

Reliability index	Enhance	Assess	Verify	Improve
Study B				
Internal consistency	.63	.77	.71	.84
Raw test-retest	.59	.72	.65	.50
Disattenuated test-retest	.94	.94	.92	.60
Study D				
Internal consistency (T1)	.76	.74	.62	.67
Raw test-retest	.33	.56	.34	.29
Disattenuated test-retest	.45	.79	.60	.53

Note: Internal consistency was computed by adjusting each item-pair correlation in line with the Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula ($2r/[1 + r]$). Raw test-retest reliability reflects simple correlations between indices across sessions 1 and 2 (Study B [$n = 102$]: 2 days; Study D [$n = 60-96$]: 5-9 months). All raw correlations are significant at $p < .05$. Disattenuated test-retest reliability reflects those correlations adjusted to compensate for their imperfect internal consistency.

Table 4. Study C: ratings of conceptual fit between self-motive descriptions and self-motive items

Self-motive items	Self-motive descriptions			
	Enhance	Assess	Verify	Improve
Enhance H	6.48	3.83	4.33	3.85
Enhance D	6.65	4.20	4.40	4.48
Assess H	3.78	6.45	4.03	4.35
Assess D	3.43	6.40	4.00	4.40
Verify H	4.80	4.55	6.18	3.85
Verify D	4.50	4.35	6.48	3.48
Improve H	3.80	3.90	3.33	6.13
Improve D	3.78	4.10	3.53	6.43

Note: $n = 40$. Ratings of conceptual fit ("Please rate each of the items below in terms of how well it captures the meaning of the motive described") were given on a 1 (very poor) to 7 (very well) scale. Numbers in boldface font represent ratings of conceptual fit for corresponding descriptions and items. Numbers in regular font represent ratings of conceptual fit for non-corresponding descriptions and items.

$ps < .0005$). In addition, none of the averaged non-corresponding ratings differed significantly from the scale midpoint, $ts(39) < 0.66$, all $ps > .52$. However, all the corresponding ratings significantly exceeded not only the midpoint (value = 4) on the seven-point scale, $ts(39) > 14.94$, all $ps < .0005$ but also the value of 6, $ts(39) > 2.09$, all $ps < .05$.

Taken together, these findings provide evidence of discriminant content validity. That is, the content of the items for each self-motive item map on to the concepts they were designed to

measure but *not* the other self-motive concepts, in so far as they are understood by everyday raters.

Predictive Validity

Study D examined whether the self-motives could predict, specifically and uniquely, levels of desire for corresponding types of feedback offered 1-4 days later in an unrelated setting. In particular, we tested whether each self-motive would (i)

significantly predict desire for each corresponding type of feedback; (ii) do so to a greater extent than for non-corresponding motives; and (iii) continue to do so even when the impact of other self-motives was statistically controlled for.

Table 5 displays the standardized regression coefficients (β s) obtained when we simultaneously regressed the desire for each of four types of feedback in turn (i.e., enhancing, assessing, verifying, improving) on all four self-motives. Some evidence of predictive validity emerged, particularly when one bears in mind that the self-motive items were pitched very generally, whereas the outcome variables pertained to a specific scenario (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974). In particular, controlling for all other self-motive indices, verification, and improvement significantly predicted desire for verifying and improving feedback, respectively, and enhancement and assessment marginally predicted desire for enhancing and assessing feedback, respectively. In addition, the significant β s for verification and improvement each exceeded the three competing β s in each corresponding regression, and the marginal β s for enhancement and assessment each exceeded two of the three competing β s in each corresponding regression. (Further discussion of significant off-diagonal values occurs below.)

Interrelations Between Self-Motives

We proceeded to test whether the four self-motives were related to one another as predicted. Taken together, the assessment-with-improvement and verification-with-enhancement hypotheses predict that assessment should be linked to improvement, and verification to enhancement, more strongly than any other pair of self-motives should be linked to one other.

Evidence supporting these predictions emerged from the correlations in studies A, B, and D between latent factors in CFA (Table 1). Of the three significant intermotive paths, one was between enhancement and verification, and one between assessment and improvement. Moreover, whereas these two paths did not significantly differ, $\Delta\chi^2(1)=0.71$, $p=.40$, the third significant association, between assessment and verification, was significantly smaller than both, $\Delta\chi^2(1)=4.78$, $p<.03$.

Earlier analyses also yielded results in line with both the assessment-with-improvement and verification-with-enhancement hypotheses; these now bear mention. Consider the significant off-diagonal correlations between H-items and D-items (Table 2). Three of five in Study A and four of five in

Study B occurred either between assessment and improvement items, or between verification and enhancement items. In addition, consider the pair of significant off-diagonal β s between the self-motive indices and desire for feedback in Study D (Table 5). One occurred between improvement and the desire for assessing feedback, and the other occurred between enhancement and the desire for verifying feedback. Thus, even in these preliminary analyses, patterns consistent with the assessment-with-improvement and verification-with-enhancement hypotheses emerged, further corroborating both.

Correlations Between Self-Motives and Personality Traits

We next examined the link between each self-motive and four key personality traits. In line with the verification-with-enhancement hypothesis, we predicted that verification would correlate positively with positive personality traits (i.e., self-esteem, life satisfaction, and extraversion) and negatively with negative personality traits (i.e., neuroticism). Across the three studies (A, B, and E), this prediction was generally upheld, despite some null findings (Table 6, column 3 for each study). Participants were keener to confirm their identity when it consisted of congenial characteristics, and keener to dispute it when it consisted of uncongenial ones. Moreover, the correlations obtained for enhancement (Table 6, column 1 for each study) were directionally similar to those obtained for verification (i.e., all coefficients for positive traits were positive), even though they were less consistently significant.

As for improvement (Table 6, column 4 for each study), the only significant correlations to emerge involved self-esteem (in two studies) and neuroticism (in one). Interestingly, the direction of these significant correlations was in line with the counterintuitive proposition that, the better one already thinks of oneself, the better one seeks to become. Assessment (Table 6, column 2 for each study) showed a roughly similar pattern. This provided a measure of modest support for the assessment-with-improvement hypothesis.

Both results above speak to the perennial issue of whether mental health is better fostered by entertaining positive illusions about oneself or by evaluating oneself realistically (Colvin & Griffo, 2007; Marshall & Brown, 2007; Sedikides, Gregg, & Hart, 2007). Positive traits (like self-esteem, life satisfaction, and extraversion) tend to be adaptive, whereas negative ones (like neuroticism) tend to be maladaptive (Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2005; Kokkonen & Pulkkinen, 2001; Neiss et al., 2005; Pavot &

Table 5. Study D: regression of desire for each type of feedback at time 2 on all four self-motive items at time 1

Feedback type	Self-motive predictors (β s)				Overall R^2
	Enhance	Assess	Verify	Improve	
Enhancing	.19 [†]	.00	-.03	.19 [†]	.07
Assessing	.02	.19 [†]	.09	.28*	.17**
Verifying	.22*	-.08	.27**	.08	.17**
Improving	-.08	.14	.11	.43***	.28***

Note: $n=96$. Beta weights for self-motive items predicting their corresponding feedback type (i.e., indicators of predictive validity) are listed in the diagonal extending from the top left to the bottom right.

[†] $p<.10$; * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$.

Table 6. Studies A, B, and E: correlations between self-motives indices and personality traits

Personality trait	Study A				Study B				Study E			
	ENH	ASM	VER	IMP	ENH	ASM	VER	IMP	ENH	ASS	VER	IMP
Self-esteem	.14*	.21**	.47***	.13*	.44***	.05	.51***	.27*	.09	.04	.22**	-.14
Life satisfaction	.09	.15*	.39***	.06	.38***	-.01	.16	.16	.21**	.10	.25***	.12
Extraversion	.11	.07	.33***	.02	.27*	.16	.33**	-.01	.02	.15*	.16*	-.01
Neuroticism	-.05	-.25***	-.25***	-.19**	-.13	-.32**	-.27*	-.13	-.13	-.09	-.20**	.02
Impression management	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-.07	-.07	.05	.09

Note: ENH = enhancement; ASM = assessment; VER = verification; IMP = improvement.

Study A: $n = 251$. Self-motive indices in Study B ($n = 102$) were averaged across sessions 1 and 2. In Study E ($n = 195$), self-motive indices were derived from H-items only, and self-esteem scores were averaged over two sessions.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Diener, 1993; Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004). On balance, the obtained pattern more strongly implicates enhancement as a marker for mental health than assessment, whereas the former showed positive correlations with self-esteem and life satisfaction that replicated more than once, the latter did not.

Finally, in Study E, impression management showed only negligible and non-significant correlations with all self-motives. This reassuringly suggests that scores on each index were not an artifact of social desirability. Moreover, correlations between self-motives and personality traits remained virtually unchanged when impression management was partialled out (i.e., r values altered by less than .04, or 1% of variance).

Reactions to Self-Descriptions

Truth Preferences

As Table 7 illustrates, enhancement correlated positively with wanting favorable self-descriptions to be true (except in one case) and negatively with wanting unfavorable self-descriptions to be true. The success of this straightforward prediction affords confidence in the validity of the enhancement index. Also as predicted, a similar but weaker pattern emerged for verification, with significant effects obtained for two of the four coefficients. The combined pattern broadly supports the verification-with-enhancement hypothesis. In addition, and again as predicted, assessment did not correlate with truth-preferences. However, contrary to prediction, improvement also did not correlate with truth-preferences.

Accuracy Perceptions

As Table 7 illustrates, enhancement correlated positively with seeing the favorable self-descriptions as accurate, and negatively with seeing the unfavorable self-descriptions as accurate. Furthermore, an equally clear pattern emerged for verification. The combined pattern again supports the verification-with-enhancement hypothesis. In contrast, neither assessment nor improvement correlated significantly with accuracy perceptions.

Table 7. Study B: correlations between self-motives and truth preferences and accuracy perceptions for self-descriptions of varying valence

Self-description valence	Self-motives			
	Enhance	Assess	Verify	Improve
Truth preferences				
Very unfavorable	-.45***	-.10	-.18	.02
Unfavorable	-.45***	-.11	-.23*	.08
Favorable	.31**	.19	.17	.17
Very favorable	.21	.16	.40***	.21
Accuracy perceptions				
Very unfavorable	-.34**	-.20	-.35**	-.09
Unfavorable	-.31**	-.22	-.38**	-.04
Favorable	.48***	.11	.41***	-.08
Very favorable	.24*	.18	.47***	-.02

Note: $n = 102$.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this article was to capture individual differences in self-motive strength for the first time. Previous research has confined itself to either demonstrating the existence of particular self-motives, or to comparing their relative strength on average. However, by quantifying relevant individual differences, and by exploring their empirical ramifications, we set out to deepen our understanding, not only of each self-motive in isolation but also of how each self-motive related to the others, and of how each self-motive covaried with feedback preferences, personality traits, and self-perceptions.

We began by devising two-item indices of each of the four cardinal self-motives. Checks indicated that the two-item indices showed evidence of internal consistency, test-retest reliability, content validity, and predictive validity that, although somewhat variable, was usually satisfactory and sometimes strong. Importantly, CFA established that the indices exhibited a coherent factor structure, and that no item was redundant with any other. The evidence that a four-factor model fit the data better than two- or one-factor models, coupled with the

evidence that items conceptually fit their corresponding motive but not any non-corresponding motive, also supports the discriminant validity of the four indices.

Next, drawing on prior theory and findings, we put forward two broad hypotheses: the verification-with-enhancement hypothesis—that people seek to confirm their identities when they want them to be positive, and the assessment-with-improvement hypothesis—that people seek out objective personal information when they seek to effect positive personal change. Most basically, these hypotheses predict, respectively, higher correlations between the motives to self-verify and self-enhance, and higher correlations between the motives to self-assess and self-improve. Both these predictions received repeated empirical confirmation.

In addition, the two hypotheses predict a broadly concurrent pattern of external correlations for each self-motive pair. For the enhancement/verification pair, such a pattern emerged. In particular, both the enhancement and the verification index in general correlated positively with positive personality traits, and negatively with negative personality traits. Furthermore, both the enhancement and the verification indices correlated positively with wanting and perceiving favorable self-descriptions to be true, and negatively with wanting and perceiving unfavorable self-descriptions to be true.

In respect of the assessment/improvement pair, however, the relevant external correlations were only sporadically significant. Hence, substantial conclusions are hard to draw. We can only offer here two post hoc speculations. First, poor improvement-related coefficients could have been a consequence of the improvement index being simultaneously responsive to (i) the perceived *need* for self-improvement and (ii) the perceived *likelihood* of achieving it. People who view themselves negatively, seeing more flaws in themselves, may seek to improve more, so as to flee their undesired self (Heppen & Ogilvie, 2003). At the same time, however, they may not expect to improve as much, being more inclined towards pessimism (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994), and so may scale back their aspirations to avoid self-disappointment, being more inclined towards caution (Josephs et al., 1992). The upshot is that scores on the improvement index could shift in contrary directions as self-views became more negative, thereby curtailing external correlations. Second, the poor assessment-related coefficients may have partly resulted from the dispassionate nature of the self-assessment motive. Participants may have been interested in obtaining self-knowledge for its own sake (Loewenstein, 1994), or to make meaningful sense of themselves (Heine, Proulx, & Vohs, 2006), rather than merely as means to self-improve (see Gregg et al., 2011, for further discussion of interrelated self-motive dynamics).

Limitations and Implications

The fledgling research outlined in this article illustrates the promise of construing self-motives, not as monolithically fixed entities struggling for preeminence but as dispositionally varying entities capable of interacting functionally. The very fact that some self-motives covary suggests that, far from being isolated impulses, they are meaningfully related. Moreover, the ways in which self-motives covary hint at how they might be related. So too do their patterns of external correlation and prediction. Admittedly, some of latter were patchy, and many

of our findings were more suggestive than conclusive. Possibly, the modest internal consistency and predictive validity of our items itself contributed to this state of affairs. Nonetheless, let us here try to draw out at least one implication of the patterns we observed.

Our most consistent finding was that the motives to self-verify and self-enhancement hand in hand—both in terms of their intercorrelations and in their patterns of external correlation. Arguably, it presents a challenge to self-verification theory (Swann et al., 2003). This theory postulates that identity matters *in itself* (Gregg, 2009; Gregg et al., 2011). Indeed, identity seems to matter so much—as a means of safeguarding psychic coherence and interpersonal harmony—that people with negative self-views welcome criticism that confirms their self-views and disdain flattery that undermines them (Swann, Wenzlaff, Krull, & Pelham, 1992; Swann, Wenzlaff, & Tafarodi, 1992). Several findings cited in support of self-verification theory suggest that people with negative self-views court criticism as eagerly as people with positive self-views court flattery. For example, Swann et al. (1989, Study 3) found that an identical proportion of participants (85%) opted to interact with prospective evaluator who shared their self-views, regardless of whether those self-views were positive or negative. Similarly, Giesler et al. (1996) found that, whereas most participants with high self-esteem (75%) opted for a positive personality summary, just as many participants with low self-esteem or depression opted for a negative personality summary (64% and 82%, respectively).

Can such findings, and their standard interpretation, be reconciled with the motives to self-verify and self-enhance being intimately intertwined? Suppose people self-verify. To the extent that they now also (i) self-enhance and (ii) see themselves positively rather than negatively, two consequences follow. First, they will often seek to confirm their identity not *only* for epistemic or pragmatic reasons but *also* for egotistical ones. And second, they will seek to confirm their identities *more eagerly* to the extent that those identities are positive rather than negative. Note that the second consequence implies that people with positive and negative self-views should *not* self-verify to an equal extent—contrary to what the symmetrical findings of Giesler et al. (1996) and Swann et al. (1989) suggest (and for nonsymmetrical findings, see Bernichon, Cook, & Brown, 2003; Carnelley, Ruscher, & Shaw, 1999; Rudich, Sedikides, & Gregg, 2007; Sedikides & Green, 2004). We welcome future empirical work to resolve this paradox. Meanwhile, although our findings do not exclude the possibility that self-verification does more than merely subserve self-enhancement, they do suggest that this is one of its key functions.

The fact that self-motives are potentially *multifunctional* deserves comment. Such multifunctionality might explain, for example, why despite strong correlations between the motives to self-assess and self-improve, these motives did not align identically with external variables (although low correlations complicate interpretation). In general, the roles specified by the assessment-with-improvement and verification-with-enhancement hypotheses do not exhaust all possible roles that self-motives might play. For example, the motive to self-enhance might be tactically satisfied not only by engaging in self-verification but also by engaging in self-assessment and

self-improvement (Sedikides, 2009; Sedikides & Luke, 2008; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). After all, if one believes that one is objectively positive, then one might seek objective information about oneself expecting it to be positive. Alternatively, if one wishes to self-evaluate positively in the future, then one might attempt to self-improve in the present to provide sufficient justification later. Why, then, would the motive to self-enhance not go together with the motives to self-assess and self-improve too?

The answer, we contend, is that only when the links between self-motives are particularly robust and liable to be situationally invariant do correlations emerge at a dispositional level. That is, we suspect that there is something *intrinsic* about the links between self-verification and self-enhancement, and between self-assessment and self-improvement. In the first case, the subjective appeal of positive self-evaluation implies that, when one's self-view is positive, it is always a pleasure and rarely an effort to keep checking that one's self is as one desires it to be, whereas when one's self-view is negative, it is always a pain and often a struggle to do so. In the second case, a necessary precondition for self-improvement is that objective self-assessment take place, because unless it does, there is no way to know which weaknesses one needs to remedy and which strengths one can rely on. In contrast, the dynamic links between other self-motive combinations are looser. For example, although one can self-enhance by self-improving, there are other ways to self-enhance (Alicke & Sedikides, 2011b; Dunning, 2005; Sedikides & Gregg, 2003) and other reasons to self-improve (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Green, Sedikides, Pinter, & Van Tongeren, 2009; Pyszczynski et al., 2003).

Prospects for Future Research

The present research represents a first foray into new territory. Our brief measures of the four self-motives exhibited reasonable psychometric properties and yielded some theoretically interpretable findings. Nonetheless, more extensive and sensitive measures could yet be devised, and additional forms of validation could yet be explored. For example, implicit approaches to motive assessment are often useful tools for circumventing unawareness or evasiveness (Cai et al., 2011; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Gregg & Sedikides, 2010; McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989). Still, we would argue that explicit approaches can still capture many relevant components of the underlying constructs. In the present case, we found negligible correlations between all four self-motives and impression management, suggesting that our findings are not compromised by socially desirable responding. Further forays into self-motive measurement are liable to add value to our exploration of the "Schopenhauerian" self—a locus of motivation as well as cognition.

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APPENDIX A

Self-Motive Descriptions (Study C)

Self-motive	Description
Enhancement	Motive P is people's desire to feel Positive about themselves (or to avoid feeling negative). This motive makes people <u>think and behave</u> in particular ways. (i) It makes them prefer tasks or people that imply they are performing particularly well. (ii) It makes them care about whether they are superior. (iii) It makes them hope that their personal future will be especially bright.
Assessment	Motive A is people's desire to gain an Accurate idea of who they are (or to avoid developing an inaccurate one). This motive makes people <u>think and behave</u> in particular ways. (i) It makes them prefer tasks or people that provide good information about their performance levels. (ii) It makes them care about how they really stand. (iii) It makes them curious about how their personal future will turn out.
Verification	Motive C is people's desire to maintain a Consistent view of who they are (or to avoid developing an inconsistent one). This motive makes people <u>think and behave</u> in particular ways. (i) It makes them prefer tasks or people that confirm they are performing at the levels they expect to. (ii) It makes them care about whether they are still the same as they always were. (iii) It makes them hope that their personal future will be similar to their present.
Improvement	Motive S is people's desire to achieve Self-development goals (or to avoid failing to achieve them). This motive makes people <u>think and behave</u> in particular ways. (i) It makes them prefer tasks or people that help them to raise their performance levels. (ii) It makes them care about what progress they are making towards achieving self-development goals. (iii) It makes them hope that their self-development goals will be achieved in the future.

Note: Extra formatting in original.

APPENDIX B

Self-Motive Items

Self-motive	Items
“Hear” (H-items)	<i>In general, I LIKE to hear...</i>
Enhancement	... that I am a GREAT person
Assessment	... the TRUTH about me as a person
Verification	... that I am the TYPE of person I THINK I am
Improvement	... that I can be a BETTER person
“Discover” (D-items)	<i>In general, I WANT to discover...</i>
Enhancement	...that I have EXCELLENT qualities
Assessment	...what I HONESTLY am like
Verification	...that I am how I ALREADY see myself
Improvement	...that I can IMPROVE myself

Note: Capitalizations also present in items shown.