On Being Yourself: Investigating the Personal and Contextual Underpinnings of Accurate Self-Expression in First Impressions

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Abstract

Revealing one's unique personality has been linked to various important processes, such as being better liked initially and over time (Human et al., 2020; Mignault, Kerr, & Human, 2022), as well as being more satisfied with oneself and one's life (Human, Mignault, et al., 2019; Mignault, Heyman, et al., 2021). Despite these potential benefits, people vary widely in their tendency to reveal who they truly are to others (Human & Biesanz, 2013). Indeed, whereas some people are *good targets* or high in *expressive accuracy*, with a tendency to be seen in line with their unique personality, others are far more mysterious; not as easily understood by perceivers. Therefore, I developed a research program to investigate the extent to which expressive accuracy is within one's control. In Chapter 1, I investigate people's *awareness* of the extent to which others accurately perceive them (Mignault, Heyman, et al., 2022). In Chapter 2, I examine whether the advice to "be yourself" *enhances* people's tendency to be a good target (Mignault, Kerr, & Human, 2022). In Chapter 3, I explore how *the shift to teleconferencing* may influence expressive accuracy and its predictors (Mignault, Tissera, & Human, *in prep*).

In Chapter 1, I employed an in-person round-robin paradigm, involving brief dyadic getting-acquainted interactions, across two studies. In Study 1, I found that people have "global expressive accuracy awareness": those who believed they had a general tendency to be seen accurately indeed had their personality profiles more accurately perceived on average across their newly acquainted peers. In Study 2, I showed that people also have "dyadic awareness": when targets reported feeling more accurately perceived by a given interaction partner, their personality profiles were indeed more accurately perceived by that specific partner. In addition, across studies, *actually being accurately perceived* was associated with well-being above and

beyond the tendency to *report feeling accurately perceived*, highlighting that benefits of expressive accuracy may occur independently of one's beliefs or awareness.

But although awareness could facilitate control, it may not inevitably enable it. Thus, I next tested directly whether people could increase their expressive accuracy. In Chapter 2, using a video-interview study, I examined whether a simple experimental manipulation, instructing people to "be yourself" led people to have their unique personality profiles more accurately perceived. Indeed, interviewees instructed to be themselves were seen more accurately by perceivers viewing the videos, especially on their more observable and more evaluative self-aspects. In turn, those more accurately perceived were deemed more likable.

In Chapter 3, to examine the role of factors outside our control, I capitalized on the global shift to virtual communication as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and designed a round-robin paradigm via the Zoom teleconferencing platform. In this virtual context, I first demonstrated that people have, on average, similar expressive accuracy levels as those found in the lab. Next, in line with our prior in-person work (Human, Mignault, et al., 2019; Mignault, Heyman, et al., 2022), well-being emerged as a consistent predictor of the good target to a similar extent via teleconferencing as in the lab. However, poorer audio-video quality was linked to lower expressive accuracy and to a reduced influence of well-being on expressive accuracy. These results have important implications as we transition to a mode of interaction more reliant on these teleconferencing platforms, where audio-video quality may play an important role in smooth, positive, and accurate interpersonal interactions.

In summary, by investigating psychological and social predictors of accurate personality expression, my research program makes important contributions to the field of accuracy as well as, more broadly, to the fields of personality and social psychology.

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Résumé

La tendance à révéler les aspects uniques de notre personnalité est liée à divers processus importants, comme le fait d'être davantage apprécié par les autres (Human et al., 2020; Mignault, Kerr, & Human, 2022), ainsi que d'être plus satisfait de soi-même et de sa vie (Human, Mignault, et al., 2019; Mignault, Heyman, et al., 2021). Cependant, les gens varient considérablement dans leur tendance à révéler qui ils sont réellement (Human & Biesanz, 2013). Alors que certaines personnes ont une grande « justesse d'expression », une tendance à être vues selon leur personnalité unique, d'autres personnes sont plus mystérieuses; avec une personnalité plus difficile à décoder. Par conséquent, j'ai développé un programme de recherche pour étudier le contrôle que nous avons sur notre justesse d'expression. Dans le chapitre 1, j'examine si les gens ont conscience de leur tendance à être vue de façon juste (Mignault, Heyman, et al., 2022). Dans le chapitre 2, j'examine si le conseil « sois toi-même » encourage la justesse d'expression (Mignault, Kerr, & Human, 2022). Dans le chapitre 3, j'explore comment le contexte de vidéoconférence peut influencer la justesse d'expression (Mignault et al., en préparation).

Dans le chapitre 1, j'ai dirigé deux études impliquant un paradigme de tournoi à la ronde; de brèves interactions en dyades durant lesquelles les gens font connaissance. Dans l'étude 1, j'ai constaté que les gens ont une « conscience globale » de leur justesse d'expression : ceux qui rapportaient *croire* qu'ils sont généralement perçus de façon juste étaient en effet perçus plus justement en moyenne lors de leurs interactions. Dans l'étude 2, j'ai montré que les gens ont également une « conscience dyadique » : lorsque les gens déclaraient se sentir perçus plus justement par un partenaire d'interaction spécifique, leurs profils de personnalité étaient effectivement perçus plus précisément par ce partenaire. En outre, dans les deux études, le fait *d'être* perçu avec exactitude était associé au bien-être au-delà de la tendance à *se sentir* perçu

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avec exactitude, ce qui souligne que les avantages de la justesse d'expression peuvent émerger indépendamment de l'expérience subjective.

Malgré que la conscience puisse faciliter le contrôle, elle n'en est pas un précurseur impératif. Dans le chapitre 2, j'explore donc de façon plus directe le contrôle sur la justesse d'expression. À l'aide d'une étude par entretien vidéo, j'ai examiné si une simple manipulation expérimentale, consistant à dire aux participants « d'être soi-même », leur permettait d'être perçus de façon plus juste par d'autres participants visionnant leur entretien vidéo. En effet, les participants dans la condition expérimentale ont été perçus de façon plus juste par les gens visionnant leur vidéo, et ce davantage pour certains aspects de leur personnalité, soit les plus visibles et les plus évaluatifs.

Dans le chapitre 3, pour explorer le rôle des facteurs contextuels en lien avec la pandémie de COVID-19, j'ai conçu un paradigme de tournoi à la ronde via vidéoconférence. J'ai d'abord démontré que les gens ont un niveau de justesse d'expression similaire lors d'interactions par vidéoconférence et lors d'interactions en personne. Ensuite, le bien-être a émergé comme prédicteur de la justesse d'expression dans une mesure similaire via vidéoconférence et en personne. Cependant, une qualité audio-vidéo inférieure était liée à être vu de façon moins juste et moins positive, ainsi qu'à une influence réduite du bien-être sur la justesse d'expression. Ces résultats ont des implications importantes puisque nous utilisons de plus en plus la vidéoconférence comme moyen de communication.

En résumé, par l'étude des facteurs psychologiques et sociaux sous-tendant l'expression juste de la personnalité, ma recherche contribue au domaine de la perception interpersonnelle et, plus globalement, aux domaines de la personnalité et de la psychologie sociale.

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Contribution to Original Knowledge

Chapter 1 provides the first empirical test of whether people know the extent to which they are accurately perceived. Over the past decades, meta-accuracy research had examined whether people know how they are perceived, inviting participants to rate how they think others view them on a series of self-aspects (e.g., Kenny & DePaulo, 1993; Carlson & Furr, 2009; Tissera et al., 2020). In the present manuscript, we meaningfully extend this prior work, asking participants a higher-order, more abstract question: how accurately they believed that their personality as a whole tends to be perceived. Our present work shows that people indeed are aware of the extent to which they are accurately perceived by others. This was the case both at a global level, with people knowing the extent to which people in first impressions generally view them accurately, and at a dyadic level, with people calibrating their in-the-moment beliefs to the extent to which specific perceivers accurately view their unique personality profile. This bears important implications: although awareness may not be necessary for behavioural change, it could potentially facilitate it, for example by leading people to adjust their expressive accuracy levels based on contextual demands. Another major contribution of this work was that expressive accuracy was associated with well-being independently of expressive accuracy beliefs or awareness. As such the subjective experience of *feeling* accurately perceived may not be necessary to benefit from expressive accuracy.

The second manuscript in my dissertation, with an experimental manipulation instructing target participants to *be themselves*, provides the first direct test of the malleability of expressive accuracy. Indeed, although prior research showed increases in expressive accuracy with a self-presentation manipulation to put one's best face forward (Human et al., 2012), we demonstrate that people can, on demand increase how accurately they express their unique personality profile,

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when specifically asked to do so. Further, with an in-depth exploratory investigation of mechanisms, we demonstrate that the manipulation enhances the provision of more self-relevant cues, shedding light on the likely pathway through which the common advice "be yourself" may take effect. Considering the well-researched benefits (e.g., Human et al., 2013; 2020), and adaptive correlates (Human et al., 2019; see Mignault & Human, 2019 for review) of being accurately perceived, this straightforward, simple experiment increasing expressive accuracy lays the foundation for future, more complex interventions in higher stakes contexts, such as with clinical and organizational populations.

The third manuscript capitalizes on the shift to videoconferencing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, to examine whether expressive accuracy levels and predictors of expressive accuracy are different in this novel context. We found that people have similar levels of expressive accuracy in videoconferencing as in person, and that multiple well-being indicators found to predict expressive accuracy in person similarly predict expressive accuracy via videoconferencing. However, we found one notable context-related difference: poor audio-video quality significantly hindered the accuracy and positivity of impressions, and reduced the links between well-being and expressive accuracy. The present work bears important implications. First, people may maintain similar levels of expressive accuracy despite important contextual shifts. Second, good audio-video quality, facilitated through high-speed Internet, may be consequential for accurate and positive perceptions, potentially leading those who can access and afford high-speed Internet to have an advantage in videoconferencing first impressions.

Contribution of Authors

I am the first author of all three chapters of the present thesis.

For the first chapter, I conducted the data collection of Study 1 with Jennifer Heyman and Lauren Gazzard Kerr. Dr. Lauren Human supervised all aspects of the study from its inception to manuscript preparation. Study 2 was conducted at the University of British Columbia, by Dr. Jeremy Biesanz. Jennifer Heyman and Dr. Lauren Human contributed to developing the research question for this manuscript. I analyzed the data and wrote the manuscript. All co-authors, namely Jennifer Heyman, Dr. Jeremy Biesanz, and Dr. Lauren Human read, edited, and approved the final manuscript, published in the *Journal of Research in Personality*.

For the second chapter, I utilized a dataset from a study conducted by Dr. Lauren Human and Lauren Gazzard Kerr. Under the guidance of Dr. Lauren Human, I developed the research question, analyzed the data, and prepared the manuscript for publication. Both co-authors, namely Lauren Gazzard Kerr and Dr. Lauren Human, read, edited, and approved the final manuscript, published in *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.

For the third chapter, I designed the videoconferencing study with Hasagani Tissera. I also contributed to conducting the in-person study. Hasagani and I were responsible for cleaning the data. I subsequently analyzed the data and prepared the manuscript for publication. Both coauthors, namely Hasagani Tissera and Dr. Lauren Human, contributed to manuscript preparation. This manuscript is currently in final stages of preparation for submission.

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General Introduction

La beauté commence au moment où vous décidez d'être vous-même. – Coco Chanel (1883-1971) (Beauty begins the moment you decide to be yourself.)

Je me construirai une force, où je me réfugierai à jamais, je veux vivre la grande aventure d'être soi. – Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986)

(I will build strength in which I will forever seek refuge, I want to live the great adventure of being myself.)

There is something inherently alluring in the notion of *expressing one's true self*. For some, such as Coco Chanel, it might be the glow that emanates from unwavering confidence and composure, and for others, like Simone de Beauvoir, the thrill at the start of a meaningful life journey. Philosophers and humanistic psychologists would certainly agree that being true to oneself reflects a "transcendence of the environment, independence of it, ability to stand against it" (Maslow, 1968, p. 180), a signal of great psychological well-being and inner strength (e.g., Harter, 2002; Kierkegaard, 1943/1843; Maslow, 1968; Rousseau, 1964/1761; Sartre, 1943). More recently, personality accuracy researchers have reached similar conclusions: well-adjusted people reveal to others, even in first impressions, their unique personalities (Colvin, 1993a; Colvin, 1993b; Human & Biesanz, 2011; Human et al., 2014; Human et al., 2019; Human et al., 2020). Yet, despite the positive processes associated with being true to oneself, and the spread of folk wisdom on how *being yourself might be good for you*, we persist in concealing, minimizing, or overemphasizing aspects of ourselves, with some of us doing so more than others. In fact,

people differ widely in their tendency to accurately express who they are to others; some are just like open books, with their personalities being easy to read, and others are quite mysterious, difficult for perceivers to decipher and understand (Human & Biesanz, 2013). This then begs the question: How much control do we have over the extent to which we express our true selves? To what extent, to put it in Chanel's terms, is expressing your true self something that you simply decide to do? And to what extent, to put it in de Beauvoir's terms, is it a feat that may only be attainable with an overwhelming amount of inner strength?

In the present thesis, across a series of first impressions studies, I investigate the following question: **To what extent is accurate personality expression within a person's control?** I target this question on three levels: I begin by examining on a cognitive level, whether people are *aware* of the extent to which they come across as who they truly are to new acquaintances. But despite likely facilitating the control of accurate self-expression, awareness may not be a necessary antecedent of one's ability to control nor may it systematically enable it. With this in mind, I next investigate on a behavioural level, whether people can *enhance* how much they reveal about themselves. Finally, I explore the extent to which *environmental forces*, namely the shift to videoconferencing, can influence the amount of control we have in terms of accurately expressing our personalities.

In the present review of the literature, I will first define what I mean by accurate personality expression which, going forward and following the literature on the topic, I refer to as *expressive accuracy* (Biesanz, 2010; Human, 2009) or being a *good target* (Funder, 1999). Next, I will explain the critical role of good targets in the overall accuracy process. Then, I will follow with the characteristics of good targets – the factors which may lead someone to be accurately perceived by others. I will also briefly touch on the established and posited benefits of

being a good target. Lastly, before delving into the present research, I will discuss the potential moderating effect of personality trait characteristics, namely observability and evaluativeness.

Literature Review

Defining Expressive Accuracy

Expressive accuracy (Biesanz, 2010; Human, 2009), which has also been labeled the *good target* (Funder, 1999), *judgablility* (Colvin, 1993a, 1993b), *expressiveness* (Riggio & Friedman, 1986), *legibility* (Ambady et al., 1995), and *readability* (Thomas & Maio, 2008), reflects the tendency to reveal aspects of the self to others. To approximate this tendency, we examine the extent to which a target's unique personality characteristics are accurately perceived on average across a number of perceivers.

A Realistic Indicator of Personality

To investigate how accurately people express their unique personality, we first need an accuracy criterion against which to map on perceiver impressions, or in other words, a realistic indicator of what a target's actual personality might be (Funder, 1995). There is no perfect indicator of someone's actual personality, as no source – even the self – holds all the information about who a person really is. For example, some personality characteristics might be more observable to others because they have behavioural manifestations, such as how talkative someone is. In that case, close-other reports might be especially reliable. In contrast, some traits, such as how tense or how forgiving someone tends to be, might not always be so observable, or only observable to a select few, because they are more internal in nature (Funder & Dobroth, 1987). In such a case, the self may be the best person to ask. Although self-reports can be, and have certainly been, used as the benchmark for targets' personalities (e.g., Human, Carlson, et al., 2020), across the studies presented within this thesis, we indexed targets' personality based

on the composite of self- and close-other reports. We used this accuracy criterion as it is deemed a gold standard in accuracy research, increasing reliability and offsetting possible bias present in self- or close-other ratings alone (e.g., Funder, 1995; Beer et al., 2019; Rogers & Biesanz, 2019).

A Profile Approach to Accuracy

Next, to obtain an index of how accurately a person generally is seen by others, we map this realistic indicator of a target's personality onto a series of newly-acquainted perceivers' impressions. Given that we are interested in, holistically, how a target tends to be accurately perceived in terms of their overall personality, we use a profile approach to accuracy (for detailed discussions of the profile approach see Back & Nestler, 2016; Biesanz, 2010; Borkenau & Leising, 2016; Hall et al., 2017; Furr, 2008; Rogers, Wood, & Furr, 2018). That is, instead of estimating accuracy for each personality trait one at a time – which gives you an index of how accurately each *trait* is perceived – we estimate the extent to which perceivers see targets in line with their realistic indicator of personality across a wide range of personality items simultaneously – which gives you an index of how accurately each *target person* is perceived. For example, can Pablo the Perceiver accurately perceive that Tata the Target is more reliable than assertive and more assertive than relaxed?

The Social Accuracy Model

A key problem to overcome in accuracy research is that perceivers can achieve quite high levels of accuracy by merely supposing that a target is like the average person (Cronbach, 1955). Indeed, people have a general sense of what the average person is like, and they tend to rely on this bank of information when judging a new acquaintance (Rogers & Biesanz, 2015). As such, this tendency prevents us from discerning whether Tata is perceived by Pablo as more assertive than relaxed because she is revealing those unique aspects of herself, or because that is merely how the average person tends to be.

Therefore, to assist us in separating the average person's profile from a target's idiosyncratic self-aspects, we use the Social Accuracy Model (Biesanz, 2010; 2020). With this approach, we can break down profile accuracy into at least two components: *normative accuracy* and *distinctive accuracy*.

Normative Accuracy. To examine normative accuracy, we first obtain "normative means": the average target self-rating on each item, taken from the entire sample, such as the mean of the whole sample on "assertive" (which, hypothetically, could be a 5.5 on a 7 point scale), and then on "relaxed" (which could be a 4.5 on a 7 point scale). *Normative accuracy* would then reflect the extent to which perceivers' impressions align with the average person's profile in the sample. As such, if Pablo rated Tata as a 6 on assertive and a 4 on relaxed, he would likely be viewing Tata with high normative accuracy. But would he be viewing Tata in line with her unique profile of personality characteristics, above and beyond her similarity to the average person?

Distinctive Accuracy. To answer this question, we examine *distinctive accuracy*: the extent to which perceivers view a given target in line with how that target is different from the average person. To disentangle what is unique about a target from how they align with the average person, we remove the normative mean on each item from that target's realistic indicator score for that item. Recall the prior example, in which the average person's ratings are 5.5 for assertive and 4.3 for relaxed. If Tata and her close others rate her as a 6.1 on assertive and a 4.1 on relaxed, subtracting normative means would yield respective distinctive scores of 0.6 and - 0.2, revealing that she is *even more* assertive than relaxed compared to the average person. With

this example, Pablo's respective scores of 6 and 4 would likely demonstrate that he indeed views her with distinctive accuracy; accurately perceiving that she is much more assertive than relaxed relative to the average person. In parallel to reflecting profile, within-target accuracy, this approach also reflects average item-wise between-target accuracy, such as perceiving whether Tata is more assertive than others and less relaxed than others (Biesanz, 2020). Thus, we define *expressive accuracy* as the extent to which a person's personality profile is perceived with distinctive accuracy above and beyond that person's tendency to be perceived normatively, on average across multiple perceivers.

It is important to highlight that the normative, average person's profile is quite socially desirable, with correlations between normative means and social desirability ratings generally above r = .80 (Edwards, 1953; Rogers & Biesanz, 2015; Wood & Furr, 2016). In other words, the normative profile not only contains variance due to the average target's personality, but also variance due to targets' motivation to rate themselves based on the items' evaluative tones, such as "is a reliable worker" – which is desirable – and "starts quarrels with others" – which is not (Leising et al., 2013; Rogers & Biesanz, 2015; Wessels et al., 2020). Therefore, in addition to depicting how a perceiver's impression is in line with the average profile, normative accuracy also reflects viewing a target in line with what is positive and socially desirable. To resolve this issue, social desirability – and other sources of bias such as assumed similarity – can be incorporated and examined within the Social Accuracy Model (e.g., Kerr, Tissera, et al., 2020). This can be especially useful considering that normative accuracy and social desirability are found to have independent associations with personal and social outcomes (Rogers & Biesanz, 2015; Wessels et al., 2020).

With this in mind, researchers have recommended caution in interpreting normative information when social desirability is not partialled out and vice-versa (Wessels et al., 2020). In the present thesis, our chief goal was to investigate underpinnings of targets' tendency to be seen with *distinctive accuracy*. Therefore, across the studies presented, we purposely chose to control for this blended indicator of normative and socially desirable information (Wood & Furr, 2016), and thus exert caution in interpreting results with normative accuracy.

An additional confound to note with the normative accuracy index, is that it can represent not only an accurate understanding of the average person but also, an *accurate understanding of how the target's personality aligns with that of the average person*. This is because, by subtracting the normative information from the target's realistic indicator to get distinctive scores, the extent to which the target aligns with the average person is incorporated into the normative means. Therefore, when perceivers perceive targets in line with the normative profile, they may be perceiving what is specifically normative about them (Biesanz, 2020).

Furthermore, distinctive accuracy is independent of normative accuracy and evaluatively neutral, as people could differ from normative means both in desirable and non-desirable ways, such as being more or less assertive than the average person (see Kerr, Tissera, et al., 2020, for detailed discussion). Lastly, the SAM enables a separation between variance attributable to the target and to the perceiver. Given that we are interested in targets' tendency to have their unique personalities accurately perceived by others, we average targets' distinctive accuracy scores across all of their perceivers, to tap people's general tendency to express who they truly are.

The Role of the Target in Accurate Personality Perceptions

But what might be the reasoning behind devoting a research program to the target of others' perceptions, instead of focusing on the perhaps more intuitive role of perceivers in the overall accuracy process?

Bearers of a wealth of information about themselves, targets are critical to the initial stages of impression formation. According to the Realistic Accuracy Model developed by Funder (RAM; 1995), perception accuracy is attained via four steps: (1) targets must make *relevant* personality cues (2) *available* to perceivers, (3) who then must *detect* the cues and (4) *appropriately utilize* them. Targets have an immediate impact on the first two stages, as they first, deliberately or not, reveal cues that can be relevant or irrelevant to their personality (Andersen, 1984; Human et al., 2014; Letzring & Human, 2014; Letzring et al., 2006), and second, as they display those cues in a way that is available or visible for judges to see (e.g., Human et al., 2014; Letzring et al., 2006). But targets could also foster accuracy by playing a role in perceivers' tendency to detect and appropriately utilize cues, for example, via attributes or behaviours that attract judges' attention and heighten their motivation to be accurate (Human et al., 2012; Lorenzo et al., 2010; Tissera et al., 2022).

Thus, according to this model, targets have the power to affect each stage of accurate impression formation. This is indeed also true for perceivers, with some perceivers who may be especially skilled at eliciting high quality self-disclosure from targets, for example by making targets feel more at ease (Letzring, 2008). However, that targets have the most direct influence on the first two stages is especially important, given that the RAM is, by nature, a multiplicative process. That is, it is not possible to achieve accuracy by skipping any of the RAM stages. As such, it is essential to first and foremost make relevant cues available, especially because

perceivers will naturally be inclined to detect the cues they are exposed to (New et al., 2007), and make inferences based on those cues (Human et al., 2019), even when cognitively distracted (Gilbert et al., 1988). Illustrating this multiplicative process, research shows that people differ widely in their tendency to be a good target, but cluster around the average in their tendency to be a good perceiver (Human & Biesanz, 2013), suggesting that any difference in accuracy is much more likely to be driven by the target. Indeed, when observing and interacting with good targets, differences in perceivers' abilities are amplified (Rogers & Biesanz, 2018), suggesting that perceptive skills may only be useful when forming impressions of people who express themselves accurately.

Therefore, with the core of the responsibility for the first two stages, targets are at least equally, and possibly more, important than perceivers in the accuracy of personality impressions (see Mignault & Human, 2019; for review). While the RAM infuses the overall work of this thesis, inspiring an in-depth investigation of the target, we leverage this framework in Chapters 2 and 3 to probe specific stages in which expressive accuracy underpinnings may take root.

Characteristics of the Good Target

Given the essential role of the target in impression formation, then it follows to wonder: what makes someone an *especially good* target? In this section, we examine consistent predictors of accurate expressive tendencies for each of the RAM stages (see Mignault & Human, 2019; for review). We devote a special focus to the relevance stage, where the most consistent predictors of expressive accuracy have emerged, including *well-being* and *personality coherence*, which are most relevant to the present thesis. Then, we also briefly touch on predictors at the availability, detection and utilization stages, to anchor how the target may be implicated in those stages as well.

Cue Relevance

Here, we discuss the role of personality coherence and well-being, as well as the role of other predictors, including self-knowledge, and power, in leading targets to provide relevant cues of themselves to perceivers.

Personality Coherence. Arguably, one of the most effective ways to provide cues of one's personality to others might be through behavior (see Human et al., 2019). Then perhaps the most proximal indicator of cue relevance may be the tendency to behave in a way that is consistent, following a predictable pattern of personality characteristics, broadly termed *personality coherence* (Allport, 1937, 1955; Cervone & Shoda, 1999). A variety of indicators have been used to represent this construct, including self-reported behaviour consistency, personality stability over time, and personality-behaviour congruence.

People who *self-report behaving consistently* across a variety of situations and roles tend to be viewed by their close others more in line with their self-reported personality (Baird et al., 2006; Bem & Allen, 1974; Cheek, 1982; Kenrick & Stringfield, 1980; Zuckerman et al., 1989; but see Chaplin & Goldberg, 1984; Paunonen & Jackson, 1985). Further, *temporal stability in behaviour*, measured via experience sampling (Baird et al., 2006) or personality ratings completed once per week over the course of three weeks (Biesanz et al., 1998; Biesanz & West, 2000), has also been associated with agreement between self- and close-other ratings of personality.

Most pertinent to the present thesis, recent research using the Social Accuracy Model (Biesanz, 2010; 2020), has examined distinctive *personality-behaviour congruence*, behaving in line with one's unique personality profile in daily life or in the lab, an index obtained by controlling for the normative, average person's behaviour profile (Human et al., 2014; 2019).

This research demonstrated that those high in distinctive personality behaviour congruence tend to be more accurately perceived in first impressions, in line with their distinctive personality profiles (Human et al., 2014; 2019). For example, if Tata, whose personality includes being more reliable than the average person, consistently provides cues of how reliable she is by behaving in an especially reliable manner across contexts, such as always being on time to meetings, and keeping her promises to her friends, she is then more likely to be perceived as more reliable than average by others in future encounters, even if those encounters are relatively brief, such as when she runs into Pablo for the first time at the corner store.

It appears that, out of all stages, personality coherence may indeed be most influential at the relevance stage. Evidence for this comes from personality-behavior congruence research, showing that targets tend to be perceived in line with how they behave, regardless of the extent to which the behaviour is congruent with the target's personality (Human et al., 2019). This indicates that new acquaintances may not differentiate relevant from irrelevant cues, and may infer a target's personality based on whichever information the target provides. Therefore, congruent behavior is likely to predict accuracy, not because perceivers are able to detect or utilize those behavioural cues to a greater extent, but because those congruent behaviour cues are of higher quality.

We explore personality coherence in Chapter 2, in the form of distinctive personalitybehaviour congruence, in testing whether a manipulation aimed at enhancing expressive accuracy works by leading people to behave more congruently with their unique personality (see Chapter 2, Supplementary Online Materials).

Well-Being. Well-being may be one of the most consistent predictors of the tendency to be a good target. Philosophers and humanistic psychology have long professed that those who

have high well-being may more readily embrace what makes them unique, regardless of contextual pushes and pulls (e.g., Harter, 2002; Kierkegaard, 1943/1843; Maslow, 1968; Rousseau, 1964/1761; Sartre, 1943). Personality accuracy research provides substantial empirical support for this theory, with findings that well-adjusted people, who generally have high in selfesteem, life satisfaction, and lower depressive tendencies tend to be viewed with distinctive accuracy, and not too normatively or positively (Colvin, 1993b; Human & Biesanz, 2011a, Human et al., 2014; 2019; Human, Carlson, et al., 2020). The association between target wellbeing and expressive accuracy is found in a variety of contexts, such as platonic first impressions (Human et al., 2014; 2019), romantic first impressions (Kerr, Borenstein-Laurie, & Human, 2020), peers and objective observers (Colvin, 1993a; 1993b), and on social media (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020). Further, there is recent work which shows that well-adjusted targets consistently express their unique personality more accurately than their less-adjusted counterparts across different contexts (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020).

Why might well-being specifically promote *cue relevance*? A key mechanism may be reflected in the long-theorized link between well-being and greater personality coherence (Block, 1961; Campbell et al., 2003; Clifton & Kuper, 2011; Diehl & Hay, 2007, 2010; Donahue et al., 1993; Erickson et al., 2009; McReynolds et al., 2000; Sheldon et al., 1997; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995, but see Baird et al., 2006). Indeed, those high in well-being have been found to behave congruently with their distinct personality across contexts in daily life (Human et al., 2019). As such, when placed in a new context, such as a first impression interaction, those high in well-being are more likely to continue to emit cues that actually represent their unique personality, and are in turn viewed with greater distinctive accuracy (Human et al., 2014; Human et al., 2019). But why might those higher in well-being be more inclined to behave more in line with

their personality and thereby provide self-relevant information? One possibility may be that low well-being, such as low self-esteem, can fuel assumptions that others will be rejecting rather than accepting, fostering caution and restraint in expressing less desirable traits (e.g., Gaucher et al., 2012). Alternatively, low well-being can also relate to greater difficulty regulating emotions, and trigger "out-of-character" reactions to certain situations and people (Tangney et al., 2004).

Another hypothesis which has received some empirical support is that those higher in well-being know themselves better (Jahoda, 1958; Rogers, 1961; Human & Biesanz, 2011; Vogt & Colvin, 2005) and tend to be more certain that their self-views reflect reality (Campbell, 1990), which may lead them to provide clearer verbal information about who they are (Campbell, 1990). In Chapter 2 of the present thesis (see SOM), we provide support for the possibility that cue relevance may indeed be achieved via clearer verbal information, and not just clearer behavioural information, as those who provide more self-relevant narratives tend to have their more observable characteristics perceived with greater distinctive accuracy.

In parallel, target well-being has not been found to relate to making more information available, or to capturing perceivers' attention (Human et al., 2014). Further, perceivers largely infer targets' personalities from targets' in-the-moment behavioural cues, regardless of whether the target is well-adjusted, providing high-quality cues, or less adjusted, providing cues of lower quality (Human et al. 2014; Human et al., 2019).

Although well-being has largely been posited as a predictor of expressive accuracy (e.g., Human et al., 2019), the directionality of these associations has not yet been established. It is indeed plausible that expressive accuracy may promote well-being, for reasons examined in the benefits section of the present literature review. With this in mind, based on the specific question of interest for each manuscript, we either conceptualize well-being as an outcome of accuracy –

in Chapter 1 -or as a predictor - in Chapter 3. However, associations with well-being in both cases are cross-sectional and we outline alternative directionality interpretations for each.

The Role of Other Characteristics in Cue Relevance. While personality coherence and well-being have been most consistent as predictors of expressive accuracy, and especially pertain to the present thesis, we also review here additional characteristics that relate to expressive accuracy to draw an overarching portrait of the good target.

Self-Knowledge. First, people who report a greater tendency to reflect on their personality may provide more relevant cues of who they are because they are aware of how they behave, and can thus express that to others clearly. Indeed, those who have higher self-reflective tendencies tend to better predict how they will behave in a given situation, such as the amount of aggression they will engage in (Scheier et al., 1978) and how sociable they will be (Underwood & Moore, 1981). In parallel, they also tend to be more accurately perceived by their peers (Cheek, 1982). Similarly, those with higher *self-concept clarity*, reporting beliefs about the self that are clear and well-defined, tend to better predict their subsequent behaviour, and to be more accurately perceived by close friends (Lewandowski & Nardone, 2012). Further, traits that people particularly identify with are perceived more accurately by close others (Cheek, 1982; Zuckerman et al., 1989; Zuckerman, Kuhlman, & Camac, 1988).

Power. As an overarching definition, power reflects the ability to influence one's own and others' experience by providing or withholding resources (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Magee & Galinsky, 2008). As a function of being less dependent on others and having others depend on them, those who have high power may not feel the need to please to be accepted, and thus feel less restrained in how they must behave. As a result of feeling less restrained, they could be more likely to openly express what is unique about them without regard

for how it is perceived. Indeed, both dominance on a trait level and experimental manipulations of power, via being given a certain amount of control over resources, promote expression of one's true attitudes (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002; Berdahl & Martorana, 2006). These links are mediated by people's feelings of dominance in the moment, highlighting how awareness of one's power level at a given moment may inform people on how much to freely reveal about themselves (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). Experimental manipulations of power also reduce the tendency to behave in a way that confirms others' expectations (Christensen & Rosenthal, 1982; Cooper & Hazelrigg, 1988; Copeland, 1994; Hilton & Darley, 1985; Smith, Neuberg, Judice, & Biesanz, 1997; Snyder & Haugen, 1995), and leads people to act more in line with their values (Lönnqvist, Verkasalo, & Walkowitz, 2011).

Cue Availability

Once relevant cues have been emitted, they need to be made available. For example, Tata may reveal that she is not so "relaxed" by clenching her fists. But if, as she is providing this relevant cue, her hands are hidden below the table at dinner, the cue will not be available for perceivers to then detect and interpret. One way for information about a target to become available is to spend more time with that target: Tata may be clenching her fists again later that evening after dinner, so that cue might eventually become available. Indeed, longitudinal designs (Kurtz & Sherker, 2003; Paulhus & Bruce, 1992) and experiments (Borkenau, Mauer, Riemann, Spinath, & Angleitner, 2004; Carney, Colvin, & Hall, 2007; Letzring, Wells, & Funder, 2006), have shown that increased acquaintanceship promotes accuracy, likely due to promoting exposure to additional relevant cues. However, when keeping the length of acquaintanceship constant, there are nonetheless certain target characteristics which can facilitate the quantity of information made available. One such characteristic is trait extraversion, as extraverted targets

are by nature more social, and therefore inclined to be around others more often (Lu, 1997; Stokes, 1985), and to share more information about themselves with others (Amirkhan et al., 1995, Halamandaris and Power, 1999, Nakano, 1992, Parkes, 1986). In turn, extraverted targets tend to be perceived with greater distinctive accuracy across a variety of contexts (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020).

Additionally, extraverted people may make more cues available because they are more emotionally expressive (Riggio & Riggio, 2002), and suppress their emotions to a lesser extent (Gross & John, 2002). As such, they may not only provide more cues by spending more time around others and deliberately disclosing more information, but also in being less inhibited in their expression of inner states. Indeed, when targets make private information about thoughts and feelings available, this enhances personality accuracy to a greater extent than information about facts and overt behaviour (Andersen, 1984; Beer & Brooks, 2011; Beer & Watson, 2010, Letzring & Human, 2014). Further, target emotional expressiveness promotes accurate perception of neuroticism and agreeableness in first impressions (Ambady, Hallahan, & Rosenthal, 1995). Therefore, given the likely important role of extraversion in the overall accuracy process, we include this characteristic as a covariate in all analyses pertaining to the present thesis.

Cue Detection & Utilization

Assuming that the target has made relevant cues available, the next steps are largely in the hands of perceivers, in terms of orienting their attention to detect the relevant information, and drawing on their cognitive resources to interpret the information and make appropriate inferences about the target. But how can targets aid this part of the process? Some targets may draw perceivers' attention to a greater extent (e.g., Human et al., 2012; Tissera et al., 2022), and

may incite them to reflect more deeply about who they are (Biesanz & Human, 2010; Clark et al., 2008; Devine et al., 1989; Erber & Fiske, 1984; Neuberg & Fiske, 1987; Ruscher & Fiske, 1990), in turn promoting the overall accuracy of perceptions. These target characteristics can include likability, social skills, power, and physical attractiveness.

When perceivers tend to find a target likable and pleasant, they have been found to pay more attention to that target, and in turn view that target more accurately (Human et al., 2012). Further, in experiments inducing dislike in perceivers, perceivers tend to view a disliked target's personality with lower distinctive accuracy (Zimmermann et al., 2018). This is likely taking place via the detection and utilization stages, given that in that study, perceivers were viewing target videoclips, and not interacting with targets, suggesting that the dislike could not have colored the interaction and led targets to reduce the relevance or availability of their cues.

In terms of social skills, those who tend to be charismatic typically engage in behaviours that are more attention-grabbing (e.g., DePaulo et al., 1992; Friedman et al., 1980). Further, in an experiment encouraging people to engage in socially skilled behaviour, instructing them to "put their best face forward", led targets to behave in a way that was more engaging, in turn drawing more attention from perceivers, and as a result, having their distinct personality profiles more accurately perceived (Human et al., 2012).

Targets' physical attractiveness has also been found to influence how perceivers interact with them (Dion, 1974; Langlois et al., 1995; Snyder et al., 1977; Stewart, 1984; Stewart, 1980). Perceivers indeed devote more attention to a physically attractive target (Langlois et al., 2000; Maner et al., 2003), and are more motivated to connect with them (Lemay et al., 2010). Indeed, perceivers pay more attention to targets they find attractive, and in turn perceive those targets' personalities with greater distinctive accuracy (Lorenzo et al., 2010).

As for the role of power, individuals in a low-status position or low in trait dominance (Ratcliff et al., 2011), or who are in an experimental condition of low power (Dépret & Fiske, 1999; Erber & Fiske, 1984; Neuberg & Fiske, 1987; Ruscher & Fiske, 1990), tend to be more attentive to those of higher power, while high-power or dominant individuals do not pay as much attention to subordinates or low-dominance individuals (Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000; but see Overbeck & Park, 2001; Weick & Guinote, 2008; Schmid Mast, Jonas, & Hall, 2009). Further, targets' power levels may also promote the extent to which perceivers' utilize and carefully interpret their cues, as perceivers engage in more deliberate cognitive processing of personality cues when viewing a high compared to a low power target (Erber & Fiske, 1984; Neuberg & Fiske, 1987; Ruscher & Fiske, 1990).

Benefits of Being a Good Target

So far, we have noted a variety of positive individual characteristics in relation to expressive accuracy, which point to the possibility that expressive accuracy is an intrinsically adaptive process. Here we explore how in turn, expressive accuracy may promote personal wellbeing as well as interpersonal benefits.

Benefits to Personal Well-Being. Well-being has largely been conceptualized as a predictor of expressive accuracy, but could likely also be an outcome. In fact, "the self" is found to be a fundamentally positive stimulus (Epley & Whitchurch, 2008; Greenwald et al., 2002; Pelham et al., 2002). As such, self-disclosing information about the self, or receiving feedback from others about the self could have the potential to be a positive and rewarding experience, in turn promoting well-being more globally.

Indeed, self-disclosure has been argued to be an inherently adaptive process from an evolutionary theory perspective (Tomasello, 1999; Csibra & Gergely, 2011). Experiments lend

support to the theory, revealing that neural reward pathways are activated when people reflect on their own personality, that activation of these pathways is further heightened when sharing of those self-reflections with others, and that this experience is rewarding to the point of forgoing money for an opportunity to self-disclose (Tamir & Mitchell, 2012). People also self-report greater positive affect (Hicks & Diamond, 2008) and greater liking of the listener (Laurenceau et al., 1998) following self-disclosure. In addition, having the tendency to be accurately perceived by others could lead to *self-verification*; receiving feedback from others that aligns with one's self-views (Gill & Swann, 2004; see Swann, 2012, for review). Self-verifying feedback has indeed been found to be a subjectively pleasing experience (Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989). Accordingly, when receiving positive or negative self-relevant feedback, people respond with more positive facial expressions (Ayduk et al., 2013).

Benefits to Interpersonal Relationships. There is directional evidence that being accurately perceived leads to greater liking by perceivers. Indeed, people develop greater liking over time for targets whom they accurately perceived in an initial platonic encounter (Human et al., 2013; Human et al., 2020). Accuracy appears to also benefit romantic relationships. Newlyweds who accurately perceive their partners' personality and emotions, and the target partner of those accurate perceptions, report greater relationship satisfaction (Luo & Snider, 2009). Further, newlyweds who accurately perceive each other's specific traits are less likely to have gotten divorced four years later (Neff & Karney, 2005). However, although accuracy may benefit relationships in platonic first impressions and established romantic relationships, it may backfire in the context of a first date, relating to lower romantic interest (Kerr, Tissera, et al., 2020). That said, this could alternatively be interpreted as evidence that people are less accurate about those in whom they are romantically interested, perhaps in part because greater cognitive

demands or motivational processes hinder cue detection and utilization. There may also be benefits in the workplace, such that among high-quality job candidates, those who are good targets are more likely to receive a job offer, in part because they are perceived to be less inauthentic (Moore et al., 2017). As a result, their flaws may feel more predictable, making that candidate a potentially less risky choice than a candidate whom employers cannot quite read (see Mignault & Human, 2017, for further discussion).

Considering Personality Item Characteristics

Although good targets may express their unique standing on personality items across their entire personality profile, they may nonetheless express some self-aspects more accurately than others. Therefore, in Chapters 2 and 3, we conduct exploratory analyses to examine whether underpinnings of expressive accuracy differ depending on personality item characteristics. We examine two types of item characteristics: the observability of the item and the evaluativeness of the item. In the present research, these indices were obtained via a sample of coders (*N*=106), who rated how *easily observable or visible* (see Funder & Dobroth, 1987), and how *socially desirable* they deemed each item. We considered low and high social desirability scores as *evaluative*, and more neutral as *non-evaluative* (John & Robins, 1993).

Observability. Some aspects of our personality are more observable than others at first glance, as they have clear – and more frequent – behavioural manifestations. For example, trait levels of enthusiasm tend to be quite visible; very enthusiastic people naturally smile more, make larger gestures, open their eyes more widely, and have a more rapid speech delivery (Moè et al., 2020). In contrast, other aspects, such as tense or forgiving, may not be so easily gleaned from first impressions. These aspects are marked by specific patterns of thoughts and feelings, which operate to a greater extent within a target's inner experience. Further, when meeting someone for

the first time, there is generally little to forgive, so this trait may not be activated behaviourally until later in the relationship. In fact, what is less observable tends to be more accurately perceived by close peers than new acquaintances, as they have more opportunities to see these less visible aspects emerge (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020; Watson, Hubbard, & Wiese, 2000). Further, the sheer limits of one's visual field may lead traits that have overt behavioural cues to be more salient to others than to the self (Vazire, 2010). Nonetheless, targets who are higher in well-being tend to reveal their less observable self-aspects in first impressions to a greater extent than their less adjusted counterparts, which provides insight into why they may have greater overall expressive accuracy (Human & Biesanz, 2011).

Evaluativeness. There is a large body of evidence to support the idea that the social desirability and evaluativeness of self-aspects plays an important role in personality perceptions (Anglim et al., 2017; Anusic et al., 2009; Biderman et al., 2019; Bono & Judge, 2003; Furr & Funder, 1998; Judge et al., 2002; Musek, 2007; Pettersson et al., 2012; Leising et al., 2021). Indeed, some aspects of our personalities elicit a strong reaction in others, either positive or negative, whereas other aspects are more neutral and leave people more indifferent. For example, people will react positively to someone who is quite reliable and negatively to someone who is quite quarrelsome. In contrast, there are some aspects that are less "affectively charged" (John & Robins, 1993), such as how "quiet" someone is. Given the role of social desirability in smooth interpersonal interactions (e.g., Leising, 2015), there is more at stake when being perceived on more socially evaluative – either desirable or undesirable – self-aspects. As such, bias in self-and other-perception may be especially present for highly evaluative items. First, in an attempt to maintain positive self-views (e.g., Greenwald, 1980; James, 1890; Rogers. 1959; Tesser, 1988), we may rate ourselves especially positively on evaluative items. Alternatively, if we do
overcome the urge to rate ourselves overly positively on evaluative items, we may nonetheless proceed to conceal our unique standing on such traits in first impressions. Further, others' perceptions of a target on evaluative items may be inextricably tied to perceivers' general attitudes and liking of that target (Leising et al., 2015; 2021), leading them to rate a given target overly positively if they especially like that target. However, as suggested by Vazire (2010), whereas peers' impressions can be elevated as a result of liking, without disruption to trait ordering, self-perceptions on evaluative items are particularly vulnerable to being distorted due to ego-protective motivations. Indeed, there tends to be less agreement between self- and peer reports the more evaluative traits tend to be (John & Robins, 1993).

Summary

In the present review of the literature, we first elaborated on the target's crucial role in the overall accuracy process, highlighting that, by being responsible for the early stages of the accuracy process, the target influences the cues that are being detected and interpreted by perceivers. Indeed, being a skilled judge may only help when diagnostic cues of the target's personality are made available. Then, we reviewed evidence on the target's individual characteristics which may be especially important in promoting overall accuracy. Well-being emerged strongly as predictor of cue relevance, in large part because those high in well-being behave in line with their personality in daily life. Other key characteristics included extraversion, attractiveness, social skill and power, which likely play a bigger role in the later stages. We also examined why it might be beneficial (or not) to be a good target, with the intrinsic benefits of self-disclosure and self-verification, as well as the social benefits such as being liked by others (in some contexts). Further, we examined how all personality items are not created equal which may lead targets to be more accurately perceived on certain aspects over others.

Overview of the Present Research

Despite the critical role of the target in the overall accuracy of impressions and the positive processes reliably associated with the good target, we still do not know how much control the target has over the tendency to be accurately perceived. The present thesis sheds light on this question.

In Chapter 1, we started by examining whether on a cognitive level, people have awareness of their expressive accuracy. We did so across two in-person round-robin studies. In the first study, we examined whether actually being perceived in line with one's unique personality on average across a series of perceivers related to the global belief that we tend to be viewed in line with who we are by others. In the second study, we examined whether being accurately perceived by a specific perceiver was associated with feeling accurately perceived by that perceiver. We also examined whether expressive accuracy was related to well-being independently of beliefs, or whether that subjective experience was a prerequisite for associations with well-being to emerge.

In Chapter 2, we then examined on a behavioural level whether people could increase their expressive accuracy on demand. To do so, we conducted an experimental video-interview study. In the target phase, targets came into the lab to take part in an interview. Approximately half the targets were instructed to "be yourself" by experimenters. In the perceiver phase, another set of participants came into the lab, perceivers, who individually watched target videos and rated each target on a number of characteristics. We examined the extent to which the experimental manipulation enhanced expressive accuracy, and whether this depended on item characteristics, namely observability and evaluativeness, as well as whether it promoted target post-interview well-being and liking by perceivers.

In Chapter 3, we examined the role of environmental factors, namely videoconferencing, in modulating expressive accuracy levels and its predictors. Specifically, we designed a round-robin study on the Zoom videoconferencing platform during the COVID-19 pandemic, which we compared to an in-person round-robin study collected prior to the pandemic. With these two studies, we examined whether expressive accuracy levels were similar across contexts, whether well-being predictors of expressive accuracy in person also predicted expressive accuracy on Zoom, and whether audio-video quality related to expressive accuracy on Zoom and interacted with its well-being predictors.

Overall, this research sheds light on the extent to which we are in control of our tendency to be perceived by others in line with our unique personalities. We take this approach via three levels: cognitive in Chapter 1, with expressive accuracy awareness, behavioural in Chapter 2, with the ability to enhance expressive accuracy, and contextual in Chapter 3, with the role of videoconferencing in expressive accuracy. Chapter 1:

On Being and Feeling Transparent: Examining Expressive Accuracy Awareness in First Impressions of Personality and Links to Well-Being

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R code and raw data to recreate the primary analyses are provided on the Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/qrw3j/

Abstract

It may be good to both *be* seen accurately (expressive accuracy) and *feel* that you are seen accurately (expressive accuracy beliefs). But do people's expressive accuracy beliefs align with their actual expressive accuracy? And do expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs each independently predict well-being? Across two getting-acquainted round-robin studies, expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs were positively associated, indicating that people were aware of whether they were viewed accurately both globally (Study 1), and with specific others (Study 2). Well-being was associated with greater expressive accuracy across studies, and with greater global expressive accuracy beliefs in Study 1. Thus, feeling and being seen accurately seem to go hand in hand, and to have independent links with well-being.

Keywords: Expressive accuracy; expressive accuracy beliefs; expressive accuracy awareness; first impressions; personality judgments; round robin; well-being

Introduction

Feeling that we express who we truly are accurately to others is argued to be a critical component of healthy intimate relationships and psychological functioning (Cross et al., 2000; Sheldon et al., 2000). Similarly, actually being expressively accurate, that is, being seen in line with one's personality – a concept that is also referred to as judgeability (Colvin, 1993a, 1993b), self-other agreement (Funder & West, 1993), and being a "good target" (Funder, 1995) – is also linked to better social and personal well-being (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020; Human et al., 2019). Thus, both *expressive accuracy beliefs* and *actual* expressive accuracy may benefit personal and social well-being. There is, however, a critical distinction between feeling seen accurately and being seen accurately by others: the former reflects a subjective experience and the latter reflects what happens in reality. Indeed, there is consensus in the literature that the experiences of feeling accurately perceived and being accurately perceived may only be weakly related (Barrera, 1986; Heller & Lakey, 1985; Lakey & Cassady, 1990; Pollmann & Finkenauer, 2009; Reis et al., 2017; Wethington & Kessler, 1986). However, most research has examined feeling and being accurately perceived separately (Finkenauer & Righetti, 2009; Reis, 2014; Reis et al., 2017), making it unclear to what extent feeling and being accurately perceived are related to one another. Furthermore, examining each separately makes it difficult to determine the extent to which each is independently linked to personal and social well-being.

In the present studies, we examined both *expressive accuracy beliefs*, people's impressions that their personality is accurately perceived by others, and actual *expressive accuracy*, the extent to which people's personalities actually tend to be accurately perceived by others, in the context of first impressions, using both global and dyadic assessments of expressive accuracy beliefs. With this design, we examined two questions: First, are people

aware, both generally (Study 1) and with specific interaction partners (Study 2), of the extent to which others accurately perceive their unique personalities in first impressions: that is, do they have *expressive accuracy awareness*? Second, to what extent are feeling and being expressively accurate independently related to personal and social well-being, as reported by the self and close others? Answering these questions will shed light on how aspects of expressive accuracy – felt and actual – are related in first impression contexts, and the extent to which they both contribute to well-being, independently from one another.

Defining Expressive Accuracy

The expressive accuracy of a *target*, the person being perceived by others, is defined by the extent to which that target is viewed in line with an "accuracy criterion", that is, a realistic indicator of that target's personality, such as the target's self-ratings, or the combination of selfand close-other ratings (Funder, 1995). In both studies, the accuracy criterion was a composite of targets' self and close-other ratings. We use this accuracy criterion because it is considered a gold standard in accuracy research, as it increases reliability and offsets possible bias in self- or close-other ratings alone (e.g., Funder, 1995; Beer et al., 2019; Rogers & Biesanz, 2019). Specifically, we took a componential profile approach to examine the extent to which new acquaintances (perceivers) viewed targets in line with this accuracy criterion across a range of traits simultaneously. This profile approach provides a holistic indicator of how accurately targets were understood in terms of their patterning of personality traits, but also, equivalently, their standing on average across traits (i.e., their average trait-wise accuracy; Biesanz, 2020). Thus, if a given target, Tiffany, is more helpful than relaxed, but more curious than helpful, as per her own and close-other ratings, high accuracy would indicate that, in first impressions,

perceivers both accurately discerned this unique patterning of traits and her level on average across these traits relative to other targets.

Importantly, people have a tendency to rate themselves and others normatively, that is, in line with the average person. This tendency can be a very strong contributor to profile agreement, making it important to distinguish between *normative accuracy*, the tendency to be viewed as similar to the average person, and *distinctive accuracy*, the tendency to be viewed in line with one's distinct or unique personality profile (Biesanz, 2010; Cronbach, 1955; Furr, 2008). Of note, the normative profile also tends to be highly positive or socially desirable (Wood & Furr, 2016). Thus, disentangling normative accuracy from distinctive accuracy also allows us to control for the extent to which perceivers view a target both normatively and positively. For example, if Philip, the perceiver, sees Tiffany as more helpful than relaxed, and this is how people in general tend to be, then Philip is viewing Tiffany with normative accuracy. This may be in line with how Tiffany and her close others rate her, but given that this is true of most people, this does not indicate whether Philip specifically understands Tiffany. To this end, we control for normative accuracy and examine distinctive accuracy: whether Philip understands what makes Tiffany different from the average person. That is, if Tiffany is more helpful than relaxed, Philip might observe that she is even more helpful than relaxed compared to the average person, therefore viewing Tiffany with distinctive accuracy. Thus, in line with previous research (Human et al., 2019; Human et al., 2020; see Human & Biesanz, 2013 and Mignaut & Human, 2020 for reviews), we define expressive accuracy as the extent to which an individual's personality profile is perceived with distinctive accuracy above and beyond that individual's tendency to be perceived normatively and therefore positively.

Targets can take an active role in the extent to which their personalities are viewed accurately. According to the Realistic Accuracy Model (RAM; Funder, 1995), being accurately understood requires the completion of four stages. Targets must provide *relevant* cues about their personalities and make those cues *available* for perceivers to then *detect* and appropriately *utilize* the cues to make accurate inferences about the target. Thus, first and foremost, targets' must provide cues that are diagnostic of their personalities, but targets (and perceivers) can theoretically influence any stage, and thus targets high in expressive accuracy may also make more information available or be better able to elicit greater cue detection and attention from perceivers. Of note, people vary greatly in their tendency to be expressively accurate with others, such that some people are easy to read, and others are quite mysterious (Human & Biesanz, 2013; Rogers & Biesanz, 2019). What is unclear, however, is whether those people who are easier to read *know* that they are easier to read. That is, whether people who are high in expressive accuracy also have high expressive accuracy beliefs.

Defining Expressive Accuracy Beliefs

In contrast to expressive accuracy, which assesses how people's personality profiles are actually perceived, we use the term "expressive accuracy beliefs" to refer to the subjective experience of being accurately perceived. We distinguish this construct from other potentially related ones such as meta-perceptions (Kenny & De Paulo, 1993), feeling understood (Reis & Shaver, 1988), and feeling self-verified (Swann, 2011), to specifically address the experience of feeling *accurately perceived in terms of one's personality*. Thus, we operationalized the subjective experience to closely parallel the expressive accuracy indicator. In Study 1, we examined global first impression expressive accuracy beliefs, operationalized as the extent to which targets reported feeling that new acquaintances in general tend to accurately perceive who

they are. In Study 2, we examined dyadic expressive accuracy beliefs, operationalized as the extent to which targets reported feeling accurately perceived following each getting-acquainted interaction.

In past research, the subjective experience that the self is transparent, easy to read, and accurately perceived by others has been examined with several related constructs. For example, *felt authenticity* reflects targets' beliefs in their own tendency to "show their true selves" and not "wear social masks" (Heppner et al., 2008). *Felt understanding* reflects targets' impressions that specific interaction partners understand them (e.g., Reis et al., 2017; Reis & Shaver, 1988), and *self-verification theory* addresses targets' beliefs that perceivers see them in line with how they see themselves (e.g., Gill & Swann, 2004; Swann, 1983). In addition, meta-transparency (Tissera & Lydon, 2021) and transparency (Carlson, 2016a) refer to the concept that one believes others see the self in line with how one sees oneself. These latter constructs especially overlap with expressive accuracy beliefs, but differ in a fundamental way: meta-transparency bias or transparency indices are obtained by getting participants to rate, on a range of traits, how they think others view them, and these ratings are later mapped onto self-ratings. In contrast, for expressive accuracy beliefs, participants directly report on their subjective experience of being accurately perceived, possibly drawing on more explicit, higher order processes.

Investigating expressive accuracy beliefs as a more explicit, higher-order counterpart to meta-transparency or transparency bias may be useful given that explicit and implicit processes are often only loosely correlated (Hofmann et al., 2005; Nosek, 2005) and tend to have different personal and interpersonal implications (Petty & Briñol, 2010).

Defining Expressive Accuracy Awareness

People vary in the tendency to both be seen (Human & Biesanz, 2013) and to feel seen (Grabill & Kerns, 2000) in line with one's true self, but do these two experiences vary together, such that people's actual expressive accuracy levels correspond to their expressive accuracy beliefs? In other words, do people generally tend to have *expressive accuracy awareness*? The possibility that people have any form of interpersonal accuracy awareness has been challenged in the past (Ames & Kammrath, 2004; Dunning et al., 1990; Realo et al., 2003; Swann & Gill, 1997). Based on research in zero-acquaintance and getting acquainted contexts, people tend to lack awareness of their ability to infer others' personalities, intentions, or emotions when assessed more globally (Ames & Kammrath, 2004; Realo et al., 2003; Biesanz et al., 2011), but there is some evidence that people are aware of the extent to which they accurately perceive others when assessed dyadically (Biesanz et al., 2011; Patterson et al., 2001; Smith et al., 1991). In the present studies, we assess both global and dyadic expressive accuracy awareness, given that the degree of accuracy awareness may differ at different levels of analysis.

Is there evidence that people have expressive accuracy awareness, as a specific form of interpersonal accuracy awareness? Although no research has directly explored people's awareness of *how accurately* new acquaintances view their personality, meta-accuracy research shows that people have awareness of *how* others view their personality. Indeed, people appear to have awareness of how their personalities are perceived by others in general (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993; Carlson & Furr, 2009), and awareness of the relative impressions they make on different perceivers across a variety of social contexts (Carlson & Furr, 2009). People also appear to have awareness of the specific traits which new acquaintances may perceive as characteristic of them (Carlson et al., 2010). In addition, people seem to have meta-accuracy "resolution", that is, they appear to know the extent to which their meta-perceptions are accurate (Carlson & Furr, 2012).

Thus, if people generally make accurate meta-perceptions, and know if their meta-perceptions are accurate, then, they may know the extent to which others' views of them aligns with or differs from their own self-views.

Like expressive accuracy beliefs, expressive accuracy awareness may reflect a higherorder process than meta-accuracy or meta-accuracy resolution, directly tapping explicit awareness of the extent to which one reveals one's true self. In contrast, by focusing on *how* – instead of *how accurately* – others view the self, meta-accuracy processes may only indirectly approximate one's knowledge of being accurately perceived. For example, Tiffany may know that Philip sees her as somewhat relaxed and very helpful, but knowing whether he sees her in line with her actual unique personality requires an awareness of the extent to which Philip's ratings align with her own self-ratings. This information is not available in meta-accuracy assessments. In other words, to be meta-accurate, participants are not required to be explicitly aware of how much others see them in line with how they (and their close others) see themselves. In line with this theoretical distinction, in Study 1, where participants also provided meta-perceptions, expressive accuracy awareness had a positive but small and non-significant correlation with meta-accuracy, suggesting that they are not redundant processes¹.

Moreover, explicit awareness may be useful when attempting to adjust the extent to which one reveals one's true self. Indeed, explicit processes tend to be especially important in fostering deliberate learning and modifying behavioural tendencies (Gollwitzer, 1999; Oettingen

¹ Meta-perceptions were assessed using the same items as self- and other-perceptions, via the 21-item Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999), but asking participants to report on how they thought each new acquaintance viewed them on these items. Meta-accuracy was computed in a manner paralleling our accuracy analyses, using the Social Accuracy Multi-Level Modeling Approach (Biesanz, 2010; 2020), but predicting meta-perceptions from new acquaintance perceptions (see Tissera et al., 2020, for detailed analytical approach). Meta-accuracy and expressive accuracy awareness scores were both saved out at the target level and were positively correlated, albeit not to statistically significant level (r = .08, 95% CI [-.01, .17], t = 1.71, p = .088), thereby reflecting different processes. Future research could compare implications of meta-accuracy and expressive accuracy awareness of self-knowledge.

& Gollwitzer, 2018; Trope & Liberman, 2003; Vygotsky, 1934/1962). This is likely to be true for expressive accuracy, a tendency that appears modifiable via explicit instructions (Mignault et al., 2021). Therefore, investigating targets' expressive accuracy awareness as a more explicit process may have especially relevant practical implications for behaviour change.

In parallel, research in close relationships has examined the explicit process of *feeling understood*, reflecting feeling accurately perceived and accepted for who one is (Reis, 2014; Reis et al., 2017; Reis & Shaver, 1988), in association with *being understood*, operationalized as target-perceiver agreement on target characteristics (Pollmann & Finkenauer, 2009), but found no association. In fact, in close relationships, targets' tendencies to feel understood by their partner may depend less on the extent to which they are actually understood by their partner, and more on the targets' stable characteristics, such as personality traits and attachment style (Collins & Feeney, 2004; Cutrona, 1996; Dunkel-Schetter & Bennett, 1990; Pierce et al., 1992). Overall, then, expressive accuracy awareness may be especially present in newer relationships, where accuracy tends to be lower (Biesanz et al., 2007; Connelly & Ones, 2010; Funder & Colvin, 1988; Letzring et al., 2006), and where there may be less motivation to believe that one is seen accurately (Carlson, 2016a; Murray et al., 1996; Weger, 2005), thus allowing for greater variability both in expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs, and in turn possibly greater awareness.

Associations with Well-Being

If individual differences in expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs are indeed related, it is especially important to examine their associations with well-being in a single study, to determine whether they have independent associations. Below we consider the evidence linking well-being to actual expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs.

Expressive Accuracy and Well-Being

Expressive accuracy has long been considered a sign of psychological adjustment (Allport, 1937; Erikson, 1959; Jourard, 1971; Kernberg, 1976; Rogers, 1961). There is robust evidence that being perceived accurately is associated with greater personal well-being, such as higher self-esteem, life satisfaction, and/or lower depression, and social well-being, such as positive relationships with others. Specifically, targets perceived in line with their unique patterning of personality traits by new acquaintances in the lab (Human & Biesanz, 2011; Human et al., 2014; Human et al., 2019), by peers and objective observers (Colvin, 1993a, 1993b), and by observers of their Facebook profiles (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020) have been consistently found to have higher personal and social well-being. As further evidence of potential benefits to social well-being, longitudinal studies have shown that being seen in line with one's personality by new acquaintances predicts being better liked by those acquaintances over time (Human, Carlson, et al., 2020; Human et al., 2013). Thus, there is consistent evidence that expressive accuracy in first impressions is linked to greater personal and social well-being.

Independent Associations With Well-Being. But why would expressive accuracy have benefits for personal and social well-being? Is it because being transparent leads to feeling transparent, which is what is truly beneficial? Or could expressive accuracy have independent benefits? There are some reasons to believe that expressive accuracy could *independently* lead to well-being, without the need for expressive accuracy beliefs. For example, when people are easy to understand, they may feel familiar to perceivers, promoting smooth interactions, and greater liking (Langlois & Roggman, 1990; Reber et al., 2004; Reis et al., 2011; but see Norton et al., 2007). This greater interpersonal fluency and partner liking could in turn enhance target wellbeing without targets needing to be aware of their expressive accuracy.

Expressive Accuracy Beliefs and Well-Being

In contrast to the relationship between expressive accuracy and well-being, little research has directly investigated the relationship between expressive accuracy beliefs in first impressions and well-being. However, several related constructs have long been argued to be linked to well-being. These constructs include *felt authenticity*; people's belief that they accurately express who they are (Rogers, 1961; Winnicott, 1965; Yalom, 1980), *felt understanding*; people's belief that they are accurately perceived and accepted (Vanggaard, 1958; Van Kaam, 1959), *self-verification*; receiving feedback that the self is accurately perceived (Hixon & Swann, 1993; Swann, 1983); and *transparency*; rating others' views of the self in line with one's self-views (Carlson, 2016a; 2016b).

Specifically, felt authenticity, in the form of global, trait-like measures (e.g., Wood et al., 2008), momentary experience-sampling assessments (Heppner et al., 2008), and primed memories (Lenton, Bruder, et al., 2013) has been associated with greater personal and social well-being. In parallel, felt understanding, whether assessed via daily experience sampling (Lun et al., 2008) or experimentally manipulated (Morelli et al., 2014), is found to promote various indicators of personal well-being. Felt understanding is also thought to foster social well-being, such as more positive interactions in getting-acquainted contexts (Cross et al., 2000). Further, receiving self-verifying feedback has been associated with increased happiness (Oishi et al., 2008) and lower anxiety-related arousal (Ayduk et al., 2013). Lastly, transparency, or overestimating how others' view of the self aligns with one's own, was associated with greater self-reported self-esteem and life satisfaction (Carlson, 2016b), as well as liking of perceivers in first impressions (Carlson, 2016a).

Overall, subjectively feeling authentic, subjectively feeling understood, receiving feedback that might promote those feelings, and overestimating the extent to which others' impressions align with self-views, appear to foster greater personal and social well-being. Based on this research, we argue that expressive accuracy beliefs, or feeling that one's true self is viewed accurately by others, may also positively influence well-being levels. That said, given that we examine well-being as an individual difference, we anticipate that associations may be stronger with global beliefs, which also reflect an individual difference, compared to the aggregated dyadic beliefs, which reflect a more fine-grained process, for which implications may largely exist on a dyadic level.

Independent Associations With Well-Being. But could high expressive accuracy beliefs merely represent a byproduct of expressive accuracy, which is what truly fosters well-being? There may be initial evidence that expressive accuracy beliefs may *independently* promote well-being, that is, regardless of expressive accuracy, in close relationships contexts. For example, relationship well-being has been related to feeling understood by one's romantic partner, but not to actually having one's personality accurately perceived by them (Pollmann & Finkenauer, 2009; Murray et al., 2002). Thus, we build on this initial evidence to examine whether expressive accuracy beliefs in first impressions contexts similarly relate to greater well-being independently of expressive accuracy².

² With these extracted expressive accuracy scores, we also performed an exploratory moderation analysis to examine whether actual expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs synergistically relate to well-being, such that well-being is especially high when people are aware of their high expressive accuracy. We did not find evidence for such an interaction. Code to recreate this analysis can be found on OSF: https://osf.io/qrw3j/, and results can be found in SOM.

Directionality of Associations With Well-Being

Of note, although the present research conceptualizes expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs as predictors of well-being, it may be that well-being also predicts the tendency to be and feel expressively accurate. For example, well-being may enhance expressive accuracy via a greater tendency for authenticity (Kernis & Goldman, 2005; Maslow, 1968), self-knowledge (Human & Biesanz, 2011; Jahoda, 1958; Rogers, 1961), and behavioural congruence (e.g., Human et al., 2019; Human et al., 2014). In parallel, well-being may enhance global expressive accuracy beliefs through the promotion of positive self-views (e.g., Brown et al., 2001; Lenton, Slabu, et al., 2013). Thus, even though in the present research, we have framed expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs as predictors of well-being for simplicity, the relations may be bi-directional.

Research Overview

To recap, across two first impressions studies, the present research examined two questions: First, are people aware of the extent to which their unique personality traits are accurately perceived by others; do they have *expressive accuracy awareness*? And second, to what extent are expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs independently related to personal and social well-being?

Though some of these questions have been explored in romantic relationships (e.g., Finkenauer & Righetti, 2009), this specific context makes it difficult to disentangle individual differences in expressive accuracy from perceiver-, target-, or relationship-dependent effects, as there is only one perceiver per target. Thus, in a first impressions context, we used a round robin paradigm, allowing us to explore how a target's global expressive accuracy, averaged across multiple new-acquaintance perceivers, related to that target's global first impressions expressive

accuracy beliefs (Study 1), as well as how being accurately perceived by a specific gettingacquainted partner related to expressive accuracy beliefs with that specific partner (Study 2).

Further, across studies, to examine the associations with well-being, we assessed targets' well-being both from their own perspective as well as from the perspective of their close others, as research suggests that certain individual characteristics, such as the tendency to self-enhance, may promote differences between self- and close-other reports of well-being (Colvin et al., 1995; Dufner et al., 2019; Kurt & Paulhus, 2008; Taylor & Brown, 1994). Moreover, given that expressive accuracy beliefs were self-reported, having both self and close-other perspectives on targets' well-being ensured that any associations between well-being and expressive accuracy beliefs would not be merely due to shared method variance or driven by broad positive self-views.

In sum, across two large scale first impressions studies, we examined the relationships between expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs, and how each were associated with personal and social well-being, as rated by both the self and close others. Specifically, we were interested in how these processes align and differ when beliefs are assessed at a global level (Study 1; N = 547, $N_{dyads} = 2,878$) compared to when assessed at a dyadic level (Study 2; N =200, $N_{dyads} = 964$)³. In doing so, this is the first study to examine the extent to which people are explicitly aware of their tendency to be accurately perceived, both with specific new acquaintances and more globally. This is also the first study to disentangle the independent contributions of expressive accuracy and beliefs to well-being in first impressions contexts.

³ The first author was involved in data collection for Study 1, data analysis for both studies, and manuscript writing. The second author was involved in data collection and data analysis for Study 1, as well as manuscript writing. The third author was involved in study design, data collection, and data analysis for Study 2, as well as reviewing the full manuscript. The fourth author was involved in study design and data collection for Study 1, data analysis for both studies, and manuscript writing.

Method

Analyses conducted in the present research were exploratory and were not pre-registered. Research materials, de-identified data for the two studies, as well as the code used for analyses can be found on the Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/qrw3j/. We state all data exclusions, analyses conducted, and variables pertaining to the present research questions. Given the high similarity in design for the two studies, we describe their methods and results jointly.

Participants

A total of 547 undergraduate students participated in Study 1 ($N_{dyads} = 3068$, 464 females, $M_{age} = 20.42$, $SD_{age} = 2.14$), and a total of 200 undergraduate students participated in Study 2 ($N_{dyads} = 992$, 138 females, $M_{age} = 22.40$, $SD_{age} = 7.80$). For Study 1, the sample size goal was to recruit participants over the course of one academic year, starting in September and ending in April. For Study 2, the sample size goal to obtain a sample of 200 participants, a decision grounded in current sample size standards (200-250 participants) to have sufficient power to detect the average effect size in the field of personality and social psychology (r = .21; Richard et al., 2003; Fraley & Vazire, 2014).

We conducted power analyses for the present studies using the fabs package for R (github\jbiesanz\fabs; also see Biesanz & Schrager, 2017; McShane & Bockenholt, 2015), with our main question of interest in mind: whether people have expressive accuracy awareness. To this end, we selected prior effect size estimates from Carlson & Furr (2012), who examined meta-accuracy resolution, confidence in people's knowledge of how others see their distinctive personality profiles. Considering that these authors examined this question across two studies that were both equally relevant to our present research, we conducted power analyses using the effect size prior from each of their two studies (Study 1: r = .24, N = 220; Study 2: r = .17; N =

294), and hereby report the range of power we obtained based on these two priors for each our studies. For our Study 1, we obtained 89-98% power to detect a similar effect size, and for our Study 2, we obtained 66-87% power to detect a similar effect size. This indicates that we have sufficient statistical power for Study 1 purposes, but may be underpowered for Study 2.

In Study 1, participants self-identified predominantly as Caucasian (n = 289; 52.83%) or as Asian (n = 142; 25.96%). In Study 2, participants self-identified predominantly as Asian (n =126; 63%) or as Caucasian (n = 42; 21%). In both studies, participants came for a lab visit, engaged in a getting-acquainted "round-robin" paradigm, and completed questionnaires. We only included previously unacquainted dyads in our analyses (Study 1: $N_{dyads} = 2878$; Study 2: $N_{dyads} =$ 964). Participants also provided the contact information of up to three close others in both Study 1 ($N_{close others} = 570$, $M_{age} = 29.99$, $SD_{age} = 14.85$) and Study 2 ($N_{close others} = 307$, $M_{age} = 30.96$, $SD_{age} = 15.66$). In Study 1, 341 participants had at least one informant ($M_{close others per target} =$ 1.05), with 160 targets with one close other, 133 targets with two close others, and 48 targets with three close others. In Study 2, 156 participants had at least one informant ($M_{close others per target} =$ 1.73), with 51 targets having one close other, 59 targets having two close others, 46 targets having three close others. In both studies, participants were compensated with two extra course credits or \$20, and all procedures were approved by the universities' ethics review boards.

Procedure

Previously unacquainted people came for a lab visit in groups of 4-8 participants in Study 1 (Mdn=8; $N_{groups} = 86$), and in groups of 3-12 participants in Study 2 (Mdn=7; $N_{groups} = 28$). In both studies, participants first individually completed a questionnaire about their personality. Then, participants engaged in a round-robin paradigm, interacting in dyads with every other participant in the room for two to three minutes. Participants were told: "Just introduce yourself

and try to get to know one another". After each interaction, participants were separated and invited to complete a questionnaire rating their interaction partner's personality. In Study 2, participants also rated their *dyadic expressive accuracy beliefs* after each interaction, that is, the extent to which they believed that their interaction partner had viewed them accurately. In contrast, in Study 1, participants self-reported on their *global expressive accuracy beliefs* after the round-robin portion of the study. In terms of personal and social well-being, participants in Study 1 completed well-being ratings along with global expressive accuracy beliefs ratings after the round robin paradigm, and in Study 2, participants completed well-being ratings along with the initial personality questionnaire prior to the round robin. In both studies, participants also provided the contact information of up to three close others (e.g., family members, romantic partners, friends) who were sent an invitation to complete questionnaires as informants on the participant's personality and well-being.

Measures

Expressive Accuracy

Personality Ratings. In Study 1, targets and their close others completed an abbreviated 21-item version of the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999), plus three items assessing intelligence, such as "*Is bright*"⁴. In Study 2, targets and close others completed the 44-item BFI as well as a 20-item modified version of the Unified Motive Scales, with four items representing each of the five following subscales: power, achievement, affiliation, intimacy, and fear (UMS-3; Schönbrodt & Gerstenberg, 2012). All items were rated on a scale

⁴ The 21 items correspond to Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14,15, 16, 17, 21, 26, 31, 34, 36, and 38 of the original 44-item Big Five Inventory presented in John and Srivastava (1999). The three additional items to assess intelligence include: "*Is intelligent*", "*Is bright*", and "*Receives good grades*". This 24-item scale has been used in several studies with designs similar to the present research (see Human & Biesanz, 2011).

from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). Both the BFI scale (John & Srivastava, 1999; Ziegler et al., 2014) and the UMS-3 scale (Schönbrodt & Gerstenberg, 2012; Bettschart et al., 2020) have demonstrated high internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and predictive validity.

Personality Accuracy Criterion. In both studies, we created a composite score of participants' personality, by averaging target self-reports with close-other reports on each item. Close-other reports for a given target were first averaged together, and then averaged with the target's self-rating on each item. We then used the composite score of self and close other ratings as our "realistically valid" accuracy criterion (e.g., see Funder, 1995), against which to compare first impression ratings. In line with past accuracy research, we used this composite score as the accuracy criterion to increase reliability, and offset bias that may be present either in the self- or close-other ratings alone (e.g., Beer et al., 2019; Rogers & Biesanz, 2019). That said, given that self- and close-other ratings may diverge and differentially relate to new acquaintance impressions, we also examined the present research questions using self-ratings alone as the accuracy criterion. The pattern of results was highly similar across accuracy criteria, though associations with social well-being were weaker. The full set of results can be found in the Supplementary Online Materials (SOM; Tables S1 and S2).

Expressive Accuracy Scores. Then, following each in-lab dyadic interaction, participants in Study 1 rated their interaction partner's personality, using the abbreviated, 21item version of the Big Five Inventory and the three intelligence items. In Study 2, participants rated their interaction partner's personality on random subsets of 20 items from the 44-item BFI as well as random subsets of 10 items from the Unified Motives Scales, thereby providing 34 ratings out of the 64 possible items. The set of items evaluated were re-randomized for each dyad⁵. These in-lab perceiver ratings were then compared to the accuracy criterion (the composite score of self- and close-other ratings) on the same items, and targets' individual expressive accuracy scores were computed by averaging targets' expressive accuracy scores across all their in-lab perceivers (see Analytical Approach for more details).

Expressive Accuracy Beliefs

Global Expressive Accuracy Beliefs. In Study 1, following the round robin portion of the study, participants self-reported on the extent to which they believed they were generally transparent, using the following item: "*The impression others form of me after meeting me for the first time corresponds well to how I and my close friends view my personality*". This item was created to reflect people's expressive accuracy beliefs based on how expressive accuracy was measured in the current study. This item was rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale (M = 3.95, SD = 1.50).

Participants also completed other more general expressive accuracy beliefs items from the unpublished Individual Efficacy Scale (Berlin & Neuberg, 2011). Results with the additional three expressive accuracy belief items were essentially identical (see SOM). We present the results with only the single item noted above because it was more design-specific and closely corresponds to the measure used in Study 2.

Dyadic Expressive Accuracy Beliefs. In Study 2, following each getting-acquainted interaction, participants self-reported on the extent to which they believed that their getting acquainted partner saw them accurately, using the following item: "*How well do you think this person's impression of you would agree with how you and your close friends view your*

⁵ Considering the structure of the round robin paradigm, which involves completing several dyadic assessments within a lab visit, random subsets of items were used for this scale to prevent participants from experiencing survey fatigue, while maintaining survey validity and reliability via the number of items assessed overall (see Revelle et al., 2010).

personality?". This item was rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale (M = 4.12, SD = .45). In addition to examining this variable at the dyadic level, we also examined it at the target level by aggregating each target's dyadic expressive accuracy beliefs across their perceivers. Like the global beliefs item, this dyadic beliefs item also aligns with our expressive accuracy criterion.

Personal Well-Being

Personal well-being was assessed by creating a composite score of target self-esteem and life satisfaction, and then grand-mean centering this composite variable. We combined self-esteem and life satisfaction considering that these two scales were highly correlated ($r_{Study 1} = .56$; $r_{Study 2} = .54$), a correlation that aligned with prior work (r = .55, Kerr, Borenstein-Laurie, et al., 2020), and given that past work has found highly consistent associations between expressive accuracy and these and other diverse indicators of personal well-being in first impressions (e.g., Human and Biesanz, 2011, Human et al., 2019, Human et al., 2020). In Study 1, close others reported on both target self-esteem and life satisfaction. In Study 2, close others reported only on target life satisfaction. Targets' self-reports and close-other reports were analyzed separately and were moderately correlated (see Table 1). Descriptives and Cronbach's α for this composite as well as for individual measures of self-esteem and life satisfaction can be found in Table 1.

Self-Esteem. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to measure target self-esteem, using a 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*) scale, and consisted of ten items, such as "*I take a positive attitude towards myself*". Targets self-reported on the full scale, and close others reported on one global item "*Has high self-esteem*". This scale has demonstrated high internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and predictive validity across a variety of studies,

diverse ethnic groups, and over time (Rosenberg, 1985; Marsh, 2010; Supple & Plunkett, 2011). Close-other reports for self-esteem were only available in Study 1 and were moderately correlated with self-reports (see Table 1).

Life Satisfaction. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) was used to measure targets' life satisfaction, and consisted of five items, such as "*The conditions of my life are excellent*" and "*I am satisfied with my life*", ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). This scale has demonstrated high internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and predictive validity across a variety of studies, diverse ethnic groups, and over time (Blais et al., 1989; Shao, 1993; Diener et al., 1985; Diener, 2009). Targets self-reported on the full scale, and close others reported on one global item "*Is satisfied with his or her life*". In both studies, self-and close-other reports were moderately correlated (see Table 1).

Social Well-Being

In Study 1, we used the Short Positive Relations with Others Scale to measure targets' relationship well-being (Ryff, 1989) and consisted of three items including "*Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me*" (reverse-coded), "*People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others*", and "*I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others*" (reverse-coded), ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). This scale has demonstrated high internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and predictive validity across a variety of studies, diverse ethnic groups, and over time (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Lee et al., 2019). Targets self-reported on the three-item scale, and close others reported on one global item "*Tends to have positive relationships with others*". Targets' self-reports and close-other reports were analyzed separately and showed a low to moderate correlation (see Table 1). In Study 2, participants completed the full 14-item Positive

Relations with Others Scale (Ryff, 1989), ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*), and close others did not report on target social well-being. Descriptives and Cronbach's α can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Well-Being Indicators

			Stı	ıdy 1 (N	$_{Targets} = 5$	47)			
	Self-Reported			Close-Other Reported			Correlation Self- and Close-Others		
	М	SD	Cronbach a	М	SD	Cronbach a	r	р	[.95 CI]
Personal Well-Being	4.92	.92	.71	5.05	1.12	.76	.42	< .0001	[.33, .50]
Self-Esteem	5.00	.97	.88	4.86	1.36	-	.41	<.0001	[.32, .50]
Life Satisfaction	4.84	1.12	.82	5.24	1.13	-	.35	<.0001	[.25, .44]
Social Well-Being	5.35	1.11	.65	5.79	.94	-	.25	< .0001	[.15, .34]
Study 2 (<i>N</i> _{Targets} = 200)									
	Self-Reported			Close-Other Reported			Correlation Self- and Close-Others		
	М	SD	Cronbach a	М	SD	Cronbach a	r	р	[.95 CI]
Personal Well-Being	4.57	1.11	.70	-	-	-	-	-	-
Self-Esteem	4.68	1.22	.91	-	-	-	-	-	-
Life Satisfaction	4.47	1.30	.87	4.62	1.02	.87	.40	<.0001	[.26, .53]
Social Well-Being	4.97	.89	.86	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; $\alpha = \text{Cronbach's alpha}$; CI = confidence interval. All measures were assessed on a 1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree) scale.

Covariates

In both studies, we also controlled for possible confounds, namely gender, extraversion, and self-esteem, which were all chosen because each might be linked to both greater expressive accuracy and/or feelings of transparency, and thus might explain apparent links between these

two constructs. Specifically, self-esteem is associated with greater expressive accuracy in first impressions (e.g., Human et al., 2019) and feeling more transparent or authentic around others (Heppner et al., 2008). Moreover, self-esteem can capture a general sense of positive self-views, which might play a role in transparency beliefs. Extraversion has also been linked to greater expressive accuracy in first impressions (Ambady, Hallahan, & Rosenthal, 1995; Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2021), to feeling more understood (Selcuk, Gunaydin, Ong, & Almeida, 2016), and greater well-being (Costa & McCrae, 1980). Lastly, female gender has been linked to greater emotion expressivity (Hall, 1979; Zuckerman et al., 1982) and possibly to greater expressive accuracy in romantic first impressions (Kerr, Borenstein-Laurie, & Human, 2020), though this does not appear to be the case in platonic first impressions (Chan et al., 2011).

We first examine how each of these characteristics relates to our variables of interest; expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs. We then include them one at a time in analyses of expressive accuracy awareness, as well as in analyses of personal and social wellbeing. Of note, for analyses with personal well-being, we do not include self-esteem as a covariate, given its role as part of the personal well-being composite. Including these covariates did not alter conclusions presented here. Results and a brief discussion with covariates can be found in the SOM, and associated analyses can be recreated with the R code and data available on OSF: https://osf.io/grw3j/.

Analytical Approach

We conducted analyses in *R* (R Development Core Team, 2016) with the lme4 package (Bates, Maechler, Bolker, & Walker, 2014). The *R* code and raw data to recreate our primary analyses can be found here: https://osf.io/qrw3j/.

Expressive Accuracy

To measure expressive accuracy, we used the social accuracy multi-level modeling approach (SAM; Biesanz, 2010; 2020), predicting perceiver ratings of each target on each personality item by both (a) the target's personality realistic indicator (self- and close-other reports for distinctive accuracy scores) and (b) the average self-reported mean on that item (for normative accuracy scores). To improve convergence and interpretability, we followed recommendations (Biesanz, 2020) to center within-item, subtracting normative means from each target's realistic indicator personality item, and we did not reverse-code items prior to analyses to enable greater variation in accuracy slopes and statistical power. Both distinctive accuracy and normative accuracy validity predictors were allowed to vary randomly across perceivers and targets. We did not include dyadic random effects to improve model convergence, but when including them, all results held, indicating that neither the potential convergence issues nor the inclusion of dyadic random effects impacts the results presented here. The level 1 equation was as follows:

$$Y_{pti} = \beta_{0pt} + \beta_{1pt} TargetPersonality_{ti} + \beta_{2pt} NormativeMeans_i + e_{pti}$$
$$\beta_{0pt} = \beta_{00} + u_{0p} + u_{0t}$$
$$\beta_{1pt} = \beta_{10} + u_{1p} + u_{1t}$$
$$\beta_{2pt} = \beta_{20} + u_{2p} + u_{2t}$$

In this model, Y_{pti} is Perceiver *p*'s rating of Target *t* on item *i*; for example, Philip's judgment that Tiffany is a 6 on helpful and a 3 on relaxed. These perceiver ratings are grandmean centered and then predicted both by *TargetPersonality*_{ti} and *NormativeMeans*_i.

*NormativeMeans*_i reflects the mean of self-reports across all targets in the sample on any specific item *i* (e.g., people in this sample being on average 5.7 on helpful and 3.5 on relaxed), which is then grand-mean centered. *TargetPersonality*_{ti} is Target *t*'s distinctive accuracy

criterion (the target's composite of self and informant reports) on item *i* after subtracting the normative mean for that item. That is, if Tiffany and her close others rate her as a 6.5 on helpful and a 3 on relaxed, but the average person – as per normative means – is a 5.7 on helpful and a 3.5 on relaxed, Tiffany would have a distinctive score of .8 for helpful (.8 more helpful than the average person) and -.5 for relaxed (.5 less relaxed than the average person). These distinctive item scores are then grand-mean centered.

With both *TargetPersonality*^{*i*} and *NormativeMeans*^{*i*} in the model, then, β_{1pt} represents the regression coefficient for the distinctive accuracy slope controlling for the normative accuracy slope: how does Target *t*'s distinctive accuracy criterion on item *i* predict Perceiver *p*'s rating of Target *t* on the same item *i*? In other words, to what extent is Philip rating Tiffany in line with what is unique about her, beyond the extent to which he views her in line with the average person? β_{2pt} represents the regression coefficient for the normative accuracy slope: how does the average target self-report for item *i* predict Perceiver *p*'s rating of the same item *i*? In other words, to what extent is Philip rating Tiffany in line with the average person, beyond the extent to which he views what is distinctive about her? The average levels of distinctive accuracy and normative accuracy are reflected by β_{10} and β_{20} , respectively.

We examined target's *global* levels of expressive accuracy, that is, individual differences in distinctive accuracy, by examining the random effects, or the degree of reliable variation around mean levels due to targets, represented by u_{1t} . We obtained individual expressive accuracy scores for each target on average across perceivers, by extracting the empirical Bayes (EB) estimates of target distinctive accuracy random effects, u_{1t} from SAM; the best linear unbiased predictors of the average distinctive expressive accuracy component (for further details see *R* script: https://osf.io/qrw3j/; see also Rogers & Biesanz, 2019). These empirical

Bayes estimates are grand mean centered. We did this to be able to compute the correlations between actual expressive accuracy and well-being so we could directly compare those to the associations with expressive accuracy beliefs. Because the SAM framework provides a more reliable and high-powered assessment of expressive accuracy, where possible we also confirmed that all results that could be modeled within the SAM were consistent with results using the extracted scores.

Expressive Accuracy Awareness

We ran a multilevel regression using SAM, with *global expressive accuracy beliefs* (in Study 1) as a moderator of the distinctive and normative validity measures to predict new-acquaintance impressions.

The level 2 equation was as follows:

 $\beta_{0pt} = \beta_{00} + \beta_{01} ExpressiveAccuracyBeliefs_t + u_{0p} + u_{0t}$ $\beta_{1pt} = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11} ExpressiveAccuracyBeliefs_t + u_{1p} + u_{1t}$ $\beta_{2pt} = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21} ExpressiveAccuracyBeliefs_t + u_{2p} + u_{2t}$

Our primary focus is on the coefficient β_{11} , which indicates whether the linear association between target *t*'s validity criterion and perceiver *p*'s ratings of target *t* is moderated by target *t*'s expressive accuracy beliefs. Thus, a significant positive interaction would indicate that when targets' expressive accuracy tends to be higher, so do their expressive accuracy beliefs, reflecting expressive accuracy awareness.

In Study 2, we performed a parallel version of this model, including both dyadic-level (within-target) and aggregated-level (between-target) expressive accuracy beliefs as moderators within the same SAM analysis. We aggregated the expressive accuracy beliefs on average across perceivers for a given target to examine expressive accuracy awareness as a target-level process,

similar to Study 1's assessment of global beliefs at the target level. That said, aggregated beliefs in Study 2 reflect a different process than global beliefs in Study 1: whereas people in Study 1 were asked to think about whether they were seen accurately by new acquaintances in general, people in Study 2 were asked – after each interaction – to think about whether a specific perceiver viewed them accurately, and these dyadic ratings were averaged for a given target.

Analyses With Well-Being

Using the extracted expressive accuracy scores, we then ran a series of linear regressions with expressive accuracy and *global* expressive accuracy beliefs (Study 1) or *aggregated* expressive accuracy beliefs across perceivers (Study 2) as individual and then simultaneous predictors of self- and informant-reported well-being. Because the SAM framework provides a more reliable and high-powered assessment of expressive accuracy, where possible we also confirmed that all results that could be modeled within the SAM were consistent with results using the extracted scores. This was the case and all de-identified data and code needed to recreate these analyses can be found on OSF: https://osf.io/qrw3j/.

Results

Preliminary Analyses: Mean Levels of Expressive Accuracy

Overall, using the SAM framework, participants were seen with significant levels of distinctive accuracy across studies (Study 1: b = .14, z = 12.52, p < .0001; Study 2: b = .10, z = 6.61, p < .0001), indicating that people were significantly expressively accurate. That is, new acquaintances were able to accurately distinguish targets' unique personality profiles, thus replicating findings from a large body of previous research (e.g., Human et al., 2019; Human et al., 2020). This was above and beyond the high levels of normative accuracy that targets were viewed with (Study 1: b = .89, z = 49.92, p < .0001; Study 2: b = .83, z = 22.56, p < .0001).

Primary Analyses

Expressive Accuracy Awareness

Study 1: Global Expressive Accuracy Awareness. In Study 1, using SAM, greater expressive accuracy in getting-acquainted interactions was significantly associated with greater expressive accuracy beliefs (b = .04, z = 6.17, p < .0001, r = .28, 95% CI [.28, .29]). In other words, people who were generally seen more accurately tended to report generally feeling seen more accurately, suggesting global expressive accuracy awareness.

Study 2: Dyadic Expressive Accuracy Awareness. In Study 2, using SAM, we included both aggregated expressive accuracy beliefs (dyadic ratings averaged at the target level representing between-target effects) and dyadic expressive accuracy beliefs (ratings as they were collected, at the dyadic level, representing within-target effects) within the same analysis.

Within-Target Effects. We first examined whether within-target fluctuations in expressive accuracy across perceivers predicted within-target fluctuations in expressive accuracy beliefs across those perceivers, and found that this was the case (b = .02, z = 2.21, p = .030, r = .10, 95% CI [.09, .18]). In other words, targets who *were* seen more accurately by a specific perceiver tended to report *feeling* seen more accurately by that specific perceiver compared to their other perceivers, suggesting dyadic expressive accuracy awareness.

Between-Target Effects. However, when we aggregated expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs across perceivers for each target to examine between-target effects, greater expressive accuracy on average was not significantly associated with greater expressive accuracy beliefs on average (b = -.002, z = -.05, p = .958, r = .00, 95% CI [-.01, .01]). Of note, whereas the dyadic association is based on 964 data points, the aggregated association is at the target level, thus based on 200 data points.

Associations With Well-Being

Does Expressive Accuracy Independently Relate to Well-Being?

Using the saved-out expressive accuracy scores in linear regressions, in Study 1, expressive accuracy was significantly associated with greater personal and social well-being when assessed via either self- or close-other reports (see Table 2). All these associations held when controlling for global expressive accuracy beliefs (see Table 2). Of note, the association between personal well-being and expressive accuracy weakened slightly when controlling for global expressive accuracy beliefs, suggesting that expressive accuracy beliefs may partially contribute to this association, not surprisingly given its strong associations with expressive accuracy. Further, the associations with personal well-being tended to be stronger than with social well-being, and the magnitude of associations were similar for self-reported and closeother reported indicators of well-being.

In Study 2, expressive accuracy was significantly related to greater self-reported personal, but not social well-being, and did not significantly relate to close-other reported personal well-being (see Table 2). Results followed the same pattern when including expressive accuracy beliefs in the model (see Table 2). Thus, in line with previous research, expressive accuracy was related to well-being above and beyond expressive accuracy beliefs, but associations were stronger and more consistent for self-reported personal well-being.

Table 2

Study 1 ($N_{Targets} = 547$)									
		Correlations			Partial Correlations				
		r	t (df)	[.95 CI]	r	t (df)	[.95 CI]		
Personal Well-Being	Self-Reported	.28***	6.89 (543)	[.20, .36]	.22***	5.25 (541)	[.14, .30]		
	Close-Other Reported	.31***	6.13 (342)	[.22, .41]	.27***	5.25 (341)	[.17, .37]		
Social Well-Being	Self-Reported	.20***	4.77 (543)	[.12, .28]	.13**	3.12 (541)	[.05, .21]		
	Close-Other Reported	.20***	3.78 (342)	[.10, .30]	.16**	3.01 (341)	[.06, .26]		
Study 2 ($N_{Targets} = 200$)									
		Correlations			Partial Correlations				
		r	t (df)	[.95 CI]	r	t (df)	[.95 CI]		
Personal Well-Being	Self-Reported	.26***	3.84 (196)	[.13, .39]	.26 ***	3.82 (195)	[.13, .39]		
	Close-Other Reported	.07	.84 (153)	[09, .22]	.07	.89 (152)	[09, .23]		
Social Well-Being	Self-Reported	.07	.94 (196)	[07, .20]	.07	.99 (195)	[07, .21]		

Associations Between Well-Being Indicators and Expressive Accuracy

Note. Partial effects indicate associations between expressive accuracy and well-being controlling for expressive accuracy beliefs. CI = confidence interval. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Do Expressive Accuracy Beliefs Independently Relate to Well-Being?

In Study 1, global expressive accuracy beliefs were significantly related to greater self-reported and close-other reported personal well-being, as well as greater self-reported and close-other reported social well-being (see Table 3), without controlling for expressive accuracy. All of these results held when controlling for expressive accuracy, indicating that believing that one is expressively accurate may be linked to greater well-being independently of whether one is actually being seen accurately by others (see Table 3). The associations between self-reported indicators of well-being were stronger than with close-other reported indicators, which may be a function of shared method variance in the self-report ratings.

In contrast, in Study 2, aggregated dyadic expressive accuracy beliefs were not significantly related to greater self- and close-other reported personal well-being, nor were they related to self-reported social well-being (Table 3). Results followed the same pattern when

including expressive accuracy in the model. In sum, results from Study 1 suggest that having high global expressive accuracy beliefs may be linked to well-being, whereas results from Study 2 suggest that having high expressive accuracy beliefs with specific partners across a series of getting-acquainted interactions may not be (see Table 3).

Table 3

Associations Between Well-Being and Expressive Accuracy Beliefs

Study 1 ($N_{Targets} = 547$)									
			Correlatio	ons	Partial Correlations				
		r	t (df)	[.95 CI]	r	t (df)	[.95 CI]		
Personal Well-Being	Self-Reported	.30***	7.32 (542)	[.22, .37]	.25***	5.91 (541)	[.17, .32]		
	Close-Other Reported	.23***	4.38 (342)	[.13, .33]	.17**	3.13 (341)	[.06, .27]		
Social Well-Being	Self-Reported	.28***	6.91 (542)	[.21, .36]	.25***	5.93 (541)	[.17, .32]		
	Close-Other Reported	.19***	3.64 (342)	[.09, .29]	.15**	2.84 (341)	[.05, .25]		
Study 2 (<i>N</i> _{Targets} = 200)									
			Correlatio	ons	Partial Correlations				
		r	t (df)	[.95 CI]	r	t (df)	[.95 CI]		
Personal Well-Being	Self-Reported	01	11 (198)	[15, .13]	005	07 (195)	[14, .13]		
	Close-Other Reported	.13†	1.66 (154)	[03, .28]	.13	1.62 (152)	[03, .28]		
Social Well-Being	Self-Reported	.08	1.09 (198)	[06, .21]	.08	1.15 (195)	[06, .22]		

Note. Partial effects indicate associations between expressive accuracy beliefs and well-being controlling for expressive accuracy. CI = confidence interval. $^{\dagger}p < .1$, $^{\ast}p < .05$, $^{\ast\ast}p < .01$, $^{\ast\ast\ast}p < .001$

Discussion

Do people know if others perceive them accurately, demonstrating expressive accuracy awareness? And do the experiences of being and feeling accurately perceived independently foster well-being? The present research demonstrated that people do indeed tend to be aware of their expressive accuracy, both in general and with specific interaction partners. Furthermore, in Study 1, both expressive accuracy and global expressive accuracy beliefs independently related to greater personal and social well-being. In Study 2, expressive accuracy independently related to personal, but not social well-being, whereas aggregated dyadic expressive accuracy beliefs across getting-acquainted interactions did not significantly relate to either personal or social well-being.

Expressive Accuracy Awareness

We observed that people had insight into both their overall tendency to be easy-to-read in first impressions (Study 1), as well as their in-the-moment expressive accuracy levels with specific getting-acquainted partners (Study 2). The links between expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs held across studies controlling for several relevant covariates, including gender, extraversion, and self-esteem (see SOM). Thus, even though some covariates, namely extraversion and self-esteem, were related to expressive accuracy in both studies, and to global expressive accuracy beliefs in Study 1, expressive accuracy awareness was not accounted for by these variables. Furthermore, results held across studies when expressive accuracy was measured using personality self-ratings alone (instead of the composite of self- and close-other ratings) as the accuracy criterion to which new acquaintance ratings were compared (see SOM).

How strong were the observed levels of expressive accuracy awareness? Based on recent guidelines (see Funder & Ozer, 2019), we compare our results to an effect-size benchmark that is specific to the field of personality and social psychology, for which the average effect size is r = .21 (Fraley & Marks, 2007; Richard et al., 2003). This could be interpreted as a relatively large effect size in new research due to potential publication biases which could have inflated this estimate (Funder & Ozer, 2019). With this in mind, people's levels of global expressive accuracy awareness in Study 1 could be considered a moderate-large effect (r = .28), and in Study 2, people's levels of dyadic expressive accuracy awareness could be considered a small effect (r = .10). Thus, in line with previous research demonstrating that other forms of interpresonal
accuracy awareness are possible (Biesanz et al., 2011; Patterson et al., 2001; Smith et al., 1991), people seem to have some expressive accuracy awareness. However, expressive accuracy awareness was not perfect and the association was quite low at the dyadic level, suggesting that people may have better insight into their general levels of first impressions expressive accuracy than their specific expressive accuracy with a given interaction partner. This aligns with metaaccuracy research, finding that people tend to know how others view them in general to a greater extent than they tend to know how specific others view them (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993).

The difference in expressive accuracy awareness for more global vs. dyadic beliefs could be driven by methodological differences between the studies, including somewhat different personality measures and the smaller sample size in Study 2 (N = 200) compared to Study 1 (N =547). However, there could also be theoretical reasons as to why global beliefs might be more strongly related to expressive accuracy. When asked about their global beliefs, people may use a greater quantity of information on their expressive accuracy levels, drawing on a wide range of first impression experiences throughout their lives, such as job interviews, cocktail parties, first dates, in which they may have gotten feedback, either implicitly or explicitly about their expressive accuracy levels. In contrast, the dyadic measure limits people to drawing information from a brief, low-stakes interaction with a perceiver who likely provides little feedback regarding their expressive accuracy. Second, given that a person's expressive accuracy tends to be highly stable across contexts (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020) and over time (Colvin, 1993a), the dyadic expressive accuracy beliefs measure might lead targets to overestimate their fluctuations in expressive accuracy across their round robin perceivers.

Nonetheless, targets showed expressive accuracy awareness with both types of assessments. This is consistent with meta-accuracy research that has found that targets tend to

know how their personalities are seen both in general (Carlson & Furr, 2009, Carlson et al., 2010; Kenny & DePaulo, 1993) and by specific others (Carlson & Furr, 2009). Our findings complement this research, suggesting that such knowledge may apply not only to understanding *how* others view one's personality, but also to understanding *how accurately* others view one's personality.

These findings are less consistent with research examining expressive accuracy awareness within romantic relationships. For example, Pollmann & Finkenauer (2009) found that people's tendency to feel known by their romantic partner did not align with their tendency to have their personality traits accurately perceived by their partner. Thus, whereas people may be aware of their expressive accuracy in getting-acquainted contexts, they may be less aware of their expressive accuracy with their romantic partner. First, as noted in the introduction, both expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs may be quite high and less variable across persons in romantic relationships compared to first impressions, thereby constraining the strength of those relationships. Second, established romantic couples generally involve only one perceiver per target, which makes it difficult to distinguish expressive accuracy awareness as a target characteristic from perceiver- and relationship-specific effects. As we found evidence for expressive accuracy awareness both at target and dyadic levels of analysis, the nature of the interpersonal context is more likely driving the discrepancy in findings.

Implications of Expressive Accuracy Awareness

The prospect that people are aware of whether they are seen accurately both in general and by specific others may have important implications. First, given that expressive accuracy seems to be an adaptive individual characteristic to develop (e.g., Allport, 1937; Human et al., 2019; Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020), and that awareness may be an important antecedent to

change and growth (Ownsworth et al., 2002; Parloff et al., 1954), people's awareness of their low expressive accuracy could enable them to learn to increase their tendency to reveal their personality.

Second, with dyadic awareness, if people recognize how accurately they are being perceived in a given interaction, they could attempt to adjust their behavior during the interaction to enhance, or reduce, that accuracy, depending on their motivations and the context. For example, in platonic contexts where accuracy promotes being liked (Human et al., 2013; 2020), targets are who are not being perceived accurately could attempt to correct that. Thus, expressive accuracy awareness could inform self-presentation attempts, facilitating smoother interaction.

Associations With Well-Being

Expressive Accuracy and Well-Being

In Study 1, expressive accuracy was associated with self- and close-other reported personal and social well-being. In Study 2, expressive accuracy was only significantly associated with self-reports of personal well-being. That expressive accuracy relates to well-being aligns with a host of previous findings (Human et al., 2014; 2019; Human & Biesanz, 2011; see Mignault & Human, 2019 for review), but the key contribution of the present research was to examine whether expressive accuracy beliefs explain this association. When controlling for global expressive accuracy beliefs in Study 1, the strength of the associations reduced from medium to small in the case of personal well-being and stayed small in the case of social wellbeing, but both remained significant (see SOM for slightly differing pattern of results for social well-being when using self-ratings only as accuracy criterion). In Study 2, when controlling for aggregated dyadic expressive accuracy beliefs across getting-acquainted interactions, the effect of expressive accuracy on self-reported personal well-being remained moderately strong. That is,

targets who were accurately perceived in first impressions had higher well-being levels, regardless of how expressively accurate they believed themselves to be in general or across those first impression interactions. In sum, feeling accurately perceived does not appear to fully account for the relationship between being accurately perceived and well-being.

How might expressive accuracy promote personal well-being independently of one's beliefs or explicit awareness? For example, self-disclosure, which likely promotes expressive accuracy by making available relevant cues about the self, is an intrinsically pleasing experience (Jourard, 1971; Tamir & Mitchell, 2012), and thus those who self-disclose may feel good simply by virtue of sharing information about the self. Additionally, emotional expressivity, which is linked to personality expressive accuracy (Ambady, Hallahan, & Rosenthal, 1995; Andersen, 1984; Beer & Brooks, 2011; Beer & Watson, 2010; Letzring & Human, 2014; see Mignault & Human, 2019 for review), has been linked to adaptive physiological responses (Dan-Glauser & Gross, 2015), and emotion suppression to maladaptive physiological responses (Butler et al., 2003). Thus, these implicit responses to sharing personally relevant information may contribute to global personal well-being levels regardless of expressive accuracy beliefs or awareness levels.

Expressive accuracy may also benefit social well-being independently of explicit awareness, possibly by promoting a sense of fluency and familiarity to perceivers (Langlois & Roggman, 1990; Reber et al., 2004; Reis et al., 2011; but see Norton et al., 2007), as well as a greater sense of predictability and control (De La Ronde & Swann, 1998; Hardin & Higgins, 1996), in turn promoting positive relationship outcomes such as liking and relationship satisfaction. However, in Study 2, we did not find that expressive accuracy was significantly associated with greater social well-being, and in Study 1, links with social well-being were

weaker than with personal well-being (see also SOM for results with self-ratings alone as the accuracy criterion). Other research indicates that expressive accuracy may be detrimental to social goals in some contexts, such as first dates (Kerr, Tissera, et al., 2020). It is therefore important for future research to continue to examine the role of expressive accuracy in social well-being, to determine the robustness and nature of the associations.

Expressive Accuracy Beliefs and Well-Being

Importantly, in line with extensive previous research on related indicators such as felt authenticity (Wood et al., 2008), felt understanding (Lun et al., 2008), and self-verification (Oishi et al., 2008), global expressive accuracy beliefs as an individual difference, in Study 1, was associated with personal and social well-being. However, an important additional step of the present research was to examine whether global expressive accuracy beliefs were associated with well-being above and beyond its association to expressive accuracy in first impressions, and this was indeed the case. That is, people who believed they were generally expressively accurate had higher well-being, even if they did not actually tend to be expressively accurate in first impressions. Of note, these results were consistent across both self- and close-other reports of well-being, indicating that the link between well-being and expressive accuracy beliefs exists beyond self-report bias (Block & Thomas, 1955; Colvin et al., 1995; Shedler et al., 1993), though the effects were consistently smaller for links with close-other reports. This may be due to the shared-method variance for self-reports, or more theoretically, to the more intrapersonal benefits of expressive accuracy beliefs, perhaps less perceptible to close others.

In contrast, in Study 2, aggregated expressive accuracy beliefs with specific interaction partners were not associated with personal or social well-being. One possible interpretation for this divergence might be that, in Study 1, targets not only relied on interactions they just had to

inform their subsequent global expressive accuracy beliefs ratings, but also on other, possibly higher-stakes first impressions experiences, which might be more relevant to well-being. Alternatively, this difference could potentially be a function of lower power to detect an effect within Study 2.

What explains the association between global expressive accuracy beliefs and well-being beyond actual expressive accuracy? Perhaps believing that one is expressively accurate, regardless of whether one is or not, is beneficial because this is a socially desirable characteristic. Specifically, the qualities associated with expressive accuracy such as authenticity (Harter, 2002; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Wood et al., 2008) and coherence (Pallant & Lae, 2002) are considered positive and socially desirable, so believing one is expressively accurate may reflect holding positive self-views. In turn, positive self-views have been found to promote and maintain psychological health and social functioning (Block & Thomas, 1955; Gjerde et al., 1988; Kendall et al., 1989; Taylor & Brown, 1994). Nevertheless, expressive accuracy beliefs do not appear to be entirely redundant with holding positive self-views, as the associations between expressive accuracy beliefs and social well-being, for example, held controlling for self-esteem, a marker of positive self-views. For instance, beyond positivity, people who believe others see them accurately may also tend to feel more understood by others – that is, not only accurately perceived but also accepted and validated, which is likely to promote well-being (Murray et al., 2002; Pollmann & Finkenauer, 2009).

Beyond the potential psychosocial mechanisms considered, it is worth acknowledging that random measurement error, in expressive accuracy and/or beliefs, may have limited our statistical ability to partial out the effect of each construct on well-being when examining the

other (Westfall & Yarkoni, 2016). This may have resulted in apparent independent contributions of either expressive accuracy or beliefs which could in part stem from methodological artifacts.

Limitations and Future Research

The present studies had multiple strengths and limitations. A considerable strength of this research was the round-robin paradigm, which involved multiple perceiver ratings per target. This allowed us to isolate target effects in examining the relationships among expressive accuracy, expressive accuracy beliefs, and well-being. Further, our design allowed us to examine both broad tendencies to be and feel accurately perceived in Study 1 and within-target fluctuations in these tendencies across a series of perceivers in Study 2. Another strength of our design was the inclusion of close-other reports of well-being in addition to self-reports, to ensure that the link between self-reported expressive accuracy beliefs and well-being was not merely a result of shared-method variance. Ideally, future research will examine global and dyadic expressive accuracy awareness within the same study, with participants rating the extent to which they felt accurately perceived by each of their interaction partners in addition to rating their global expressive accuracy beliefs, in order to disentangle discrepancies in the links with well-being.

Importantly, with the present cross-sectional design, we could not explore the directionality of the associations with well-being, but this may be possible via experimental manipulations of expressive accuracy (e.g., instructing participants to be themselves), expressive accuracy beliefs (e.g., providing bogus feedback), and well-being (e.g., priming of positively or negatively-valenced memories).

Furthermore, given our relatively homogeneous sample of healthy, predominantly female, undergraduate students (Ley & Young, 1998; Nielsen et al., 2017), future work should

examine expressive accuracy awareness in more diverse samples, such as specific clinical or intergroup contexts. For example, research suggests that people who suffer from borderline personality disorder (e.g., Fonagy et al., 2015; Lazarus et al., 2018) and people from stereotyped minority groups (e.g., Herek et al., 2009; Shelton et al., 2014) may readily expect to be misperceived by others, which may result in lower well-being even when accurately perceived.

Conclusion

In sum, the present research found that people are aware of the extent to which they express their true selves to others. That is, those who believe that others see who they really are, indeed tend to be seen in line with their personality in first impressions, demonstrating expressive accuracy awareness. Across studies, expressive accuracy was independently related to well-being. Expressive accuracy beliefs, when measured as a global tendency, but not when averaged over a series of getting-acquainted interactions, was also independently associated with well-being. Thus, feeling and being expressively accurate in first impressions tend to go hand-inhand and appear to have independent links with well-being.

Open Practices

The two studies in the present article obtained Open Materials and Open Data badges for transparent practices. Materials and data for the studies are available on the Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/qrw3j/.

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Bridge Between Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

If "knowledge itself is power" as Francis Bacon posited in his in his *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597), then we may have some power over our tendency to be accurately perceived. In Chapter 1 (Manuscript 1), we demonstrated that people knew the extent to which they revealed their personality in first impressions. We first found that people were conscious, on a global level, of their general tendency to be an open book or mysterious. We then found that people also had a more fine-grained knowledge, as they were able to track fluctuations in how accurately they were perceived, from one first impression interaction to another. Furthermore, we observed that expressive accuracy was related to well-being above and beyond beliefs or awareness. In parallel, global expressive accuracy. Taken together, these results highlight how expressive accuracy may not merely be associated to well-being because it promotes the subjective experience of "feeling seen"; actually "being seen", particularly in line with what is unique about the self, appears to have its own independent role in well-being.

Despite the positive processes consistently associated with expressive accuracy, we have yet to examine whether people can improve their expressive accuracy levels. Indeed, although awareness may facilitate the control of one's expressive accuracy, it may not be necessary or systematically enable it. Therefore, we asked: Beyond *knowing* our expressive accuracy levels, do we have power over how we *behave* to enhance our expressive accuracy levels?

In Chapter 2, we explored whether a simple experimental intervention, inviting randomly assigned targets to *be themselves* before a video interview, promoted expressive accuracy as well as downstream personal and social benefits, namely target post-interview self-esteem and life satisfaction as well as likability.

Chapter 2:

Just Be Yourself?

Effects of an Authenticity Manipulation on Expressive Accuracy in First Impressions

Mignault, M. C., Kerr, L. G., & Human, L. H. (2022). *Just Be Yourself*? Effects of an Authenticity Manipulation on Expressive Accuracy in First Impressions. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*. Advance Online Publication. doi: 10.1177/19485506221101000

R code and raw data to recreate the primary analyses are provided on the Open Science Framework: https://osf.io/pkt92/

Abstract

Does the common advice to "be yourself" lead people to reveal who they truly are? And what broader personal and social implications might this advice bear? In an experimental firstimpressions study, we examined whether a manipulation instructing some people to be themselves (vs. no explicit instructions) led targets to have their unique personality profiles more accurately perceived, and carried personal and social benefits. Specifically, 204 targets participated in a video interview, with half the targets told to "be yourself" before the interview. Then, 373 observers watched subsets of target video interviews. Overall, the manipulation led targets to be seen with greater distinctive accuracy, especially on their more observable and evaluative self-aspects. However, the manipulation did not significantly influence impression normativity, target likability, nor target post-interview well-being. In sum, being told to be oneself elicits more accurate first impression perceptions but may not bear immediate personal or social consequences.

"Be brave. Be you." (Brené Brown, 2014; Oprah Magazine).

"Unless you're Oprah, 'be yourself' is terrible advice" (Adam Grant, 2016; New York Times).

Before a first date or a job interview, people often receive the advice to "just be yourself". Is this advice effective? Does telling people to "be yourself" lead them to indeed express their unique personality characteristics more accurately? Further, does this advice bear positive or negative consequences? Historically, behaving coherently and authentically has long been a posited hallmark of psychological and social adjustment (e.g., Harter, 2002; Kierkegaard, 1943/1843; Maslow, 1968; Rousseau, 1964/1761; Sartre, 1943). However, in recent pop-culture opinion pieces, scientists have diverged, with some claiming that being yourself is "terrible advice" likely leading people to behave in disinhibited, socially inappropriate ways (Grant, 2016; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2020). To shed light on these competing possibilities, we examined the implications of giving others the advice "be yourself" via an experimental manipulation, which we term *authenticity manipulation*, in first impressions. Specifically, we explored whether telling participants to be themselves enhanced their *expressive accuracy* – the tendency to be viewed in line with one's unique personality profile – and whether it influenced state well-being and likability.

Defining Expressive Accuracy

First, how do we define expressive accuracy? We use the term *expressive accuracy* to reflect the extent to which a target's distinct personality is accurately perceived on average across a number of previously unacquainted observers. To this end, we need an indicator of one's actual personality as an *accuracy criterion*, against which to compare first-impression

observations. In the present research, we indexed targets' actual personality based on the composite of self- and close-other ratings (see Funder, 1995). Next, using a profile approach, we examined the extent to which previously unacquainted observers saw targets in line with their accuracy criterion across a wide range of personality items simultaneously (see Human et al., 2019). That is, on Ted's first day at the office, can his new colleagues see that he is more helpful than assertive, and more assertive than relaxed?

Specifically, we wanted to examine whether the manipulation led targets to reveal what was unique about them. To do so, we disentangled two sources of information which observers rely on when forming impressions: "*distinctive accuracy*", relying on a specific target's idiosyncratic cues, and "*normative accuracy*", relying on information about how people tend to be in general (Biesanz, 2020; Cronbach, 1955). For example, if Ted's new colleague Patrick accurately sees him as more helpful than assertive, and this is how most people are, it is unclear whether Patrick specifically understands Ted's idiosyncratic tendencies, or simply understands people in general. Therefore, we control for normative accuracy and examine distinctive accuracy: does Patrick see the extent to which Ted is even more helpful than assertive compared to the average person? In parallel to reflecting profile, within-target accuracy, this approach also reflects item-wise between-target accuracy, such as perceiving whether Ted is less assertive than others and more helpful than others (Biesanz, 2020). Thus, we define *expressive accuracy* as the extent to which a person's personality profile is perceived normatively.

Importantly, the normative profile not only reflects the average target's personality, but also the average person's tendency to rate oneself based on item desirability (Edwards, 1953; Leising et al., 2013; Rogers & Biesanz, 2015; Wessels et al., 2020). As such, "normative

accuracy" not only reflects perceiving how a target aligns with the average profile, but also with what is positive and socially desirable. Although highly correlated (generally above r=.80; Edwards, 1953; 1957; Wood & Furr, 2016), normative accuracy and social desirability appear to have independent associations with personal and social outcomes (Rogers & Biesanz, 2015; Wessels et al., 2020), requiring caution in interpreting normative accuracy when social desirability is not partialled out (Wessels et al., 2020). In the present research we deliberately controlled for this blended indicator of average and positive self-aspects (Wood & Furr, 2016), to specifically examine how the manipulation influenced targets' distinctive profiles. Of note, distinctive accuracy is independent of normative accuracy and evaluatively neutral, as people could deviate from the normative profile both in desirable and non-desirable ways, such as being more vs. less reliable than the average person (see Kerr, Tissera, et al., 2020; Leising et al., 2015).

"Being Yourself" and Expressive Accuracy

But how might trying to "be yourself" lead to being more accurately perceived? According to the Realistic Accuracy Model (RAM; Funder, 1995), for accurate personality judgments to take place, targets must provide *relevant* cues, and make those cues *available* to observers, who then *detect* and appropriately *utilize* the cues to correctly infer targets" personalities. Although targets can influence all these stages, including perceivers' attention and motivation to detect and correctly interpret their cues (e.g., Human et al., 2012), instructions to "be yourself" may most likely promote expressive accuracy by leading targets to reveal relevant cues about themselves. But how?

Such instructions may lead them to *behave* congruently with their unique personality, formally termed distinctive personality-behavior congruence (Sherman et al., 2012), which has

been associated with distinctively accurate first impressions (Human et al., 2019). Alternatively, they may *verbally* provide more self-relevant information. Indeed, those motivated to be viewed in line with who they are tend to provide more personally-relevant – albeit not necessarily systematically accurate – narratives (Rice & Pasupathi, 2010), which have been found to enable distinctively accurate in-person first impressions (Wallace & Biesanz, 2020). Lastly, in situations where people report feeling that they can "be themselves", they also report feeling more relaxed (Lenton et al., 2016), which at the trait level, relates to accurately expressing one's less observable distinctive personality characteristics (Human et al., 2020).

Indeed, instructions to "be yourself" could lead to accurately expressing certain selfaspects over others based on how observable or socially evaluative these self-aspects are. Regarding observability, the authenticity manipulation could especially affect less observable items, such as forgiving, which tend to be seen less accurately (e.g., Funder & Dobroth, 1987), thus affording greater room for improvement. Alternatively, more observable items, such as outgoing, generally have clearer behavioral manifestations (e.g., talking a lot), making them easier to control and amplify on demand. For evaluativeness, more socially evaluative selfaspects (e.g., reliable) tend to be viewed less accurately (John & Robins, 1993), perhaps partly due to self-presentational goals to conceal unique standing on such characteristics. The manipulation could potentially reduce these self-presentational goals, thereby especially enhancing accuracy on evaluative items. Alternatively, people may feel more comfortable revealing their more neutral characteristics (e.g., tense), therefore selectively (consciously or not) providing more relevant cues on such items. In sum, we examined whether people can voluntarily increase how much they reveal their unique personality and, in exploratory analyses, whether this depends on item observability and evaluativeness.

Consequences of "Being Yourself"

Beyond potentially fostering personality expressive accuracy, prior research suggests that the act of being oneself may hold personal and social benefits. In terms of correlational evidence, behaving congruently with one's distinctive personality profile has been linked to greater wellbeing (Human et al., 2014; Human et al., 2019). In terms of experimental evidence, in-lab inductions of "felt authenticity", the subjective experience of acting "in accord with one's true self" (Harter, 2002, p. 382), have promoted positive affect, life satisfaction, or meaning in life (Kifer et al., 2013; Thomaes et al., 2017; Schlegel et al., 2009), and socially-appropriate behaviors (Gino et al., 2010). However, these experimental studies have manipulated people's subjective experience of authenticity (e.g., via recalling past inauthentic behavior), rather than their tendency to increase "authentic" cues. Thus, the present study tests for the first time whether direct, explicit instructions to be oneself enhance expressive accuracy and carry immediate psychological and social benefits, enhancing state well-being and likability.

Methods

All procedures were approved by the University's ethics review board. Hypotheses and analyses conducted in the present research were not pre-registered because portions of data from Wave 1 were already analyzed for an undergraduate honours thesis in 2016, before preregistration was relatively standard. Study codebook, de-identified data, and R code for analyses are available on the Open Science Framework: [https://osf.io/pkt92/]. We state all data exclusions, analyses conducted, and variables pertaining to the present research questions¹.

¹ Wave 1 target and observer data were used to address a different research question in a recently published paper (Latif et al., 2021). A different manuscript used a subset of eight target videos as stimuli with a different sample of observers (Capozzi et al., 2020).
Overview

Our primary aim was to determine whether we could enhance expressive accuracy via simple instructions to "be yourself". Following previous work demonstrating that personality accuracy can be enhanced in first impressions for observers (Biesanz & Human, 2010) or targets (Human et al., 2012), we used a similar procedure involving experimenter-delivered instructions in a video-interview design. In the first phase, targets completed questionnaires and participated in a video interview, with half the targets randomly assigned to the authenticity manipulation in which they were instructed to "be themselves" during the interview. In the second phase, previously unacquainted observers watched subsets of target videos and provided impression ratings for each target.

We first examined the influence of the manipulation on expressive accuracy. Second, we examined whether the manipulation led people to reveal certain types of items over others, based on item observability or evaluativeness. Third, we examined immediate consequences of the manipulation on state well-being and likability. In addition, we controlled for possible confounds, namely trait self-esteem and gender, and conducted exploratory analyses examining several potential mechanisms at the cue relevance and other stages of the Realistic Accuracy Model (Funder, 1995). Covariate and mechanism analyses can be found in Supplementary Online Materials (SOM; p.1-10).

Target Phase

Participants

We determined our sample size of targets based on current sample size standards (200-250 participants) for sufficient power to detect the average effect size in personality and social psychology research (r=.21; Richard et al., 2003; Fraley & Vazire, 2014). Thus, we aimed to

obtain a sample of 200 targets, and the final sample consisted of 204 targets (136 women; M_{Age} =20.90, SD_{Age} =2.79). Eligible participants were recruited from the undergraduate student participant pool, and were at least 18 years old. Participants predominantly identified as Caucasian/European (*n*=144), followed by Black/African (*n*=16) and East/South East/South Asian (*n*=13). Each participant was compensated \$15 or 1 course credit. Targets also provided the contact information of up to three close others (*N*_{CloseOthers}=270, *M*_{Close-OtherAge}=29.44, *SD*_{Close-OtherAge}=14.25), who were invited via email as informants to report on the target's personality. Overall, 54 participants had no informant, 60 participants had one, 60 participants had two, and 30 participants had three informants.

Procedure

Targets came into the lab individually. First, they completed an initial questionnaire about their personality. In this manuscript, we only examined a subset of questionnaires administered in the study. The study codebook with all available measures, experimenter protocol, and script is provided here: [https://osf.io/pkt92/]. Following the initial questionnaire, experimenters explained the video-interview portion of the study, telling all targets that this study was about accuracy of impressions, and that their videos would later be rated by observer participants. Control targets did not receive additional instructions before the interview. In contrast, experimental targets were told:

"Please try to be yourself as much as possible throughout the interview. That is, try to express yourself as accurately as possible to the interviewer and any others who may view your video in the future. Do you understand?".

This study included two waves. In Wave 1 ($N_{Targets}$ =105), an interviewer was present to ask video-interview questions. This interviewer was absent during the instructions, thus blind to

the condition. In Wave 2 ($N_{Targets}$ =99), targets faced the camera alone, and read interview questions from a sheet provided by the experimenter. Study results were consistent across the two waves and were not moderated by wave (all *ps*>.255). Thus, we used the full sample with the two waves combined².

Interview. During the interview, targets answered eight questions, including "*what are your passions?*" and "*what do you do in your leisure time?*". The full list of interview questions is available in the study codebook: [https://osf.io/pkt92/]. Target interviews on average lasted 9.73 minutes (*SD*=4.16). To create target video-sets for observer viewing, video-interviews were edited to only include responses to the two interview questions stated above (*M_{Video-} ClipLengthPerTarget*=1.79 minutes; *SD_{Video-ClipLengthPerTarget*=0.74 minutes). We selected these two questions as they have been used in prior research, and were initially derived from online dating websites (e.g., Match.com) in an effort to reflect real-world getting-acquainted contexts (Human et al., 2014). In total, each set of videoclips was on average 23.23 minutes (*SD*=0.96 minutes).}

Personality Ratings. Targets' self- and close-other ratings of personality included the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999), with items such as "*Is full of energy*", and three intelligence items, including "*Is intelligent*", "*Is bright*", "*Receives very good grades*", on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). For our accuracy criterion (e.g., Funder, 1995), we averaged target self-reports and close-other reports on a 24-item subset that paralleled observer ratings (see below). Specifically, for each item, close-other reports for a given target were first averaged together, and then averaged with target self-ratings. For targets without close-other reports, we used only self-reports.

Measures

² Study results moderated by wave can be recreated with R code here: [https://osf.io/pkt92/]

Manipulation Check. Targets rated how much they felt they "were themselves" via two single items, "*I really tried to be myself during the interview*" and "*I behaved in line with my personality*", on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale, averaged into a composite (M=5.82, SD=0.92, α =.78, r=.65).

Target Post-Interview Well-Being. Targets completed a single item assessing selfesteem "*I have high self-esteem*" (*M*=4.76, *SD*=1.55) and life satisfaction "*I am satisfied with my life*" (*M*=5.08, *SD*=1.45), on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. These items were averaged as a composite of post-interview well-being (*M*=4.92, *SD*=1.31, α =.68, *r*=.52).

Observer Phase

Participants

The sample consisted of 373 observers (204 women; M_{Age} =22.32, SD_{Age} =6.09), recruited from the undergraduate student participant pool. Eligible participants were at least 18 years old. Participants predominantly identified as Caucasian/European (*n*=229), followed by Black/African (*n*=44) and East/South East/South Asian (*n*=32). Each participant was compensated \$20 or 2 course credits. Wave 1 included 94 observers and Wave 2 included 279 observers.

Procedure

Observers came into the lab to watch 9 to 15 target video interviews (*MdnTargetVideosPerObserver*=10), and each target was viewed by 10 to 54 observers (*MdnObserversPerTargetVideo*=14), totalling 4177 unique observer-target pairs. After each target video, observers rated the target's personality and likability. We only retained previously unacquainted observer-target pairs (*NPairs*=4083; *NPairsWave1*=1360; *NPairsWave2*=2723).³

³ In the context of a separate research question for a different manuscript, observers in Wave 2 were also randomly assigned an experimental manipulation, either to view targets through a platonic or romantic lens. This observer

Measures

Personality Ratings. Following each target video, observers rated the target's personality on a 21-item subset of the BFI (John & Srivastava, 1999; see Human & Biesanz, 2011 for the specific items), as well as the same three intelligence items used in the target phase, on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale.

Target Likability. Following each video, observers also rated the likability of each target (M = 4.80, SD = 1.33), based on the following item: "*Is very likable*", on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. Given that we were interested in likability as a target-level characteristic, we estimated the mean of likability ratings across observers for a given target, thus providing each target with an individual likability score (*M*=4.85, *SD*=0.71).

Item Characteristics: Observability and Evaluativeness

We obtained a separate sample of undergraduate students from the same population (N=106) to rate the 24 personality items in terms of how "observable or visible" they were, on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale (M=4.77; SD=.88). They also rated items' social desirability, on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale (M=4.95; SD=1.67). We then transformed social desirability ratings into evaluativeness levels by mean-centering scores, followed by squaring scores to obtain a continuum from neutral to strongly socially evaluative.

Analytical Approach

We conducted analyses in *R* (R Development Core Team, 2016) with the lme4 package (Version 1.1-21; Bates et al., 2014). See *R* code and raw data to recreate our primary analyses here: [https://osf.io/pkt92/]. To measure accuracy, we used the social accuracy multi-level

manipulation was not the focus of the present research, and including it as a covariate in the present study analyses did not alter our conclusions (see [https://osf.io/pkt92/] for procedure details in Study Codebook and for R code and data to recreate this analysis).

modeling approach (SAM; Biesanz, 2020). Specifically, we predicted observer ratings of each target on each personality item by both (a) the target's personality accuracy criterion (self- and close-other reports for distinctive accuracy) and (b) the average target self-reported mean on that item (for normative accuracy). Both distinctive and normative accuracy criterions were allowed to vary randomly across observers and targets. To test our primary question of whether the authenticity manipulation influenced expressive accuracy, we included the dummy-coded manipulation (i.e., control condition=0, experimental condition=1) as a moderator of the distinctive and normative validity criterion measures to predict observer impressions. In this model, we then added an additional moderator for item type, to examine whether the condition influenced expressive accuracy to a greater extent based on item observability or evaluativeness (including item-characteristic moderators one at a time in the model). Multi-level equation details are available in SOM (p.11-12). We then ran linear regressions, examining the effect of the manipulation on the manipulation check and target outcomes, including post-interview well-being and perceived likability.

Effect Sizes. For multi-level SAM analyses examining the effect of the authenticity manipulation on distinctive and normative accuracy, both on average across items, and at different levels of item observability and evaluativeness, we calculated effect sizes (ds) as the change in distinctive and normative accuracy slopes when shifting from control to experimental condition, divided by the target random-effect standard deviation estimate for that slope (see Orehek et al., 2020). Given the large sample of observations, we estimated 95% confidence intervals (CIs) with the Wald method, using the lme4 package (see Human et al., 2020; Orehek et al., 2020). We also calculated Cohen's d effect sizes for our linear regression analyses, using the psych package for Cohen's d 95%CIs.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Mean Levels of Observer Impressions

On average, observers viewed targets' personality with significant levels of distinctive accuracy, b=0.12, z=6.51, p<.001, thereby accurately detecting targets' unique, self- and close-other reported personality profile. Observers also viewed targets in line with the normative profile on average across all personality items, b=0.66, z=23.40, p<.001, thus viewing targets in a quite positive, socially desirable light.

Item Observability. In line with previous research (e.g., Human & Biesanz, 2011), items ranked as more observable (e.g., outgoing) were viewed with greater distinctive accuracy (b=.06, z=14.08, p<.0001), but items ranked as *less* observable were viewed with greater normative accuracy (b=-.26, z=-27.57, p<.0001). That is, observers may have access to plenty of cues to accurately perceive targets' standing on more observable characteristics, but may need to fill in the gaps with normative information for less observable characteristics.

Item Evaluativeness. Items ranked as more evaluative (e.g., outgoing) were viewed with both lower distinctive (b=-.01, z=-6.79, p<.0001) and normative (b=-.02, z=-9.26, p<.0001) accuracy. Thus, in judging someone's standing on highly evaluative characteristics, observers may rely on information other than a person's distinctive ratings or the average person's ratings, possibly because these characteristics elicit stronger biases both in targets and observers (John & Robins, 1993).

Authenticity Manipulation Check

The authenticity manipulation significantly enhanced people's tendency to *feel* that they were being themselves, b=0.35, t=2.79, p=.006, d=0.39, 95%CI [0.11, 0.67], as targets in the

experimental condition reported feeling that they behaved in line with their true selves (M=6.00; SD=0.80) to a greater extent than their control counterparts (M=5.65; SD=0.99), suggesting that targets in the experimental condition paid attention to manipulation instructions.

Primary Results: Authenticity Manipulation and Expressive Accuracy

Distinctive Accuracy

Critically, were people in the authenticity condition seen more in line with their true selves? Overall, the manipulation significantly enhanced distinctive accuracy, b=0.09, z=2.51, p=.013, d=0.36, 95% CI [0.08, 0.64]. Specifically, the experimental condition led targets to be perceived significantly more in line with their unique personality profile, b=0.17, z=6.39, p<.001, compared to controls, b=0.08, z=3.09, p=.002. Importantly, when removing two outliers in the experimental condition with expressive accuracy scores three standard deviations above the mean, the effect held and was quite similar in magnitude, b=0.08, z=2.14, p=.034, d=0.31, 95%CI [0.03, 0.60], with experimental targets seen with greater distinctive accuracy, b=.15, z=5.96, p<.001, than control targets, b=.08, z=3.23, p=.001.

Normative Accuracy

The manipulation did not significantly impact normative accuracy, b=-0.05, z=-1.28, p=.202, d=-0.19, 95%CI [-0.48, 0.10]. Thus, targets who were instructed to be themselves were not seen significantly more or less in line with the average, socially desirable personality profile, b=0.63, z=17.60, p<.001, compared to controls, b=0.69, z=19.98, p<.001.

Lastly, the manipulation did not affect the model's intercept, b=-.04, z=-1.38, p=.168, reflecting the predicted mean rating across observers, targets, and items, and not of substantive interest.

Moderating Role of Item Characteristics

Item Observability

Importantly, authenticity instructions interacted with item observability to predict distinctive accuracy (b=.04, z=4.79, p<.0001), promoting greater distinctive accuracy only for items high (b=.12, z=3.23 p=.001, d=0.48, 95%CI [0.19, 0.77]), but not low (b=.05, z=1.32, p=.189, d=0.20, 95%CI [-0.10, 0.49]) in observability. Thus, in addition to people's general tendency to be perceived with greater distinctive accuracy on more observable traits, receiving instructions to be yourself may lead one to amplify even more those observable self-aspects (see Figure 1). Further, the authenticity condition interacted with item observability to predict normative accuracy (b=.07, z=3.51, p<.001), decreasing normative accuracy for items low (b=-.10, z=-2.19, p=.029, d=-0.34, 95%CI [-0.65, -0.04]), but not high (b=.02, z=.39, p=.695, d=0.06, 95%CI [-0.26, 0.38]) in observability. Thus, observers may rely less on normative information in judging experimental targets' less observable characteristics potentially because they relied more – albeit non-significantly – on experimental targets' distinctive information for those items.

Figure 1

Authenticity Manipulation Effect on Distinctive Accuracy Based on Item Observability



Authenticity Manipulation Condition

Note. Distinctive accuracy levels based on item observability (± 1 SD) in control and experimental conditions. The graph shows the mean unstandardized fixed effects partial regression coefficients, with error bars illustrating ± 1 SE.

Item Evaluativeness

Authenticity instructions also interacted with item evaluativeness to influence distinctive accuracy (b=.01, z=2.38, p=.017), fostering distinctive accuracy for evaluative items (b=.11, z=3.01, p=.003, d=0.46, 95%CI [0.16, 0.76]) more than for neutral items (b=.08, z=2.07, p=.040, d=0.32, 95%CI [0.02, 0.62]), albeit influencing both significantly. Thus, although people generally express their distinct standing on more evaluative, socially valuable items less accurately, instructions to "be yourself" led them to express evaluative self-aspects with almost as much distinctive accuracy as less evaluative ones (see Figure 2). Additionally, the authenticity condition interacted with item evaluativeness to predict normative accuracy (b=-.01, z=-3.01, p=.003), though simple slopes were not statistically significant for either high (b=-.06, z=-1.32, p=.189, d=-0.20, 95%CI [-0.50, 0.10]) or low (b=.01, z=-.24, p=.813, d=0.04, 95%CI [-0.29, 0.20]

0.37]) evaluativeness. However, the simple slope pattern suggests that observers may rely less on normative information in judging experimental targets' evaluative characteristics, perhaps due to relying more on targets' distinctive levels for those items.

Figure 2





Authenticity Manipulation Condition

Note. Distinctive accuracy levels based on item evaluativeness (± 1 SD) in control and experimental conditions. The graph shows the mean unstandardized fixed effects partial regression coefficients, with error bars illustrating ± 1 SE.

Additional Analyses: Authenticity Manipulation and Target Outcomes

Target personal well-being and likability did not differ significantly based on the manipulation. Thus, targets instructed to be themselves were not viewed as more, or less, likable by observers, b=-0.03, t=-0.25, p=.801, d=-0.04, 95%CI [-0.31, 0.24], nor did they report significantly better, or worse, post-interview well-being, b=0.03, t=0.15, p=.882, d=0.02, 95%CI [-0.25, 0.30].

Discussion

It appears that people can turn up, on demand, the extent to which they accurately express their unique personality profiles, such as whether they are more helpful than assertive. That is, targets in the authenticity condition were seen significantly more in line with their distinctive personality profile. Notably, the "be yourself" manipulation especially promoted accuracy on more observable and socially evaluative items. It may be that people amplify more observable characteristics (e.g., outgoing) because these characteristics have clear behavioral manifestations, such as talking a lot, which may be easier to control. Conversely, the present low-stakes setting may have limited opportunities for targets to reveal less observable characteristics, such as how forgiving they are. In terms of evaluativeness, the manipulation fostered targets' expressive accuracy for their neutral self-aspects (e.g., tense), but even more so for their highly evaluative self-aspects (e.g., reliable). Thus, when told to "be yourself", targets may be willing and able to reveal what is more socially evaluative about them, providing observers with insight into the characteristics they likely care most about.

Moreover, targets instructed to be themselves were not viewed more in line with the average, socially favourable personality profile, nor were they perceived as more likable, and they did not report any significant changes to their well-being. Thus, simply giving the advice "be yourself" may be effective, leading to more accurate personality expression, yet may not bear immediate social or psychological consequences in such low-stakes first impressions.

Authenticity Manipulation and Expressive Accuracy

Why did instructions to be oneself enhance expressive accuracy? Exploratory analyses of potential mechanisms suggest that the authenticity manipulation may have particularly influenced expressive accuracy via the relevance stage, leading targets to *behave more*

congruently on their highly observable and evaluative self-aspects, and to *verbally disclose more self-relevant information*. Analyses and discussion for all potential mechanisms explored are available in SOM (p.3-10).

The present research complements previous experimental work demonstrating the malleability of accuracy in similar video-interview designs. For example, observers told to "*try to form an accurate perception*" saw targets' distinct personalities more accurately (Biesanz & Human, 2010), and targets told to "*make a good impression*" led observers to pay more attention to them and in turn to see them with both greater distinctive accuracy and positivity (Human et al., 2012). Thus, our study extends this prior work, showing that directly instructing targets to reveal their true selves may fuel their active role in the overall accuracy process, thus representing an additional pathway to enhance distinctive accuracy. Future research may also examine potential synergistic effects of instructing targets to be themselves as well as instructing observers to accurately perceive targets, thereby simultaneously capitalizing on both the target and the perceiver roles in the accuracy process.

Given the simplicity of the experimental instructions provided, these results suggest an easy intervention to enhance expressive accuracy, which may be useful given that being viewed accurately is linked to both greater well-being (e.g., Human et al., 2014; 2019) and being liked more (Human et al., 2013, 2020; see SOM, p.13). This could especially benefit those lower in trait self-esteem who tend to have lower expressive accuracy (Human et al., 2019; Kerr, Borenstein-Laurie, & Human, 2020). Importantly, the manipulation's effect on expressive accuracy did not seem to depend upon targets' trait self-esteem (see SOM, p.1), indicating that those lower in self-esteem may also attain greater expressive accuracy. To further examine the potential for interventions, future research should replicate this manipulation in more naturalistic,

face-to-face first-impression contexts, such as getting-acquainted round-robin designs (e.g., Human et al., 2019), where people informally get to know one another as opposed to answering pre-determined interview questions. In addition, given that our manipulation was administered right before the interview, it would be important to examine its effectiveness when administered at different time points (e.g., a few hours prior or the day before) and by different people (e.g., friend or family member). These adjustments may reflect with greater ecological validity the circumstances in which people receive this advice in real life.

Authenticity Manipulation and Target Outcomes

The present study showed no evidence of benefits or drawbacks of the "be yourself" instructions on personal and social outcomes, as it did not significantly impact having one's personality viewed more normatively, being viewed as more likable, or greater state well-being. Of course, we should be cautious about interpreting null effects, as this advice could affect personal and social outcomes more indirectly or have stronger effects in other contexts or over time.

Moreover, being oneself may especially, or only, be useful for those who have more appealing characteristics. In the present research, baseline self-esteem did not interact with the manipulation to affect well-being and likability (see SOM, p.1-2), but future research should continue to examine moderation effects of desirable characteristics, perhaps especially in higherstakes contexts, such as first dates and job interviews, where making an accurate impression on others may only be beneficial if it is also positive (Kerr, Tissera, et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2017; Day et al., 2002). In addition, considering our quite homogeneous sample of healthy undergraduate students (Ley & Young, 1998; Nielsen et al., 2017), it would be worthwhile to examine consequences of this manipulation in clinical samples, including individuals with personality disorders, with potentially less socially favourable traits, who may be more ambivalent about heeding the advice to be themselves in first impressions, as they may reap more negative social consequences if they do (Oltmanns et al., 2004; Rogers et al., 2018).

In sum, "just be yourself" may not be terrible advice after all. In the present low-stakes first impression context, simple instructions to be oneself led people to express their unique personalities and did not appear to bear positive or negative immediate consequences.

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Bridge Between Chapter 2 and Chapter 3

Beauty begins the moment you decide to be yourself. – Coco Chanel (1883-1971)

As implied in this aphorism, it might in fact be possible to simply "decide to be yourself". In Chapter 2, we found that instructing people to be themselves indeed led them to reveal what makes them different from others. In fact, by following these instructions, people especially amplified cues of already observable self-aspects, such as the extent to which they are energetic, possibly because those cues have clearer behavioural manifestations and are thus easier to control, such as via larger gestures. Interestingly, people in the *be yourself* condition also revealed their unique standing on more evaluative self-aspects, which are generally less accurately perceived, such as the extent to which they are quarrelsome or reliable.

But is expressive accuracy systematically within one's control? In the next chapter, we explore the role of environmental forces in the tendency to accurately express one's personality. We do so by examining a precise environmental factor: the shift to videoconferencing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, we designed a round-robin getting-acquainted study via the Zoom videoconferencing platform paralleling an in-person round-robin study conducted right before the COVID-19 pandemic. With these two studies, we compared 1) whether people differed in their expressive accuracy levels based on the context (videoconferencing vs. in-person), 2) whether typical predictors of in-person expressive accuracy (i.e., well-being indicators), also predicted expressive accuracy online, and 3) whether a feature unique to the videoconferencing context, namely audio-video quality, might have influenced expressive accuracy and its predictors.

Chapter 3:

Transparency Through the Screen:

Do People Reveal Their Unique Personalities in Videoconferencing First Impressions?

Mignault, M. C., Tissera, H., & Human, L. H. (2022). Transparency Through the Screen:Do People Reveal Their Unique Personalities in Videoconferencing First Impressions?*Manuscript in preparation*.

Abstract

The use of videoconferencing platforms, such as Zoom, has globally risen to facilitate face-to-face communication since the onset of COVID-19 (Koeze & Popper, 2020). But do people reveal who they are to others on Zoom as much as they do in person? Using a round-robin paradigm via Zoom ($N_{targets}$ =567; N_{dyads} =3053), which we compared to an in-person round-robin paradigm ($N_{targets}$ =306; N_{dyads} =1682), we found that people accurately expressed their unique personalities via videoconferencing to a similar extent as in person. Second, target well-being, a key feature of accurate personality expression in in-person contexts, was also linked to expressive accuracy to a similar degree via videoconferencing. However, poorer audio-video quality was related to being viewed less accurately, less positively, and reduced the associations between accuracy and target well-being. Overall, then, transparency seems achievable through a screen, especially for well-adjusted people, but this may depend on the quality of that screen.

Keywords: Personality Accuracy, First Impressions, Online Interactions, Video-Conferencing Platforms, Social Accuracy Model, Well-Being

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed the landscape of typical social interactions, shifting a substantial amount of everyday communication from in-person to online (Wang et al., 2021). For instance, the Zoom videoconferencing platform registered a spike from 10 million daily users in December 2019 to over 300 million users by April 2020 (Evans, 2020), casting on computer screens a wide range of interpersonal interactions, such as teaching, holiday parties, wedding celebrations, as well as first-impression contacts including first dates, job interviews, and health assessments. But how might this global interpersonal shift impact how we express ourselves and are perceived by others in first impressions? To shed light on this question, we conducted a naturalistic getting-acquainted study on the Zoom videoconferencing platform (during COVID-19), which we compared to a similar study that took place in-person in the laboratory (prior to COVID-19). Using these two different first impressions contexts, we sought to address the following three questions: First, do people accurately perceive one another's unique personality profiles in videoconferencing first impressions, and do they do so to a similar extent as in-person? Second, do the personal and social well-being correlates of the tendency to be accurately perceived in in-person first impressions translate to videoconferencing? And third, how might a unique feature of the videoconferencing context, audio-video quality, relate to being accurately perceived?

Defining Personality Accuracy

Prior to delving into whether and how personality accuracy emerges in videoconferencing interactions, we define what we mean by "personality accuracy". First, we must determine a realistic criterion to approximate the "actual" personality of the *targets*, those being perceived. If we take the hypothetical example of Thomas, a target whose actual

personality includes being highly intelligent and not very helpful, how might we best estimate that? What if Thomas is unaware of his high intelligence levels, or unwilling to report that he is not helpful? In the present research, following the realistic accuracy approach (Funder, 1995), we obtain a realistic indicator of targets' personalities by combining targets' self-reports with reports from their close-others, such as friends, family members, and romantic partners. In doing so, we follow gold-standard guidelines from the field of personality accuracy to increase reliability and offset potential bias which could be present in self-report or close-other ratings alone (e.g., Beer et al., 2019; Funder, 1995; Rogers & Biesanz, 2019). Next, to examine the extent to which targets are accurately perceived in first impressions, we take a *profile approach*, looking at accuracy holistically, on average across a series of personality items representing different traits. That is, instead of examining accuracy for each trait separately, such as accuracy for intelligence and then accuracy for helpful, we look at perceivers' impressions of targets' patterning of personality characteristics (e.g., Human et al., 2019). In other words, can Paris, a perceiver, accurately see the extent to which Thomas is *more* intelligent *than* helpful?

The Normative and Distinctive Components of Accuracy

Furthermore, we are especially interested in the extent to which people are perceived in line with their *distinctive* profile of self-aspects, how their ordering of personality characteristics differs from the average person's profile and reflects what is specific and unique about them. To this end, we use the Social Accuracy Model (SAM; Biesanz, 2010), which allows us to decompose accuracy into the components of normative and distinctive accuracy.

Normative accuracy can be defined as the extent to which perceivers on average view the target as similar to the average person, or a "normative" profile of traits (Biesanz, 2010). For example, if Paris views Thomas as more intelligent than helpful, and this is how the average

person is, then we are not disentangling whether Paris grasps what is unique about Thomas or instead grasps how most people are and is applying this to Thomas, deliberately or automatically. To enable this distinction, we must control for normative accuracy, and examine distinctive accuracy, the extent to which Paris views how Thomas is even more intelligent and even less helpful compared to the average person. In addition to representing profile, within-target accuracy, this approach also represents average item-wise between-target accuracy, such as the extent to which Paris accurately sees how Thomas is less helpful than others and more intelligent than others, on average across all the items included in the profile (Biesanz, 2020). Importantly, distinctive and normative accuracy can be orthogonal constructs, such that perceivers could view a targets as high on both (e.g., Human et al., 2012), or high on one and low on the other (e.g., Biesanz & Human, 2010). Of note, given the average person's tendency to rate themselves and others positively, the normative personality profile is highly socially desirable in nature (Edwards, 1953; Wood & Furr, 2016). The distinctive personality profile, in contrast, is considered evaluatively neutral, as people could differ from the average person in either positive and negative ways, such as being more or less helpful than the average person. Moreover, even though people high in well-being tend to possess more normative personalities (Wood et al., 2007), they tend to be seen with greater distinctive accuracy (e.g., Human & Biesanz, 2011; Human et al., 2014; 2019; Mignault, Heyman, et al., 2022), indicating that a person does not need to be substantially different from the normative profile in order for people to know how they differ from it.

Overall then, in the present research, to explore personality accuracy in videoconferencing, we chiefly focus on *distinctive accuracy*, the extent to which people perceive

each other's idiosyncratic profile of personality characteristics, beyond what is average or "normative" about them.

Distinctive Personality Accuracy Relates to Positive Personal and Social Processes

It is important to examine whether distinctive accuracy emerges on Zoom, as it tends to relate to positive personal and social processes. Indeed, targets who report greater personal and social well-being, such as self-esteem, life satisfaction, and positive relations with others, tend to be perceived in line with their unique patterning of personality traits in a variety of first impression contexts, such as low-stakes getting-acquainted interactions in the lab (Human et al., 2019; Mignault, Heyman, et al., 2022), as well as in somewhat higher-stakes first impressions such as social media (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020) and speed dating (Kerr, Borenstein-Laurie, & Human, 2020). There is also longitudinal evidence demonstrating that being accurately perceived benefits relationship development, as perceivers, over time, report better liking targets whom they perceived with distinctive accuracy in an initial first impression (Human et al., 2013; Human, Carlson, et al., 2020).

Therefore, in the present research we both investigate whether distinctive accuracy is possible via videoconferencing, and whether similar well-being processes are involved, specifically focusing on key well-being predictors from prior personality accuracy literature, including self-esteem, life satisfaction, and positive relations with others.

Cross-Contextual Consistency of Distinctive Accuracy

But what is the evidence that distinctive accuracy levels from in-person contexts could transfer to videoconferencing? First, in offline video-interview studies, perceivers constrained to viewing targets' pre-recorded videos averaged only slightly lower levels of distinctive accuracy than in in-person interactions (Rogers & Biesanz, 2019). Second, evidence indicates that targets

tend to maintain their individual tendency to be accurately perceived across different contexts. Indeed, those who are perceived with distinctive accuracy in in-person getting acquainted interactions also tend to be perceived with distinctive accuracy in texts that they wrote (Wallace & Biesanz, 2020), as well as with close peers. Further, Human, Rogers, & Biesanz (2020) found that good targets in in-person getting-acquainted interactions were also more likely to be perceived with distinctive accuracy by strangers rating their social media profile, though in one of their samples, overall distinctive accuracy levels were significantly lower on social media than in-person. Therefore, distinctive personality accuracy levels may be similar across a variety of contexts, but mixed evidence in the context of social media suggests that it could potentially be somewhat lower online.

Expressive Accuracy and Online Interactions

How might distinctive accuracy via live online videoconferencing platforms be similar to and differ from offline? According to the Realistic Accuracy Model (RAM; Funder, 1995), accurate personality perception may be attained through the completion of the following four sequential stages: the target must emit *relevant* cues, make them *available* to perceivers, who then must *detect* those cues and *utilize* them to infer the target's personality. However, mistakes can happen along the way at any of these stages, resulting in inaccurate perceptions. These mistakes could occur for different reasons and at different rates in videoconferencing compared to in-person contexts, leading to different overall levels of accuracy as well as differential associations with typical well-being correlates.

Contextual Similarities

Evidence from live text messaging suggests that targets may be providing similar levels of *relevant* cues in live online interactions as face-to-face. Shapka et al. (2016) showed that

experimenters interviewing teens either online via text-messaging or in-person obtained similar levels of rapport-building and detail in the information disclosed by the interviewee. In addition, in the context of focus group discussions on sensitive topics, when individuals participated in an online text-based chat-room group compared with in-person group, the content and themes discussed in the two contexts were highly similar (Woodyat et al., 2016). Thus, virtual interaction environments, at least those relying on text messaging, may lead targets to disclose similar levels and types of information, thereby potentially making relevant cues available. However, it remains unclear whether this would also apply to videoconferencing.

Contextual Differences

Why might videoconferencing be different from offline and other online interaction environments? One noteworthy consequence of videoconferencing is captured in a phenomenon labeled "Zoom fatigue", exhaustion caused by a higher amount of cognitive effort exerted during the virtual interaction (Bennett et al., 2021; Ferran & Watts, 2008; Fosslien & Duffy, 2020; Wiederhold, 2020; Nadler, 2020). With cognitive resources taxed in this way, perceivers' attention span to *detect* target cues could potentially be reduced, and targets' motivation to provide *relevant* cues, lowered. In parallel, a host of relevant non-verbal cues usually present in face-to-face interactions, for example, height and posture, are not as easily gleaned through computer screens, and therefore, certain personality signals, such as dominance levels, could be *unavailable*. However, access to a person's home background may increase other cues, usually unavailable in first impressions, such as certain types of art on the walls which may illustrate levels of openness to experience (Gosling et al., 2002).

Further, like a mirror, viewing one's own self-image on the screen during the interaction, through the self-view function, could increase self-awareness (Bailenson, 2021; Duval &

Wicklund, 1972; Vallacher, 1978), in turn potentially leading targets to either behave more normatively (Diener & Wallbom, 1976), or alternatively, feel more inhibited. That said, if perceivers are more self-focused and self-aware, they may be missing cues in the other person, possibly resulting in lower accuracy. Lastly, the availability and detection stages could be impacted by the notorious "Zoom freeze", when a person's videoframe freezes due to lag in the Internet signal, and by other audio-video glitches, found to reduce the quantity and quality of relevant social cues typically available during in-person interactions (Storr et al., 2021). In the present research, we focused on this feature unique to the videoconferencing context, audiovideo quality, and examined how it relates to distinctively accurate personality impressions.

Overview of the Present Research

The aims of the present research were three-fold. First, we examined the extent to which people were perceived with distinctive and normative accuracy when getting acquainted on Zoom, and whether these levels differed from what we typically find in in-person getting-acquainted contexts. To this end, we conducted a videoconferencing round-robin study during the COVID-19 pandemic, which we compared to an in-person round-robin study conducted prior to the pandemic. Second, we examined whether target well-being, a consistent feature of distinctive accuracy in person, also related to distinctive accuracy on Zoom, and we examined whether this association differed in the videoconferencing context compared to in-person. Third, we examined how audio-video quality, a feature unique to the videoconferencing context, related to distinctive and normative accuracy. We also examined the extent to which audio-video quality influenced the associations between accuracy and well-being.

Methods

Analyses conducted in the present research are exploratory and were not pre-registered. We state all data exclusions, analyses conducted, and variables pertaining to the present research questions. The methodology of the Zoom Study was designed to parallel as closely as possible the previously-collected in-person round-robin getting-acquainted paradigm, in terms of the sample, procedures, measures, and analytical approach. We did so to enable direct comparison of results with an in-person context, acknowledging that the samples differ in more ways than simply the interaction paradigm, given participants were not randomly assigned to the different communication mediums, and they were collected pre- and post-onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (we revisit this issue in the discussion). Next, we present the sample and procedures of the videoconferencing study, followed by that of the in-person sample that we used for comparison. Given that we used the exact same measures across studies, we then present the measures of the two studies jointly.

Participants

For both the videoconferencing and in-person studies, the sample size goal was to recruit as many participants as possible over the course of one academic year, starting in September and ending in April, with a minimum of 200 participants.

Videoconferencing Study

In total, 567 undergraduate students participated in the videoconferencing study between September 2020 and May 2021. Students were instructed to fill out an initial questionnaire at home, and then participate in a Zoom visit within a few days of completing initial questionnaires. As a result of this two-part design, of those who participated, 9 people did not complete the initial survey, and 21 people did not present to the Zoom visit, resulting in a total of 546

participants who completed both components (449 women, $M_{age} = 20.71$, $SD_{age} = 2.85$, $N_{dyads} = 3155$). Further, we only included previously unacquainted dyads in our analyses ($N_{dyads} = 3053$). Lastly, for the purposes of the round robin paradigm, we needed at least three participants per Zoom session, so we removed a session which only included two participants. Based on these exclusions, the final composition of dyads in our analyses was as follows: (N = 544, 447 women, $M_{age} = 20.70$, $SD_{age} = 2.86$, $N_{dyads} = 3051$). We also asked participants to provide the contact information of up to three close others, who completed questionnaires about participants (*Nclose others* = 1149, $M_{age} = 28.19$, $SD_{age} = 13.93$). Overall, 57 participants had no informant, 67 participants had one informant, 178 participants had two informants, and 242 participants had three informants. Thus in total, 89.52% had at least one close other. Participants were compensated with two extra course credits or \$20, and all procedures were approved by the university's ethics review board.

In-Person Study

In total, 306 undergraduate students participated ($N_{dyads} = 1746$, 249 females, $M_{age} = 20.17$, $SD_{age} = 1.90$) between September 2019 and March 2020 (data collection ended early because of the start of the COVID-19 pandemic). As in the videoconferencing study, people completed questionnaires and took part in a dyadic getting-acquainted "round-robin" paradigm, described in the procedure section. We only included previously unacquainted dyads in our analyses ($N_{dyads} = 1682$). We also asked participants to provide the contact information of up to three close others, who completed questionnaires about participants ($N_{close others} = 425$, $M_{age} = 30.10$, $SD_{age} = 15.28$). In total, 76 participants had no informant, 92 participants had one informant, 81 participants had two informants, and 57 participants had three informants.

Expected Power

We derived our expected power using the fabs package for R (github\jbiesanz\fabs; also see Biesanz & Schrager 2017; McShane & Bockenholt, 2015), based on a prior from Kerr, Borenstein-Laurie, & Human (2020), who examined associations between well-being and distinctive accuracy in a speed dating context ($N_{Targets} = 372$; r = .21). We selected this prior due to the parallel analytical approach and variables, as well as a sample of roughly similar size, inbetween our videoconferencing and in-person sample sizes. With this prior, we obtained 97% power to detect a similar effect for our videoconferencing sample ($N_{Targets} = 544$), and 88% power for our in-person sample ($N_{Targets} = 306$).

Procedure

Videoconferencing Study

After signing up for a scheduled Zoom session, participants received a Zoom link via email as well as an initial questionnaire about their personality and well-being to complete at home prior to entering the Zoom session. On their scheduled visit date, 3-9 previously unacquainted participants joined the online Zoom session¹ (*Mdn*=7 people per session; *Nsessions* = 85). Then, participants engaged in a dyadic round-robin paradigm, interacting one-on-one with every other participant present at the Zoom visit for two minutes. This was achieved by sending groups of two participants with an experimenter into separate breakout rooms. The experimenter present with the two participants informed them to "*just introduce yourself and try to get to know one another*"², and then started the two-minute timer. During the two-minute interaction, the

¹ There were five groups with only three participants, and when removing them from analyses all results held. ² In the second wave of the videoconferencing sample ($N_{Wave 2} = 215$), a manipulation was introduced, whereby an experimenter told approximately half the participants randomly assigned to the experimental condition ($N_{Experimentals} = 106$) to "be yourself". These participants also had a written reminder to be themselves at end of each postinteraction survey, prior to the next interaction. This manipulation did not moderate the results of the present research, and results held when removing the participants who underwent the manipulation.

experimenter had their video and audio turned off, and both participants had their video and audio on. For consistency across participants, participants had been previously instructed to select the viewing option "gallery mode", which enabled viewing all people at once within the same screen. Thus, participants viewed the video of their interaction partner and of themselves, as well as a black square for the experimenter. After each interaction, participants were brought back to the main Zoom group room, and completed a questionnaire about that interaction partner's personality and about the quality of the audio and video during the interaction. They then met with another participant until everyone had met and rated every other participant in the Zoom session.

In-Person Study

Previously unacquainted people came for a lab visit in groups of 4-8 participants. Once in the lab group room, participants first individually completed a questionnaire about their personality. Then, participants engaged in a dyadic round-robin paradigm, interacting with every other participant in the room for two minutes. As in the videoconferencing study, participants were told: "*Just introduce yourself and try to get to know one another*". After each interaction, participants were separated and completed a questionnaire about their interaction partner's personality. They then met with another participant until everyone had met and rated every other participant in the room. After completing the round-robin portion of the study, participants individually filled out a series of well-being questionnaires.

Measures

Expressive Accuracy

Personality Ratings. Across the videoconferencing and in-person studies, targets and their close others completed a 21-item version of the Big Five Personality Inventory (John &

Srivastava, 1999), plus three items assessing intelligence, such as "*Is bright*"³. All items were rated on a scale from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*).

Personality Accuracy Criterion. In both studies, we created a composite score of participants' personalities: we first averaged close-other reports on each item, and then averaged these scores with self-ratings on each item. We then used this composite as our accuracy criterion, against which to compare first impression ratings (see Funder, 1995).

Accuracy. Following each dyadic interaction, participants in both studies rated their interaction partner's personality, using the 21-item version of the Big Five Inventory and the three intelligence items. Then, we compared these first impression perceiver ratings to the accuracy criterion (the composite score of self- and close-other ratings) on the same items (see Analytical Approach for more details).

Well-Being

Trait Self-Esteem. Trait self-esteem was assessed via the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965), ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). This scale included ten items such as "*I take a positive attitude towards myself*" (videoconferencing : M = 4.78, SD = 1.13, $\alpha = .91$; in-person: M = 4.82, SD = 1.14, $\alpha = .91$). A t-test revealed that self-esteem means did not significantly differ based on context (t = 0.50, p = .619, d = 0.03, 95% CI [-0.11, 0.17]).

Trait Life Satisfaction. Trait life satisfaction was assessed via the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffon, 1985), ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*), and including five items such as "*The conditions of my life are excellent*" (videoconferencing: M = 4.58, SD = 1.24, $\alpha = .85$; in-person: M = 4.73, SD = 1.27, $\alpha = .87$). A t-

³ The 21 items correspond to items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 26, 31, 34, 36, and 38 of the original 44-item Big Five Inventory developed by John and Srivastava (1999). The three additional items to assess intelligence are: "Is intelligent", "Is bright", and "Receives good grades".
test revealed that life satisfaction means did not significantly differ based on context (t = 1.67, p= .096, d = .11, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.25]).

Trait Social Well-Being. Across studies, trait social well-being was assessed via the Short Positive Relations with Others Scale (Ryff, 1989), ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*), and including three items: "*Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me*" (reverse-coded), "*I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others*" (reverse-coded), and "*People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others*" (videoconferencing: M = 5.20, SD = 1.12, $\alpha = .58$; inperson: M = 5.23, SD = 1.19, $\alpha = .68$). A t-test revealed that social well-being means did not significantly differ based on context (t = 0.27, p = .785, d = 0.02, 95% CI [-0.12, 0.16]).

Well-Being Composite. All results with each of these well-being indicators followed a highly similar pattern. Therefore, for simplicity of presentation, we combined them into a composite for all analyses reported here (videoconferencing: M = 4.85, SD = 0.93, $\alpha = .72$; inperson: M = 4.92, SD = 0.99, $\alpha = .76$). A t-test revealed that, when averaged into a composite, well-being did not significantly differ by context (t = 1.07, p = .285, d = 0.07, 95% CI [-0.07, 0.21])). Results specific to each individual indicator can be found in the Supplementary Online Materials (SOM; available in the Appendix of the present thesis), along with additional well-being indicators, namely, loneliness, perceived stress, social anxiety, and interpersonal support. *Audio-Video Quality*

Considering the live online nature of the interactions, we also asked participants to rate the audio-video quality following each dyadic interaction, on a scale from 1 "*Very poor*" to 5 "*Excellent*", with the following single item: "*How would you rate the audio/video quality of this*

interaction?". On average, participants rated the audio-video quality as "*Good*" (M = 4.16, SD = .76).

Additional Analyses

In both studies, we conducted additional analyses controlling for gender and trait extraversion. Further, we examined whether Study 2 results held when removing dyadic interactions in which perceivers rated the audio-video-quality as "*poor*" ($N_{dyads} = 81$) or "*very poor*" ($N_{dyads} = 10$). All results presented below held, and these additional analyses and results can be found in the SOM (see Appendix).

Trait Extraversion. Across studies, trait extraversion levels were measured via the Big Five Inventory Extraversion subscale (John & Srivastava, 1999), ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*), and including eight items such as "*Is full of energy*" (videoconferencing: M = 4.53, SD = 1.10, $\alpha = .88$; in-person: M = 4.42, SD = 1.06, $\alpha = .87$). A ttest revealed that extraversion means did not significantly differ based on context (t = -1.43, p =.153, d = -0.10, 95% CI [-0.24, 0.04]).

Analytical Approach

Analyses were conducted in *R* (R Development Core Team, 2016) with the lme4 package (Bates, Maechler, Bolker, & Walker, 2014).

Distinctive & Normative Accuracy

To measure distinctive and normative accuracy, we used the social accuracy multi-level modeling approach (SAM; Biesanz, 2010, 2020), predicting perceiver ratings of each target on each personality item by both (a) the target's personality accuracy criterion (self- and close-other reports for distinctive accuracy scores) and (b) the average self-reported mean on that item (for normativity scores). We included target and perceiver random effects for the distinctive and

normative accuracy slopes and intercepts. We improved convergence and interpretability by centering predictors within-item, subtracting normative means from each target's accuracy criterion personality item, and we did not reverse-code items prior to analyses to enable greater variation in accuracy slopes and statistical power (for detail on these recommendations, see Biesanz, 2020). We then grand-mean centered perceiver ratings, the distinctive accuracy criterion, and the normative means on their respective variable grand mean across items. We did not include dyadic random effects to improve model convergence (see Biesanz, 2020), but when including them, all results held.

Level 1 equation:

$$Y_{pti} = \beta_{0pt} + \beta_{1pt} TargetPersonality_{ti} + \beta_{2pt} NormativeMeans_i + e_{pti}$$
$$\beta_{0pt} = \beta_{00} + u_{0p} + u_{0t}$$
$$\beta_{1pt} = \beta_{10} + u_{1p} + u_{1t}$$
$$\beta_{2pt} = \beta_{20} + u_{2p} + u_{2t}$$

First, Y_{pti} reflects Perceiver *p*'s rating of Target *t* on item *i*; for example, Paris's judgment that Thomas is a 6 on *intelligent* or a 2 on *helpful* on a 7-point scale, prior to grand mean centering. *TargetPersonality*_{ti} reflects Target *t*'s distinctive accuracy criterion on item *i*: the composite of targets' self and informant report after subtracting the *NormativeMeans*_i (i.e., the average score in the sample for a given item). For instance, if the normative means for *intelligent* and *helpful* respectively were 5.5 and 5, and Thomas's composite of self- and close-other reports for *intelligent* was 6.5, and 2.8 on *helpful*, this would yield a distinctive accuracy criterion for Thomas of 1 for *intelligent* and -2.2 for *helpful*. *TargetPersonality*_{ti} and *NormativeMeans*_i are then grand-mean centered. β_{1pt} reflects the regression coefficient for the distinctive accuracy slope: the association between Target *t*'s distinctive accuracy criterion on item *i* and Perceiver

p's rating of Target *t* on the same item *i*. That is, to what extent does Paris's perception ratings map onto Thomas's unique personality characteristics? β_{2pt} is the regression coefficient for the normativity slope: the relationship between the mean target self-report for item *i* predicting Perceiver *p*'s rating of the same item *i*. That is, to what extent does Paris's ratings map onto the average personality characteristics in that sample? The average levels of distinctive accuracy and normativity are reflected by β_{10} and β_{20} , respectively.

Moderators of Distinctive & Normative Accuracy Slopes: Well-Being, Context, & Audio-Video

We ran different multilevel regression models using SAM with individual moderators of the distinctive and normative validity measures to predict perceiver impressions. Specifically, we included as individual moderators well-being, context, or audio-video quality, in each their own, separate model.

The level 2 equation was as follows (with well-being as an example):

$$\beta_{0pt} = \beta_{00} + \beta_{01} Well-Being_t + u_{0p} + u_{0p}$$

$$\beta_{1pt} = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}$$
 Well-Being_t + $u_{1p} + u_{1}$

$$\beta_{2pt} = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21} Well-Being_t + u_{2p} + u_{2t}$$

We focus on the coefficient β_{11} , which indicates whether the linear association between target *t*'s validity criterion and perceiver *p*'s ratings of target *t* is moderated by target *t*'s wellbeing levels. A significant positive interaction would indicate that distinctive accuracy tends to be higher at higher levels of target well-being. We then also used context as an individual moderator in the SAM (dummy-coded: 0=in-person, 1=videoconferencing) to examine whether being in-person or on Zoom differentially related to distinctive and normative accuracy levels. Further, we then included well-being along with context in a three-way interaction, to examine whether context moderated the association between well-being and accuracy. Lastly, we examined the role of audio-video quality, first as an individual moderator in the SAM, and then in a three-way interaction with well-being.

Results

Mean Levels of Distinctive & Normative Accuracy in Videoconferencing vs. In-Person Distinctive Accuracy

Using the Social Accuracy Modeling approach, we found significant levels of distinctive accuracy on Zoom (b = 0.18, z = 13.75, p < .001). That is, new acquaintances were able to accurately distinguish targets' unique personality profiles following brief videoconferencing interactions. Critically, these levels were highly similar to our in-person sample distinctive accuracy levels (b = 0.18, z = 11.58, p < .001), and there was no significant moderation by context, suggesting that, through videoconferencing, to a similar extent as in-person, people may be perceived in line with their unique personality (b = -0.005, z = -0.22, p = .823, d = -0.02, 95% *CI* [-0.18, 0.14]).

Normative Accuracy

Further, targets were also viewed with normative accuracy on Zoom, that is, in line with the sample's average, socially desirable profile of traits (b = 0.95, z = 49.97, p < .001). These levels were also highly similar to our in-person sample normative accuracy levels (b = 0.89, z = 49.92, p < .001), and normative accuracy did not significantly differ based on the in-person or videoconferencing context (b = -0.02, z = -0.78, p = .435, d = -0.12, 95% *CI* [-0.42, 0.18]). **Target Well-Being: Links to Distinctive and Normative Accuracy in Videoconferencing** *Target Well-Being & Distinctive Accuracy*

Consistent with prior research showing that targets who are high in well-being tend to have their distinct personality profile more accurately perceived in in-person first impressions, we found that distinctive accuracy in videoconferencing was also positively associated with target well-being, and that the strength of this association was highly similar in our in-person sample (videoconferencing: b = 0.10, z = 8.53, p < .001, d = 0.74, 95% *CI* [0.57, 0.91]; in-person: b = 0.08, z = 6.75, p < .001, d = 0.79, 95% *CI* [0.57, 1.01]). Specifically, at high levels of target well-being, distinctive accuracy levels were higher (videoconferencing: b = 0.27, z = 16.32, p < .001; in-person: b = 0.27, z = 13.76, p < .001) than at low levels of target well-being (videoconferencing: b = 0.08, z = 4.77, p < .001; in-person: b = 0.08, z = 4.22, p < .001). Highlighting the similarity between videoconferencing and in-person contexts, the context did not moderate the association between distinctive accuracy and well-being (b = 0.01, z = 0.25, p = .805). Results with individual well-being indicators included in the well-being composite were highly consistent with those presented here and can be found in SOM, along with additional well-being indicators (see Appendix).

Target Well-Being & Normative Accuracy

In contrast, consistent across videoconferencing and in-person studies, normative accuracy was negatively associated with well-being (videoconferencing: b = -0.03, z = -2.35, p = .019, d = -0.25, 95% CI [-0.46, -.04]; in-person: b = -0.04, z = -3.03, p < .01, d = -0.31, 95% CI [-0.59, -.03]). That is, at high levels of target well-being, normative accuracy levels were lower (videoconferencing: b = 0.92, z = 41.50, p < .0001; in-person: b = 0.94, z = 32.79, p < .001) than at low levels of target well-being (videoconferencing: b = 0.92, z = 41.50, p < .0001; in-person: b = 0.94, z = 32.79, p < .001) than at low levels of target well-being (videoconferencing: b = 0.97, z = 43.98, p < .001; in-person: b = 1.00, z = 35.12, p < .001). In other words, targets lower in well-being tended to be seen more in line with the sample's average personality profile. Possibly, perceivers may have relied to a greater extent on normative information for targets lower in self-esteem given that less distinctive information was available for those targets. Further, context did not moderate the

association between well-being and normative accuracy (b = 0.003, z = 0.19, p = .851). See SOM (Appendix) for a highly consistent pattern of associations with individual well-being indicators.

Taken together, these results indicate that trait well-being relates similarly to the impression one makes on others, whether in the context of in-person or Zoom first impressions.

The Role of Audio-Video Quality

Audio-Video Quality and Perceiver Impressions

Audio-video quality as rated by perceivers promoted distinctive accuracy, b = 0.02, z = 2.80, p < .01, d = 0.12, 95% *CI* [0.03, 0.20], such that when perceivers rated the audio-video quality of the interaction one standard deviation above the mean, they viewed the target's personality with higher distinctive accuracy levels (b = 0.19, z = 13.73, p < .001) than when rating the audio-video quality one standard deviation below the mean (b = 0.16, z = 11.57, p < .001), though distinctive accuracy was significant at both levels. In addition, when perceivers rated the audio-video quality of the interaction to be higher, they also perceived targets with greater normative accuracy, b = 0.09, z = 8.24, p < .0001, d = 0.65, 95% *CI* [0.49, 0.80], thereby viewing them more in line with the socially desirable, average person profile. Specifically, when perceivers rated the audio-video quality of the interaction one standard deviation above the mean, they perceived the target's personality with higher normative accuracy levels (b = 1.02, z = 49.80, p < .001) than when rating the audio-video quality one standard deviation below the mean (b = 0.88, z = 43.08, p < .001).

Does Audio-Video Quality Moderate the Role of Well-Being in Accuracy?

Audio-video quality moderated the association between target well-being and distinctive accuracy (three-way interaction: b = 0.02, z = 3.33, p < .001), such that for those interactions rated by perceivers as higher in audio-video quality, target well-being was more strongly

associated with distinctive accuracy, b = 0.12, z = 9.13, p < .001, d = 0.85, 95% CI [0.67, 1.04], compared to interactions of lower audio-video quality, b = 0.09, z = 6.77, p < .001, d = 0.62, 95% CI [0.44, 0.81], see Figure 1.

Figure 1







We then looked at the specific distinctive accuracy means at different levels of well-being and audio-video quality to get a sense of how different, descriptively, accuracy levels were as a function of these factors. For targets higher in well-being, high audio-video quality was related to higher distinctive accuracy (b = 0.30, z = 16.68, p < .0001), than low audio-video quality (b =0.24, z = 13.28, p < .0001). In contrast, for targets lower in well-being, high audio-video quality was related to similar levels of distinctive accuracy (b = 0.08, z = 4.35, p < .0001), as low audiovideo quality (b = 0.08, z = 4.38, p < .0001). This suggests that, when people have characteristics of good targets, such as higher well-being, and are thus likely to provide more relevant cues, factors that facilitate whether perceivers can detect such cues (e.g., high audio-video quality) may be especially helpful. In contrast, for targets who do not tend to provide particularly relevant cues, such as those lower in well-being, audio-video quality may not provide that same boost in accuracy.

Additional Analyses

All results outlined here held controlling for extraversion and gender, as well as when removing dyads who reported "poor" and "very poor" audio-video quality in the videoconferencing context. These additional analyses can be found in the SOM (Appendix).

Discussion

After years of lockdown and increased experience with videoconferencing, there is a general consensus that Zoom interactions feel qualitatively different from in-person interactions (Nadler, 2020; Kuhn, 2022; Bailenson, 2021), in large part due to characteristics unique to computer-based communication, such as the two-dimensional screen, the closeup on others' faces, the default option to view oneself, and potential asynchronies due to lags in audio-video feed. Yet, in the present research we showed that it was possible for people to accurately perceive one another's unique personality profiles via videoconferencing, even during brief getting-acquainted interactions. In fact, participants in videoconferencing first impressions tended to achieve similar levels of distinctive personality accuracy as participants in face-to-face first impressions. This was also the case for normative accuracy, such that people were being viewed in line with the average person's socially desirable profile to a similar extent in both contexts. Further, target well-being, a consistent predictor of distinctive personality accuracy in-

person, also predicted distinctive personality accuracy via Zoom. In other words, targets high in well-being seem to have a greater tendency to be seen in line with their unique personality across these two different contexts. Lastly, the quality of the audio-video feed, a feature unique to the videoconferencing context, predicted lower distinctive and normative accuracy, and reduced the association between well-being indicators and distinctive accuracy. Therefore, it seems that it is possible to achieve similar levels of accuracy face-to-face and on Zoom, but high audio-video quality may be important to maximize accurate and positive impressions on Zoom.

Distinctive Personality Accuracy Levels in Videoconferencing First Impressions

Distinctive personality accuracy appears to be achievable on Zoom, at similar levels as in-person. This aligns with a host of research suggesting that distinctive accuracy levels tend to be consistent across contexts. For example, when perceivers were viewing video-recordings of a target interacting with new acquaintances, they were almost as accurate in perceiving the target's unique personality as those new acquaintances who interacted with that target face-to-face (Rogers & Biesanz, 2019). Further, targets tend to be consistent, regardless of the medium and context, in how accurately they express their personalities. For instance, similar distinctive personality accuracy levels were obtained whether perceivers read texts written by a target or interacted face-to-face with that target (Wallace & Biesanz, 2020). In addition, targets' distinctive personality accuracy levels are similar in face-to-face interactions and when strangers rate their social media profile (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020). Future research should examine the same targets in-person and via videoconferencing to confirm whether targets' crosscontextual consistency explains the consistent distinctive personality accuracy levels found in the present research.

In parallel, it is possible that distinctive accuracy through videoconferencing was achieved via a different pathway than in-person, nonetheless producing similar overall levels. That is, videoconferencing involves potential obstacles to accuracy, such as Internet glitches, which may reduce the availability of cues, or self-view, which may distract perceivers and reduce the attention they devote to detecting target cues. However, videoconferencing simultaneously enables access to other features which may palliate for the aforementioned obstacles and aid in attaining overall accuracy. For example, seeing the target's face from upclose may heighten the detection of non-verbal facial cues, and access to a target's home background, such as a bedroom wall, may make available certain cues to which new acquaintances would otherwise not have access (see Gosling et al., 2002). Future research should disentangle the role of these various sources of information, for example by blurring targets' background or manipulating the distance of the target's face from the screen.⁴

There are noteworthy implications of being able to accurately perceive others' distinct personalities from brief Zoom interactions. Various in-person activities, such as job interviews and mental health assessments, which have shifted to videoconferencing, rely on the formation of accurate first impressions. For example, research shows that hiring managers will interpret personality information to infer the hireability of a candidate (Dunn et al., 1995), and that candidates who reveal who they are during a job interview are more likely to be hired (Moore et al., 2017). In parallel, a recent meta-analysis on personality and mental health outcomes demonstrates that accurate personality assessment aids case conceptualization and adequate treatment choice (Bucher et al., 2019). Thus, our results suggest that, to the extent that the fit

⁴ Although there were no context differences in overall levels of distinctive and normative accuracy, some contextual differences emerged in additional, exploratory analyses, when examining accuracy for certain types of personality item characteristics, such as how visible or evaluative items were (see SOM for analyses and discussion of those differences).

between job candidate and work environment, or between patient and treatment plan, rests on accurate personality inferences, it may have the potential to be achieved via Zoom – at least to the same degree as in-person interactions. That said, given our young, healthy, undergraduate student sample, who may be especially familiar with a variety of online platforms (Shapka et al., 2016), future research should examine personality accuracy via videoconferencing in other populations, such as in organizational and clinical samples. Moreover, both our Zoom and in-person interactions were very brief – only two minutes – so we do not know if larger context differences would emerge in initial interactions of greater length.

Target Well-Being and Distinctive Accuracy in Videoconferencing First Impressions

The present research showed that target well-being, a consistent predictor of distinctive personality accuracy in face-to-face first impressions (Human et al., 2019; Mignault, Heyman, et al., 2022; see Mignault & Human, 2019, for review), was also related to distinctive personality accuracy via videoconferencing first impressions. This pattern held across specific well-being indicators typically examined in relation to accuracy, namely, self-esteem, life satisfaction and positive relations with others, as well as a wide array of additional well-being indicators (e.g., loneliness, perceived stress; see SOM, Appendix). These results align with research finding that targets high in well-being tend to be more accurately perceived across a variety of contexts, including with close peers, new acquaintances, and by strangers who rate their social media profiles (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020). This seems to be partly because, across contexts, targets high in well-being tend to behave more in line with their distinctive personality, thereby consistently providing relevant cues of who they are (Human et al., 2019).

With the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown involving long periods of social distancing, people had to maintain social connections through virtual means (Hwang et al., 2020), but those

social interactions may not have all been equally beneficial. It is possible that those high in wellbeing, through being accurately perceived on Zoom, benefitted from those virtual interactions to a greater extent, particularly given that revealing one's true self tends to be intrinsically pleasing (Jourard, 1971; Tamir & Mitchell, 2012), and that having one's unique personality accurately perceived fosters greater liking over time (Human, Carlson, et al., 2020). As a result of these potentially more socially rewarding virtual interactions, those initially higher in well-being could have experienced less loneliness and social isolation. Therefore, although implications are limited by the cross-sectional nature of our design, associations between well-being and distinctive personality accuracy via Zoom could reflect a protective factor during the pandemic. Future research – both on Zoom as well as in person – is needed to examine the possible bidirectionality of these associations, and the potential for a positive feedback loop, whereby well-being may promote accuracy, in turn fostering social benefits, potentially further fueling well-being.

The Role of Audio-Video Quality in Videoconferencing First Impressions Audio-Video Quality and Perceiver Impressions

Greater audio-video quality, as rated by perceivers, was associated with greater distinctive accuracy. This is rather unsurprising, considering that image and sound are prone to deteriorating when transmitted over live wireless signal, resulting in information loss (e.g., Filanova, 2020). Arguably, this information loss could obstruct perceivers' detection of relevant target cues. That said, other stages of the accuracy process could also have been impacted. For example, given that low audio-video quality during videoconferencing can be a frustrating experience (Nadler, 2020), it could potentially interfere with perceivers' cognitive resources and lower their motivation to exert mental effort in appropriately interpreting target cues. Indeed, when people – targets and perceivers – rated the interaction as poorer in audio-video quality, they also reported greater post-interaction negative affect (see SOM, Appendix), which could have influenced perceivers' engagement levels and motivation to appropriately interpret cues. But could low audio-video quality, perhaps through heightened negative affect, also have lowered targets' tendency to provide relevant cues? When we examined target-reported audiovideo quality (see SOM, Appendix), there was no association with distinctive accuracy. This suggests that the links between poorer audio-video quality and lower distinctive accuracy may be better explained by perceivers failing to detect and appropriately interpret cues, than by targets lowering the number of relevant cues they make available.

Additionally, audio-video quality seems to relate to perceiver impressions beyond distinctive accuracy, as perceivers who rated the audio-video quality of the interaction as poorer also viewed the target less in line with the normative, socially desirable personality profile. When we examined target-rated audio-video quality, we observed a similar pattern of results (see SOM, Appendix), such that targets who noted a lower quality of the audio-video feed were perceived in a less desirable light. This could perhaps be due to targets experiencing heightened negative affect in relation to lower audio-video quality, in turn potentially getting in the way of making a desirable first impressions. Alternatively, given that the social desirability of perceivers' impressions is inextricably linked to their more general attitudes toward a target (Leising et al., 2015; 2021), it may be that perceivers experienced negative affect as a result of the lower audio-video quality, in turn potentially shading the positivity of their personality perceptions. Critically, all associations held when we removed dyads who reported "poor" or "very poor" audio-video, and only examined dyads who reported "fair", "good", or "excellent"

audio-video. This suggests that the quality of audio-video feed needs not be highly problematic to relate to impressions of lower accuracy and positivity.

Audio-Video Quality as Moderator of Links Between Well-Being and Distinctive Accuracy

Further, despite strong and consistent associations between target well-being and distinctive accuracy, lower audio-video quality reduced these associations. This was the case consistently, across the well-being indicators typically examined in accuracy research, as well as across several of the additional well-being indicators considered in SOM (Appendix). In other words, despite the advantage that targets high in well-being have in terms of generally being seen in line with their distinctive personality, this advantage was significantly reduced by having an audio-video feed of lower quality. Based on the Realistic Accuracy Model (Funder, 1995), this suggests that although those high in well-being tend to provide more relevant cues (Human et al., 2019), if those cues are not being clearly sent to the perceiver, the perceiver cannot as readily detect nor interpret those relevant cues, thus hindering the overall accuracy of impressions. Of note, these effects generally lowered from very strong with high audio-video quality (e.g., Cohen's $d_{life satisfaction} = 0.60$) to strong with low audio-video quality (e.g., Cohen's $d_{life satisfaction} =$ 0.43), such that well-being still predicted greater distinctive accuracy for those with a poorer audio-video feed. This indicates that target well-being could represent a buffer and nonetheless foster accurate impression formation even when faced with suboptimal contextual conditions, such as lower audio-video quality. In parallel, those lower in well-being did not reap significantly different levels of accuracy as a result of the better or poorer audio-video quality. This again aligns with the RAM stages: Given that those low in well-being tend to provide less relevant cues (e.g., Human et al., 2019), the clarity of the screen upon which these irrelevant cues were displayed could have helped perceivers in detecting the cues, but likely did not help perceivers in making more accurate interpretations.

Implications of Audio-Video Quality on Perceiver Impressions

Taken together, these findings with audio-video quality could bear implications for higher-stakes first impression interactions now being conducted online, such as job interviews and mental health assessments. Given that accurate personality perceptions have been found to be important in both these contexts (Bucher et al., 2019; Moore et al., 2017), people without access to high-speed internet, such as those from rural areas, minority neighborhoods and lower in socio-economic status (Dunbar, 2011; Lai & Widmar, 2020; Mossberger et al., 2012; Van Dijk, 2008) could be somewhat disadvantaged. For example, they may not fare as well on a job interview due to being perceived less accurately or less positively, which could potentially, in the long run, contribute to widening the socio-economic gap. Alternatively, they may be assigned to a suboptimal treatment program based on a less accurate personality evaluation, which could be problematic given that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to require and make use of specialized mental health services (e.g., Amaddeo & Jones, 2007). Of note, requiring mental health services generally reflects lower psychological adjustment, suggesting that those people may already be less expressively accurate on their adaptive traits (e.g., Human et al., 2019; Rogers et al., 2018), and thus not necessarily benefit from higher audio-video quality. However, less-adjusted people, such as those with personality disorders, nonetheless tend to accurately express their less adaptive traits (Oltmanns et al., 2004). Therefore, if they have poor audio-video quality, they could potentially still be impacted in the context of a mental health evaluation, where accuracy for less adaptive traits is the focus.

Strengths and Limitations

There are several strengths to this research. First, we were able to investigate the correlates of videoconferencing in a relatively naturalistic context, resembling one-on-one Zoom first impressions as they may take place in daily life (e.g., Zoom classroom breakout room activities; Zoom team-building exercises at work). By specifically employing a round-robin paradigm, we obtained two high-powered samples of dyads, with multiple perceivers per target and vice-versa, enabling the modeling of target and perceiver variances. By closely following the design of prior in-person round-robin studies, we could draw comparisons between our videoconferencing and in-person samples. Lastly, we were able to confirm the consistency and strength of associations between target well-being and distinctive accuracy by examining well-being across a large range of indicators.

In parallel, some noteworthy limitations circumscribe our interpretations. First, this set of studies was not part of an experimental design. That is, the in-person sample was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the videoconferencing sample was collected during COVID-19, including during lockdown periods limiting in-person social enounters to contain the spread of the virus. Therefore, the two samples inevitably differed in more ways than the medium of communication, such as the amount of interpersonal contact in daily life or the level of stress experienced due to the presence of a highly contagious health-hazard. Indeed, a large-scale survey by Statistics Canada indicates a significant drop in life satisfaction between 2018 and 2020, especially marked in youths under 30 (Helliwell et al., 2020), reflecting the age range in our samples. However, in the present research, we did not observe significant differences between the two samples in well-being levels, though the most pronounced difference was for life satisfaction, and was marginal ($M_{videoconferencing}$: 4.58; $M_{in-person}$: 4.73, t = 1.67, p = .096). That said, findings across the two samples were highly similar, in terms of distinctive (b

videoconferencing = 0.18; $b_{in-person} = 0.18$) and normative ($b_{videoconferencing} = 0.95$; $b_{in-person} = 0.89$) accuracy levels, and associations with well-being ($d_{videoconferencing} = 0.74$; $d_{in-person} = 0.79$). This suggests that any potential differences, including the medium of communication, did not influence people's tendency to be accurately perceived, nor did it influence the typical predictors of accuracy, at least for this sample of participants.

Further, our cross-sectional design prevented an examination of directionality for associations among accuracy, well-being, and audio-video quality. Indeed, as mentioned above, the associations between accuracy and well-being may very well be bidirectional. Future research, using experience sampling procedures and experimental designs should aim to disentangle the predictive effects of target well-being on personality accuracy from its consequences. Though it is quite unlikely that accuracy influenced audio-video quality, it is possible that a third variable may be at play, influencing both accuracy and the audio-video. For example, status has been associated with being more accurately perceived (e.g., Hall et al., 2006), and those of higher status may also have more financial resources to secure higher-speed Internet (e.g., Mossberger et al., 2012). Additionally, we were limited in our interpretation of the role of audio-video quality considering our use of a single item rated by perceivers and targets. Future research should examine this construct with more comprehensive scales separating audio and video, as well as via the use of objective coders. Lastly, given the low-stakes context and the relatively homogeneous undergraduate samples, future research should examine more ecologically valid, higher-stakes contexts with more diverse samples.

Conclusion

In sum, people tend to be perceived in line with their distinct personalities in live online first impression interactions, to a similar extent as in person. Well-being, a key correlate of

distinctively accurate impressions in face-to-face contexts, also strongly relates to distinctive accuracy through videoconferencing. However, audio-video quality seems to be an important feature not to overlook, as poorer audio-video quality related to being viewed less accurately, less normatively, and reduced the associations between accuracy and target well-being. Overall then, the computer screen may offer a transparent enough window into another's personality, and enable accurate personality perceptions. Nevertheless, poorer audio-video feed may blur that window, obstructing the overall impression formation process.

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General Thesis Discussion

A first impression may be the blankest slate a social interaction can afford. One may use such a slate as a window, transparently displaying one's idiosyncrasies through it, or at the other extreme, as a drawing board, starting from scratch in a fantastical manner, inventing a new self. At a more fine-grained level, each moment in a first impression interaction reflects such an opportunity to express one's true self, or not. How one handles this opportunity deliberately or reflexively, bears important consequences: a timely self-disclosure to the right person may set the stage for a life-long friendship, whereas misplaced self-relevant information may ruin one's reputation. Therefore, especially in first impressions, where risks and benefits of self-revelation have yet to be identified, we are continuously negotiating how permeable the boundary is between what is private about us and what is public about us (Petronio, 2002). However, it is unclear exactly how much control we really have in this complex balancing act.

Summary of Main Findings

In the present research, across three chapters totaling five first-impressions studies, we explored the extent to which accurately expressing one's unique self-aspects might be within one's control. We did so at three levels. As a preliminary step, at a *cognitive level* in Chapter 1, we conducted two studies exploring whether people were conscious of their tendency to be accurately perceived. We found that people were indeed aware, both at a global level (Study 1) and at a dyadic level (Study 2) of the extent to which new acquaintances accurately perceived their unique personalities. Second, considering that awareness, despite being a likely facilitating factor, may not necessarily enable control, we examined control at the *behavioural level* in Chapter 2. Specifically, we conducted an experimental study to examine whether people could increase their expressive accuracy levels. We found that, when told to "be yourself" people

indeed revealed their unique personality profile to a greater extent, especially the more visible and more evaluative aspects of their personality. Third at an *environmental level*, in Chapter 3, we compared two getting-acquainted studies, one on Zoom and one in-person, to examine whether accuracy may at times be outside our control: Might videoconferencing – and features of videoconferencing, such as audio-video quality – influence people's tendency to reveal who they are? We found that people had highly similar levels of expressive accuracy via videoconferencing as they did in-person. Further, well-being related to expressive accuracy to a similar degree in both contexts. However, audio-video quality on Zoom mattered: poorer audiovideo feed related to lower accuracy and a reduced association between well-being and accuracy.

In sum, do we have control over our expressive accuracy? To some extent. We are aware of how accurately we are perceived, we can enhance our expressive accuracy levels on demand, and we can weather important shifts in our social interaction environment, maintaining similar levels of expressive accuracy across contexts. However, some contextual features, such as technological glitches during videoconferencing, may nonetheless chip at our control and reduce our expressive accuracy levels, especially for those high in well-being.

The present program of research contributes to important components of the accuracy literature: research on expressive accuracy levels, and processes associated with the good target. We bring in an additional angle to this literature by examining how much awareness and control one has over one's expressive accuracy. We discuss below our contributions to each of these themes. We then describe overarching strengths and limitations of the present package of studies, as well as broader future directions of interest.

Key Themes & Implications

Expressive Accuracy Levels in Different First Impression Contexts

Our research adds to a large body of work showing that people tend to show their unique personality in first impressions. Indeed, there is mounting evidence that people have expressive accuracy in a wide array of first impressions contexts: low-stakes face-to-face getting-acquainted interactions (Human et al., 2019; Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020; Wallace & Biesanz, 2020), on social media (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020), during speed-dating events (Kerr, Borenstein-Laurie, & Human, 2020), via video-recorded interviews or interactions later watched by perceivers (Human et al., 2014), and via written texts (Wallace & Biesanz, 2020). People in fact seem to express their unique personalities in these various contexts to a similar degree (*bs* ranging from 0.09 to 0.18, all ps < .001).

With the package of studies presented in this thesis, we showed that people expressed what was *unique* about their personality in three face-to-face getting-acquainted studies (Chapters 1 & 3), when taking part in a recorded video-interview later watched by perceivers (Chapter 2), and when interacting via videoconferencing (Chapter 3). Importantly, across these contexts, distinctive accuracy levels were similar (*bs* ranging from 0.10 to 0.18, all *ps* < .001), in a range paralleling that of the aforementioned prior research. Further, people also expressed what was *positive* about them to a similar degree in the various contexts explored. That is, targets were also perceived in line with their normative, socially desirable profile of personality characteristics to a very high and similar extent across the various studies presented (*bs* ranging from 0.66 to 0.94, all *ps* < .001), as well as similar to levels found in prior research. In other words, people will reveal their *quirks*, and to an even greater extent, their *perks*, with similar levels in different types of low-stakes platonic first impressions.

A possible interpretation for these consistent levels across studies may be that targets themselves are stable in their levels from one context to another. In fact, over the past decades, expressive accuracy has been more and more clearly emerging as a stable individual characteristic, with early work arguing its importance (Allport, 1937; 1961), a later reignited interest for this construct (Colvin, 1991; 1993a; 1993b; Colvin & Funder, 1991), theoretical models developed to adequately understand it (Funder, 1995; 1999), and a more recent use of sophisticated statistical modeling to delve more deeply into this individual difference (Biesanz, 2010; Human & Biesanz, 2011; Human et al., 2012; Human et al., 2019; Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020; see Human & Biesanz, 2013; and Mignault & Human, 2019; for review). Of course, the design of our studies strictly afforded a between-targets analysis. Nonetheless, that expressive accuracy levels followed a similar pattern across five first impressions studies in three contexts lends support to prior research specifically finding cross-contextual within-person stability in expressive accuracy (Human, Rogers, & Biesanz, 2020; Wallace & Biesanz, 2020).

Of note, as suggested by Human, Rogers, & Biesanz (2020), research has yet to explore the stability of expressive accuracy as an individual difference in higher stakes contexts, where norms may be more rigid and behaviour constrained: For example, is the good target on a first date the same person as the good target on a job interview? Further, as noted by Wallace & Biesanz (2020), we would benefit from examining whether good targets are particularly skilled at flexibly expressing different aspects of themselves based on contextual demands: That is, good targets may be accurately expressing their personality in first impressions because that is what the context calls for: we want to know *who* a stranger is. But in a romantic relationship, we may also be interested in what our partner *feels*, and in a job interview, in what the job candidate's *goals* are. Therefore, future research could identify the target aspects that are of highest interest

to perceivers based on different social contexts, and whether the good target is a person who delivers self-relevant information accordingly.

Correlates of Expressive Accuracy

Across chapters, we also confirmed key processes typically associated with expressive accuracy. Specifically, in all three chapters, we examined associations with target well-being (Human & Biesanz, 2011; Human et al., 2014; 2019). In Chapter 2, we examined the role of personality-behaviour congruence (Human et al., 2014; 2019), and the role of liking (Human et al., 2013; 2020). Below, we discuss how the present thesis aligns with and expands on prior research with each of these target characteristics.

Target Well-Being. One of the hallmark features of the good target is high well-being (Colvin, 1993a; 1993b; Human & Biesanz, 2011; Human et al., 2014; Human et al., 2019; Kerr, Borenstein-Laurie, & Human, 2020; Wallace & Biesanz; 2020). Across two chapters (Chapters 1 and 3) spanning four studies, we found additional support for this association, observing in all four round-robin studies strong and consistent links with trait-level self-esteem, life satisfaction, and positive relations with others. In Chapter 1, we expanded on this prior research by finding that expressive accuracy was reliably associated with well-being independently of beliefs in one's expressive accuracy. In other words, we showed how *actually being transparent and revealing one's unique self* in first impressions could be important for well-being beyond the subjective experience; beyond *feeling transparent and believing that one is seen as who one is*.

In Chapter 3, we expanded on prior work by examining the link with well-being in a novel context: videoconferencing. We found that well-being was similarly associated to expressive accuracy in this context compared to face-to-face first impressions, but that audio-video quality had the power to reduce this association, potentially by preventing perceivers from

detecting the high-quality cues that those high in well-being were emitting. That said, those high in well-being with low audio-video quality were still more accurately perceived than those low in well-being but high in audio-video quality, highlighting the likely critical role of well-being in leading targets to reveal relevant cues of themselves. All in all, then, it seems that highly consistent evidence is amounting to support the notion that expressive accuracy reflects a highly adaptive individual process.

One noteworthy limitation is that in Chapter 1, although well-being was conceptualized as an outcome based on the specific research question, it was examined with the same trait-level indicators as in prior research (e.g., Kerr, Borenstein-Laurie, & Human, 2020) and as in Chapter 3, and following the same analytical approach in associations with expressive accuracy. It would be important to examine longitudinal designs tracking well-being and expressive accuracy over time, or experimental designs manipulating well-being and expressive accuracy, to disentangle the directionality and strength of associations in each direction.

In Chapter 2, in a pre-recorded target video-interview later watched by perceivers, we again examined well-being as an outcome of expressive accuracy, assessing well-being by asking targets to rate how satisfied with themselves and their lives they felt following the interview. In this context, we did not find associations with expressive accuracy levels (see Chapter 2; SOM). There may be a few explanations for this discrepancy. First, one pathway through which expressive accuracy may foster well-being, could be through smoother interpersonal interactions. Indeed, longitudinal designs show that perceivers report better liking targets whom they accurately perceive (Human et al., 2013; Human, Carlson, et al., 2020). When targets interact with perceivers who like them more, they may sense this heightened perceiver liking, which could in turn fuel targets' well-being levels. Indeed, in Chapter 2, perceivers did

report greater liking of targets whom they accurately perceived (see SOM). However, due to not having the opportunity to interact with perceivers, targets could potentially not reap interpersonal benefits of accurately expressing themselves in this context, and thus not have the necessary feedback to update their well-being levels.

Personality-Behaviour Congruence. In Chapter 2 (see SOM), we examined several mechanisms which could explain how instructions to "be yourself" enhanced expressive accuracy. We found, as in prior research (Human et al., 2014; 2019), that behaving in line with one's unique personality in the lab, as rated by coders, was associated with greater expressive accuracy. Importantly, we expanded on this prior research by showing that the "be yourself" instructions enhanced congruent behaviour particularly on more observable and more evaluative self-aspects. In turn, those in the experimental condition were perceived most accurately on those more visible and evaluative self-aspects. As such, this work highlights that, when we make deliberate attempts to reveal who we are, we tend to behave more congruently on certain types of characteristics, and this appears to be effective: we end up being seen more accurately by others on those characteristics. Implications for observability and evaluativeness are discussed below. Critically, personality-behaviour congruence was not the only plausible pathway leading those in the "be yourself" condition to accurately express their personality. We also found that "be yourself" instructions also promoted verbal disclosures involving more personally-relevant information. In turn, those verbal disclosures were associated with greater expressive accuracy on more observable self-aspects. Therefore, one may use different routes to effectively follow the advice to "be yourself", and one such route appears to be personality-behaviour congruence.

Target Likability. There is evidence for likability both as a predictor and as an outcome of being accurately perceived. First, experimental studies manipulating perceiver liking show

that perceivers who are experimentally induced to dislike a target perceive that target's personality less accurately (Zimmermann et al., 2018). Similarly, experimental studies indirectly manipulating target likability, via telling them to put their best face forward, show that targets in the experimental condition are viewed more in line with their distinct personality profiles (Human et al., 2012). Both of these experiments suggest that likability likely influences the latter stages of the Realistic Accuracy Model (Funder, 1995), leading perceivers to pay more attention and being more motivated to accurately interpret target cues. In turn, longitudinal studies with liking show that those who are accurately perceived by newly-acquainted classmates are liked more by those classmates over time (Human et al., 2013; 2020), potentially because accurately perceiving someone makes the person more predictable (Haselton & Funder, 2006; McArthur & Baron, 1983) and subsequent interactions more fluid as a result (Bernieri, 2001; Langlois & Roggman, 1990; Reis et al., 2011; Reber et al., 2004; but see Norton et al., 2007).

In Chapter 2, we aggregated perceiver ratings of target likability to examine the tendency to be liked as a target-level individual difference. Aligning with the aforementioned prior work, we found that good targets were indeed deemed more likable on average across their perceivers. Given the cross-sectional design, we were unable to disentangle the directionality of this association. Nonetheless, we found that instructions to "be yourself" influenced expressive accuracy, but not likability, which could potentially suggest that being a likable person is an intrinsic characteristic of good targets which promotes accuracy, potentially through fostering greater perceiver engagement, as suggested in the previously discussed experimental studies. Next steps could involve behaviour coding and transcript analyses of target videos to examine this possible pathway in greater detail, investigating what likable targets may be doing or saying differently that might draw perceivers in and fuel accuracy.

Overall, then, in the work of the present thesis, expressive accuracy emerged as a consistently adaptive process, aligning with a host of prior theory and research, with links to a wide range of well-being indicators, personality behaviour-congruence, and likability.

Implications of Having One's Expressive Accuracy Within One's Control

At the Cognitive Level: Implications of Expressive Accuracy Awareness. If people are aware of *the extent* to which they reveal who they are, then, could those "not so good" targets be aware of the reasons *why* they do not reveal who they are? Understanding reasons behind low expressive accuracy may be useful as not all reasons may yield similar negative consequences (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). A vast array of factors has been posited to explain why certain people may express themselves less accurately. Some people may be *motivated* to hold back on expressing certain aspects of themselves either because they deem those aspects to be undesirable, have felt misunderstood when revealing such aspects, or anticipate rejection (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010; Gaucher et al., 2012). Alternatively, some may lack the *ability* to provide relevant behavioural cues about themselves due to emotion regulation difficulties promoting frequent impulsive, "out-of-character" behaviour (Tangney et al., 2004; Gratz & Tull, 2010; Whiteside et al., 2007; Messman-Moore et al., 2010). Others may lack the ability to provide verbal cues, as they may not feel so certain of who they are, and thus have difficulty articulating how they view themselves (e.g., Campbell, 1990). Or, some people, such as those of lower status, may not feel that they have the *opportunity* to reveal certain aspects of themselves, experiencing less freedom and more constraints in what is deemed acceptable behavior (e.g., Kraus et al., 2011).

However, these potential mechanisms have yet to be tested empirically. Given that expressive *in*accuracy appears to be a conscious process, then perhaps people are also conscious
of reasons underpinning this process. Therefore, one preliminary avenue could be to take a qualitative approach, first asking people to rate how much they believe they tend to be viewed accurately in first impressions, followed by an open text-box explaining the reason. Despite cautionary tales against the validity of introspection (e.g., Dutton & Aron, 1974; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977), more recent experimental evidence suggests that people can and will be accurate when introspecting about reasons for specific behaviours (Questienne et al., 2018), and researchers have proposed models to bring introspection back into science (see Locke, 2009; Bitbol & Petitmengin, 2013; Jack & Roepstorff, 2003; Piccinini, 2003; Weger & Wagemann, 2015a, 2015b; Weger et al., 2018; Morales, 2021). For example, the content of those explanations could help guide scale development, behavioural observation, experiment design, and interventions for clinical samples.

At the Behavioural Level: Implications of Expressive Accuracy Malleability. By showing that we have the ability to amplify our expressive accuracy levels on demand, we highlight a new pathway to access the benefits of being accurately perceived, such as perceiver liking and friendship formation (Human et al., 2013; Human, Carlson et al., 2020). In Chapter 2, we did not find direct benefits of the advice to "be yourself" beyond increased expressive accuracy. This could have been a function of the video-interview design, precluding targets from interacting with perceivers, thereby shielding targets from feedback that they were accurately perceived, which could have been intrinsically pleasing (Gill & Swann, 2004; see Swann, 2012 for review). With that said, this simple experiment sets the stage for more complex interventions to test the impact and boundary conditions of the common advice "be yourself".

First, replications and extensions of this experiment should involve an in-person interaction component between targets and perceivers, which would be both more ecologically

valid and could potentially allow for benefits to emerge. Second, it would be informative to manipulate the time frame between the delivery of the "be yourself" instructions and the intended moment of implementation: How long do we have until this advice loses its power and is forgotten? Third, future research could experiment with different advice providers and contexts: In Chapter 2, the advice provider was the experimenter, an authority figure in a low-stakes context, but it would be interesting to examine, for example, a non-authority figure (e.g., a friend) in a higher-stakes context (e.g., a job interview). Lastly, there are some contexts in which being accurately perceived may hurt, such as first dates, especially for those with less desirable personality traits (Kerr, Tissera, et al., 2020). As such, it may be especially interesting to examine in such contexts whether people can follow the opposite advice: to be more mysterious.

At the Environmental Level: Implications of Videoconferencing. Finally, by knowing the specific contextual factors which can hinder accuracy, it is then possible to take measures to reduce their impact. In Chapter 3, although there was no overall difference in expressive accuracy based on the videoconferencing vs. in-person context, we found that poorer audio-video quality reduced the extent to which targets were perceived in line with their unique and desirable self-aspects. Critically, there are contexts, such as a job interviews, in which expressing the self accurately (Moore et al., 2017), and desirably (Imada & Hakel, 1977; DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999) holds high stakes, such as promoting hireability. As such, if that interview takes place via Zoom, low audio-video quality could represent an important drawback. However, having the knowledge that audio-video quality can disrupt this process may lead one to plan accordingly, such as via finding a location with good internet broadband. Further, we can now combine these different levels of control by examining, for example, whether those who are aware of their

expressive accuracy are better able to modulate their levels behaviourally, and whether they can do so in contexts where accuracy may be impeded.

Strengths of the Present Research

The Study Design

A key strength of the present program of research is the study design. First, by implementing round-robin and video-interview paradigms, we were able to take a highly naturalistic approach to person perception, with real target persons invited to talk about themselves, as opposed to reliance on static images or actors, which bear lower ecological validity. Second, this approach resulted in very high-powered samples of dyads (ranging across the five studies from 964 to 4083 unique perceiver-target pairs). Third, these designs, by virtue of including multiple perceivers per target and vice-versa, enabled us to disentangle target effects from perceiver or dyadic effects. That is, if Tata the target, is being perceived only by Pablo, we don't know if the extent to which Tata is accurately perceived is a function of Pablo's excellent perceiving skills, the exceptional synergy in their interaction, or because Tata is revealing lots of self-relevant information. However, if Tata is being perceived by Pablo, Pacho, and Peña, then we can obtain her expressive accuracy score by averaging how accurately she is perceived across these perceivers, and compare her score to that of other targets rated by these same perceivers.

The Social Accuracy Model

Another chief strength of the present thesis is that, across all three chapters, we examined accuracy-related processes through the lens of the Social Accuracy Model (SAM; Biesanz, 2010; 2020). The SAM, a multi-level cross-classified random-effects model, holds multiple benefits in the assessment accuracy. First, this method enables the disentanglement of different components of accuracy: being perceived in line with one's unique characteristics or *distinctive accuracy*, and

being perceived in line with the average person, or *normative accuracy*. Second, by modeling all items within one model as a profile, we can holistically assess a person's tendency to have their personality accurately perceived, as opposed to a trait-by-trait approach, which would yield a trait's tendency to be accurately perceived, and only indirectly allow for an examination of a person's tendency to be accurately perceived on that trait. Beyond our theoretical interest in examining accuracy as a stand-alone individual characteristic, trait-by-trait approaches result in multiple separate analyses, and therefore, by using the SAM, we reduce Type I error. Lastly, by using personality items as the unit of analysis, we preserve all the data within a single model, reducing Type II errors and maximizing power.

General Scientific Approach

By keeping a consistent analytical framework throughout my research program, we were able to combine the development of innovative ideas, via testing novel underpinnings of expressive accuracy such as awareness, malleability, real-word contextual influences, while in each study, replicating and confirming prior work on expressive accuracy levels and related processes such as well-being. In doing so, we both strengthened the foundation of mounting evidence on target characteristics, and illuminated new angles, thereby providing a more and more reliable as well as informative portrait of the good target of personality perceptions.

Limitations of the Present Research and Broad Future Directions

Cross-Sectional Links with Well-Being

There are noteworthy limitations to the present thesis. First of all, across studies, we investigated the links between expressive accuracy and well-being, finding strong, consistent associations in the four round-robin studies, whether in person or via videoconferencing. Nevertheless, the present design precluded an investigation of directionality. Although there is

mounting evidence that well-being may promote expressive accuracy via cue relevance (e.g., Human et al., 2014; 2019), this effect has not yet been disentangled from the possible influence of expressive accuracy on well-being. The wealth of evidence reviewed as part of this thesis hints to the possibility that a positive feedback loop could be at play, with people high in wellbeing revealing more about themselves (e.g., Human et al., 2019), in turn being liked more by perceivers (Human et al., 2013; Human, Carlson et al., 2020), thereby fostering overall more positive experiences, which could then further fuel global well-being levels. Indeed, it is possible that associations between expressive accuracy and more social indicators of trait well-being (e.g., see Chapter 3, SOM), such as positive relations with others, interpersonal support, as well as lower loneliness and social anxiety, may constitute important elements in this posited cycle. That is, these social well-being processes could directly result from the extent to which one is liked and experiences smoother interpersonal interactions (e.g., Perry et al., 1988; Boulton & Smith, 1994), in turn influencing more personal well-being processes such as self-esteem and life satisfaction (e.g., VanderWeele et al., 2012). Future research should involve experimental designs manipulating different components of well-being, and longitudinal designs examining the interplay of different well-being processes and expressive accuracy dynamically over time, for example, over the course of an undergraduate degree. Alternately, this line of research could be well-suited to a specific higher-stakes context, high school years, in which well-being is likely to be especially tied how the self is viewed in social interactions (e.g., Parker & Gottmann, 1989; Morison & Masten, 1991; Valkenburg et al., 2006).

The Low-Stakes Laboratory Context

This specific future direction ties into the second broad limitation of the present thesis, that is, all studies took place in low-stakes laboratory contexts. It is possible that in higher stakes contexts, with more rigid norms and constrained behaviour, the processes explored in the present thesis would differ. Therefore, as previously mentioned, examining job interviews, naturally occurring first dates, as well as first impressions during a life stage in which they especially matter – teen years – may provide further insight into how these processes may differ. Indeed, it may be effective to reveal some specific self-aspects more than others in each of these contexts, marked by their respective social norms. Possibly, highly socially adjusted targets may adequately select which relevant cues to emit based on those contexts. One well-suited method to investigate this hypothesis may be Response Surface Analysis (Edwards, 1994; Edwards & Parry, 1993; Nestler et al., 2015; Barranti et al., 2017), which could illustrate whether, in different contexts, well-adjusted targets flexibly prioritize accuracy for certain traits, or in parallel, which accurately-expressed traits are especially well-received by perceivers.

Undergraduate Sample Homogeneity

Third, a similar limitation preventing generalizability of our findings is the homogeneity of our samples. Indeed, by examining a highly homogeneous, healthy sample of undergraduate students predominantly identifying as women, we are undoubtedly failing to observe nuances which may be present in more diverse demographics, including a wider range of ages, ethnicities, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic status. For example, we know from prior research that social status matters in the accurate expression and perception of cues: higher status individuals tend to express themselves more freely and feel less constrained (e.g., Kraus et al., 2011), and perceivers tend to pay more attention to higher-status individuals (e.g., Hall et al., 2006). As such, the processes examined in the present research, such as expressive accuracy awareness (in Chapter 1) or instructions to "be yourself" (Chapter 2), may be more nuanced in a context where status dynamics are exacerbated. For example, high-status individuals may not be

as aware of whether or not they are being accurately perceived, as they may not be as attuned to the impression they are making on others. Similarly, in a job interview, job candidates may be more hesitant than prospective employers to heed the advice to be themselves. As such, current directions of my research include investigating the role of status, in the form of socio-economic status, in a more diverse sample of dyads recruited from the community.

Alternative Explanations for Expressive Accuracy

Across studies in the present thesis, we use, as a benchmark for people's actual personalities, the composite of self- and close-other reports. Indeed, although there is no fundamental "truth" to who a person really is (Vazire, 2010), utilizing self- and close-other reports as a benchmark represents a realistic compromise, offsetting biases present in self- and close-other ratings alone (e.g., Beer, Rogers, & Letzring, 2019; Funder, 1995; Rogers & Biesanz, 2019). However, one limitation of this approach is that, as pointed out by Human, Rogers, & Biesanz (2020), some people may *seem* to accurately express their personality, when in fact they may be quite skilled at persuading others – both in first impressions and close relationships - to view them in line with how they would like to be. For example, through stories they tell about themselves rather than behaviour, they may be providing – consciously or not – specific irrelevant cues to appear more conscientious, assertive, generous, or adventurous than they are. As such this tendency may inflate agreement among the self, close-others, and new acquaintances, without being anchored in the reality of who the person actually is. However, this tendency is unlikely to be extreme. That is, those who endorse narcissistic traits, who may be especially prone to engaging in this process; rating themselves desirably and influencing others to view them as such (e.g., Paulhus, 1998; Vazire et al., 2008), do not tend to be able to maintain positive impressions over time (Carlson et al., 2011; Leckelt et al., 2015; Paulhus, 1998). In turn,

perhaps in part due to close others offsetting the positivity of the accuracy criterion, they do not have a tendency to be more or less accurately perceived by new acquaintances (Rogers, Le, et al., 2018). That said, collection of behavioural data across a wide range of situations may represent an alternate – albeit more labor-intensive and costly – accuracy criterion, which could contribute to validating the findings of the present thesis.

Beyond Accurately Expressing the Big Five Personality Traits

The present thesis was limited to a search of underpinnings for personality expressive accuracy exclusively. However, research is beginning to draw links among different domains, such as between accurate personality expression and accurate expression of more "under the skin" processes, such as motives (Wallace & Biesanz, 2020), finding that those who accurately express their personality in getting-acquainted interactions also express their motives more accurately in writing. In future research, I would like to follow the good target across a large variety of domains of the self and contexts, including emotions, boundaries, and values. For example, do those who accurately express how extraverted they are at a cocktail party, also accurately express when they feel disappointed to their close others, and when they have enough on their plate at work? Answering this question may greatly contribute to fleshing out the portrait of the good target: if this individual difference indeed transcends contexts and domains, this may expose an extraordinary degree of social proficiency.

Conclusion

People differ remarkably in their tendency to accurately express who they are. Some people, just like open books, let themselves be known, even to strangers. Others are more like locked diaries; mysterious, cryptic, hard to decipher. The present thesis first echoed the mounting evidence that on average, people are more like the open book, naturally revealing, even in brief

first impressions, their unique personality profile. Further, based on prior work, key processes typically associated with expressive accuracy consistently emerged, namely well-being, personality-behaviour congruence, and likability. I then built on this prior work to examine across the three chapters: to what extent is expressive accuracy within one's control? It appears that we do have some control over our expressive accuracy. As an initial step, I demonstrated that we are aware, both of our global expressive accuracy levels and of how accurately we are viewed by specific others. This awareness may certainly facilitate control though may not always be its precursor. Therefore, as a second step, I demonstrated on a behavioural level that we are able to enhance our expressive accuracy when instructed to do so. Thirdly, I demonstrated that our expressive accuracy levels may be robust in the face of contextual forces, demonstrating that people express themselves with similar accuracy via videoconferencing as in-person, though audio-video quality may be an important feature not to overlook.

In sum then, both Simone De Beauvoir and Coco Chanel may be right. As De Beauvoir reflected, being oneself may naturally require inner strength indeed; in the form of psychological well-being. At the same time, as Chanel hinted, it may also be possible to *simply decide* to take the leap of being oneself. How adventure and beauty may arise from taking that leap is still open for investigation.

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Appendix : Supplemental Online Materials

Chapter 1: Supplemental Online Materials

Expressive Accuracy Awareness and Well-Being

Although both expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs may have independent benefits, it is also possible that they are most beneficial when paired together, that is, when people are transparent and know it. However, we did not observe a significant interaction between expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs in their association with self-reported personal well-being (Study 1: b = -.10, t = -0.79, p = .429, $r_{partial} = -.03$, 95% CI [-.34, .14]; Study 2: b = .47, t = .40, p = .693, $r_{partial} = .03$, 95% CI [-1.86, 2.79]) nor close-other reported personal well-being (Study 1: b = .07, t = .40, p = .686, $r_{partial} = .02$, 95% CI [-.28, .42]; Study 2: b = 1.63, t = 1.40, p = .165, $r_{partial} = .11$, 95% CI [-.68, 3.94]). A similar pattern of results emerged for social well-being, such that expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs did not interact in their association to self-reported social well-being across studies (Study 1: b = .14, t = .96, p = .336, $r_{partial} = .04$, 95% CI [-.15, .44]; Study 2: b = .75, t = .75, p = .453, r*partial* = .05, 95% CI [-1.21, 2.70]) or close-other reported social well-being, which was only available in Study 1 (b = .19, t = 1.23, p = 0.221, $r_{partial} = .07$, 95% CI [-.11, .49]). In sum, experiencing expressive accuracy awareness, either globally (Study 1) or dyadically (Study 2), does not appear to relate to significantly greater well-being. In other words, it may be good to both be expressively accurate and feel expressively accurate, but the extent to which one has awareness of one's expressive accuracy does not appear to be associated with even higher wellbeing. In parallel, awareness of one's low expressive accuracy, that is, having low expressive accuracy beliefs when one's expressive accuracy was actually low, did not buffer against lower well-being.

Global Expressive Accuracy Beliefs: Using Berlin & Neuberg's (2011) Individual Efficacy Scale

In addition to our design-specific single expressive accuracy beliefs item, participants completed three more general items from Berlin & Neuberg's (2011) unpublished Individual Efficacy Scale. Specifically, items included: "*In general, it is easy for others to see me how I truly am*", "*My personality is difficult for others to understand*" (reversed), and "*When other people meet me for the first time, it is easy for them to understand what kind of person I am*". These items were rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale, and combined into a composite score (M = 4.27, SD = 1.26). Expressive accuracy beliefs using our design-specific single item and using the Berlin & Neuberg's (2011) items were strongly correlated (r = .65, *95% CI* [.60, .70]). Below, we examine whether results using this composite measure of *even more* global expressive accuracy beliefs align with our single global expressive accuracy beliefs item.

With the Berlin & Neuberg (2011) composite, global expressive accuracy beliefs were associated with expressive accuracy (b = 0.04, t = 5.40, p < .0001), as well as with all self- and close-other reported personal and social well-being indicators, when controlling for expressive accuracy (all ps < .01). Expressive accuracy was also associated with all well-being indicators when controlling for this expressive accuracy beliefs measure (all ps < .01). All results followed the same pattern as reported in the main article when controlling for covariates including selfesteem, extraversion, and gender. In addition, when separating the Berlin & Neuberg (2011) item that specifically referred to expressive accuracy beliefs *in first impressions* from the two items that referred to expressive accuracy beliefs in general, the first impression-specific item was more strongly related to expressive accuracy with new acquaintances. All analyses can be reproduced here: osf.io/qrw3j/.

The Role of Covariates: Gender, Extraversion, and Self-Esteem

In both studies, we controlled for possible confounds, namely gender, extraversion, and self-esteem. In this section, we first examine how each of these characteristics relates to our variables of interest; expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs. We then include them one at a time in analyses of expressive accuracy awareness, as well as in analyses of personal and social well-being. Of note, for analyses with personal well-being, we do not include self-esteem as a covariate, given its role as part of the personal well-being composite.

Covariates: Results

Associations Between Covariates and Expressive Accuracy. In Study 1, expressive accuracy was not significantly associated with gender (dummy coded with males = 0 and females = 1), such that females were not seen with significantly greater accuracy than males (b = -0.03, p = .198). However, expressive accuracy was significantly associated with greater self-esteem (b = .06, p < .0001) and extraversion (b = .05, p < .0001). In Study 2, expressive accuracy was significantly associated with gender (dummy coded with males = 0 and females = 1), such that males were seen with marginally greater accuracy than females (b = -0.05, p = .022), and was also significantly associated with greater self-esteem (b = .04, p < .0001) as well as extraversion (b = .02, p = .009).

Associations Between Covariates and Expressive Accuracy Beliefs. In Study 1, global expressive accuracy beliefs were not significantly associated with gender (dummy coded with males = 0 and females = 1), such that females did not hold significantly greater expressive accuracy beliefs than males (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441), but were associated with greater self-esteem (b = -.14, p = .441).

.47, p < .0001), and extraversion (b = .48, p < .0001). In Study 2, aggregated expressive accuracy beliefs were significantly associated with gender, such that females *believed* they were seen more accurately than males (b = .14, p = .042), but were not associated with greater self-esteem (b = .01, p = .786), and extraversion (b = .03, p = .377).

Controlling for Covariates in the Present Analyses. Across studies, all significant associations held when including gender, self-esteem, or extraversion as covariates, with one exception: when including self-esteem as a covariate with both expressive accuracy and beliefs in the same analysis in predicting self-reported social well-being, expressive accuracy no longer significantly predicted self-reported social well-being (p = .093). Nevertheless, the overall consistency of the results controlling for these covariates suggests that the links between expressive accuracy, expressive accuracy beliefs, and personal and social well-being are quite robust.

Covariates: Discussion

The Role of Self-Esteem. When controlling for self-esteem in the model including both expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs as predictors of social well-being, the association between expressive accuracy and self-reported social well-being in Study 1 became marginal, with the correlation reducing from moderately small (r = .13) to small (r = .07). The correlation between expressive accuracy beliefs and social well-being remained significant but lowered from moderately large (r=.25) to moderate (r=.19). This suggests that self-esteem might contribute to the associations between social well-being and expressive accuracy, and to a lesser extent, expressive accuracy beliefs. This is consistent with research finding that people who have higher self-esteem tend to be more accurately perceived in first impressions (e.g., Human et al., 2019), tend to report feeling more transparent or "feeling authentic" around others (Heppner et

al., 2008), and are also found to have more positive interpersonal relationships (e.g., Paradise & Kernis, 2002). However, when controlling for self-esteem in associations with close-other reports of social well-being in Study 1, effects remained significant and only slightly weakened. Thus, we hesitate to make strong conclusions about these results.

The Role of Extraversion. When controlling for extraversion, all associations remained significant, but effects tended to weaken slightly. This suggests that extraversion might contribute to some of the links between expressive accuracy, expressive accuracy beliefs, and well-being. This is consistent with research finding that extraverted people tend to be more accurately perceived in first impressions (Ambady, Hallahan, & Rosenthal, 1995), tend to report feeling more understood (Selcuk, Gunaydin, Ong, & Almeida, 2016), and are also found to have higher well-being levels (Costa & McCrae, 1980).

The Role of Gender. When including gender as a covariate, all associations remained significant, and effects did not tend to weaken. Nevertheless, future research may wish to further explore the role self-esteem, extraversion, and gender, in relation to expressive accuracy, expressive accuracy beliefs, and well-being, as well as investigate additional covariates unexplored in the present research.

Analyses Using Self-Ratings of Personality Alone as Accuracy Criterion Preliminary Analyses: Mean Levels of Expressive Accuracy

Overall, using the SAM framework, participants were seen with significant levels of distinctive accuracy across studies (Study 1: b = .09, z = 9.14, p < .0001; Study 2: b = .05, z = 4.55, p < .0001), indicating that people were significantly expressively accurate. That is, new acquaintances were able to accurately distinguish targets' unique self-rated personality profiles, above and beyond the high levels of normative accuracy with which targets were viewed (Study

1: b = .91, z = 51.16, p < .0001; Study 2: b = .79, z = 19.42, p < .0001). In sum, the pattern of results with self-ratings only was the same as in the main manuscript, where the accuracy criterion included both self- and close-other ratings. Although the overall distinctive accuracy levels were slightly lower with self-ratings only, this tends to be typical as the combination of self- and close-other ratings affords greater reliability, and allows for a greater shared perspective of outside observers.

Primary Analyses

Expressive Accuracy Awareness

Study 1: Global Expressive Accuracy Awareness. In Study 1, using SAM, greater expressive accuracy in getting-acquainted interactions, using personality self-ratings as the accuracy criterion, was significantly associated with greater expressive accuracy beliefs (b = .04, z = 5.71, p < .0001). In other words, in line with results in the main manuscript, people who were generally seen more accurately tended to report generally feeling seen more accurately, suggesting global expressive accuracy awareness.

Study 2: Dyadic Expressive Accuracy Awareness. In Study 2, using SAM, we included both aggregated (dyadic ratings averaged at the target level) expressive accuracy beliefs and dyadic (within-target level) expressive accuracy beliefs within the same analysis.

Within-Target Effects. We first examined whether within-target fluctuations in expressive accuracy across perceivers predicted within-target fluctuations in expressive accuracy beliefs across those perceivers, and found that this was the case, when using personality self-ratings alone as the accuracy criterion (b = .02, z = 2.22, p = .027). In other words, in line with results in the main manuscript, targets who *were* seen more accurately by a specific perceiver

tended to report *feeling* seen more accurately by that specific perceiver compared to their other perceivers, suggesting dyadic expressive accuracy awareness.

Between-Target Effects. However, again aligning with main manuscript findings, when we aggregated expressive accuracy and expressive accuracy beliefs across perceivers for each target to examine between-target effects, greater expressive accuracy on average was not significantly associated with greater expressive accuracy beliefs on average (b = -.02, z = -.59, p = .556).

In sum, people's expressive accuracy awareness levels, both when examined globally and dyadically, were highly similar with self-ratings only as the accuracy criterion compared to the composite of self- and close-other ratings. These results followed the same pattern when controlling for gender, extraversion, and self-esteem. Results also followed the same pattern when using the alternative beliefs measure (Berlin & Neuberg, 2011) for global transparency beliefs in Study 1.

Associations With Well-Being

Does Expressive Accuracy Independently Relate to Well-Being?

We then saved out the expressive accuracy scores in linear regressions based on the selfratings alone as the accuracy criterion. In Study 1, expressive accuracy was significantly associated with greater self-reported personal and social well-being, and was significantly associated with close-other reported personal, but not social, well-being (see Table S1). When controlling for global expressive accuracy beliefs, only associations with self- and close-other reported personal well-being held (see Table S1).

In sum, when using self-ratings only as the accuracy criterion instead of the combination of self- and close-other ratings, links between expressive accuracy and personal well-being

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remained strong, only slightly smaller, but links with social well-being were much weaker, and mostly non-significant. This may be reflective of having lower power due to a less reliable accuracy criterion. Of note, these results nonetheless follow a similar pattern as in the main manuscript, where associations with personal well-being tended to be stronger than with social well-being.

In Study 2, expressive accuracy was significantly related to greater self-reported personal, but not social well-being, and did not significantly relate to close-other reported personal well-being. Results followed the same pattern when including expressive accuracy beliefs in the model (see Table S1). Thus, in line with results in the main manuscript, expressive accuracy with self-ratings as accuracy criterion in Study 2 was related to personal, but not social well-being above and beyond expressive accuracy beliefs.

Taken together, across studies and accuracy criteria (composite of self- and close other ratings vs. self-ratings only), these results suggest that links between expressive accuracy and personal well-being may be stronger and more reliable than links with social well-being. This may be especially the case when considering the unique variance in expressive accuracy predicting well-being, above and beyond one's beliefs.

Do Expressive Accuracy Beliefs Independently Relate to Well-Being?

In Study 1, aligning with results in the main manuscript, all results between global beliefs and well-being indicators held when controlling for expressive accuracy, indicating that believing that one is expressively accurate may be linked to greater well-being independently of whether one's personality self-ratings actually relate to new acquaintance ratings (see Table S2).

In Study 2, again in line with the main manuscript, aggregated dyadic expressive accuracy beliefs were not significantly related to greater self- and close-other reported personal

well-being, nor were they related to self-reported social well-being when controlling for expressive accuracy (with self-ratings as criterion; see Table S2).

In sum, for expressive accuracy beliefs, conclusions remain the same as in the main manuscript, such that results from Study 1 suggest that having high global expressive accuracy beliefs may be linked to well-being, whereas results from Study 2 suggest that having high expressive accuracy beliefs with specific partners across a series of getting-acquainted interactions may not be.

All results presented here, with self-ratings as the expressive accuracy criterion, followed the same pattern when controlling for gender, extraversion, and self-esteem. Results also followed the same pattern when examining global transparency beliefs using the alternative beliefs measure (Berlin & Neuberg, 2011).

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Chapter 2 Supplemental Online Materials

Just Be Yourself?

Effects of an Authenticity Manipulation on Expressive Accuracy in First Impressions

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Covariates

Self-Esteem

Given the role of self-esteem as a predictor of distinctive personality-behavior congruence and distinctive accuracy (Human et al., 2019), we examined whether the authenticity manipulation differentially promoted expressive accuracy in those high compared to low in selfesteem. Further, we also examined whether the authenticity manipulation may only foster positive personal and social outcomes for those high in self-esteem, based on research suggesting that accuracy may differentially benefit those who have more vs. less socially desirable characteristics (Kerr, Tissera, et al., 2020). Thus, we included self-esteem first as a covariate and then as a moderator in analyses among the authenticity manipulation, distinctive accuracy, and target outcomes. To this end, targets completed the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, including items such as "*I take a positive attitude toward myself*" (M = 5.13, SD = 1.07, $\alpha = .90$).

A t-test showed that participants did not differ in their baseline levels of self-esteem across the two conditions, $M_{control} = 5.18$, $M_{experimental} = 5.08$; t(202) = 0.67, p = .504. Higher baseline levels of self-esteem were not significantly associated with greater distinctive accuracy overall, b = -0.01, z = -0.32, p = .750, nor with normative accuracy, b = 0.02, z = 1.23, p = .220. Baseline self-esteem did not moderate the association between condition and distinctive accuracy, b = -0.001, t = -0.04, p = .971, or normative accuracy, b = -0.03, z = -0.76, p = .450, such that the manipulation did not differentially influence distinctive nor normative accuracy for those higher vs. lower in baseline self-esteem. Further, when baseline self-esteem was included as a covarying predictor in the association between condition and expressive accuracy, the effect of condition on accuracy held, b = 0.09, z = 2.49, p = .013. Lastly, including baseline self-esteem as a moderator or covarying predictor in associations between condition and target outcomes did not influence associations (all ps > .324).

Overall, then, even though prior research suggests that those higher in self-esteem tend to be more accurately perceived, this was not the case in the present study, where an experimental manipulation was implemented. Further, being low or high in self-esteem did not appear to influence the extent to which people heeded the advice to "be themselves".

Gender

In addition, we examined whether the main associations varied based on gender or held controlling for gender. A chi-square test showed that there were no significant differences in gender breakdown across the two lab conditions ($\chi^2(1) = 1.10, p = .294$), with 29% men (28 men and 69 women) in the experimental condition compared to 36% men (39 men and 67 women) in the control condition. Gender (dummy coded with women = 1 and men = 0) was not significantly associated with normative accuracy, b = -0.05, z = -0.97, p = .331, but was significantly associated with distinctive accuracy, b = -0.10, z = -2.43, p = .016, such that women were seen less accurately than men. That said, the two outliers mentioned in the manuscript (i.e., with distinctive accuracy scores that were over three standard deviations above the mean) were men, and when excluding them from the analysis, the association between accuracy and gender became non-significant, b = -0.07, z = -1.91, p = .058.

There was a marginal moderation by gender in the association between condition and distinctive accuracy, b = -0.15, z = -1.93, p = .055, but when excluding the two outliers from the analysis, the interaction with gender was non-significant, b = -0.10, z = -1.32, p = .190. There was no moderation by gender in the association between condition and normative accuracy, b = -0.04, z = -0.47, p = .636. Importantly, when gender was included as a covariate in the association

between condition and distinctive accuracy, the association held, b = 0.10, z = 2.76, p = .006. Gender moderated the effect of the authenticity manipulation on target likability, b = -0.52, t = -2.46, p = .015, with the "be yourself" instructions increasing likability for men, b = 0.32, t = 1.81, p = .072, but decreasing likability for women, b = -0.21, t = -1.71, p = .089, though not significantly in either case. This interaction held when removing the two male outliers from the analyses, b = -0.50, t = -2.33, p = .021. However, gender did not moderate the effect of authenticity manipulation on personal well-being, b = 0.49, t = 1.24, p = .218. Further, including gender as a covariate in associations between the authenticity manipulation and target outcomes did not alter these associations (all ps > .709). Future research should examine the differential influence of the advice to "be yourself" on men and women with higher-powered, more gender-balanced samples.

Mechanisms of the Effect of the Manipulation on Expressive Accuracy

Based on the realistic accuracy model (RAM; Funder, 1995), we conducted exploratory analyses on potential mechanisms of the manipulation's effect across all stages of the accuracy process. We first examined three potential mechanisms within the cue relevance stage. First, we investigated whether targets in the experimental condition *felt less anxious*, possibly in turn leading them to feel comfortable to reveal relevant self-aspects. Second, we investigated whether participants *followed the instructions behaviorally*, providing relevant cues by behaving more in line with who they are. Third, we examined whether participants *followed the instructions verbally*, for example, highlighting relevant self-aspects via verbal descriptions of personal experiences. Next, in terms of the later stages of the RAM, we investigated the availability stage by examining the *quantity of information that targets provided*, and for the detection and utilization stages, we examined *observer engagement*. We sought to disentangle these

mechanisms via three methods: 1) using existing target and observer reports, 2) using the Language Inquiry and Word Count software to analyze transcripts of these interviews (LIWC; Pennebaker et al., 2015), and 3) via measuring behavioral congruence using a different set of observers, whom we term "coders", who watched target videos coding for targets' behaviors (for a subset of the data for which this coding was available; see below).

Cue Relevance

Target Anxiety Levels

Method: Target and Observer Subjective Reports. We examined targets' postinterview self-reports of the extent to which they felt "distressed", "nervous", "jittery", or "afraid", during the interview, rated on a scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). These items were examined separately. We found that targets in the experimental condition were not less (or more) likely to report feeling these negative emotions (all ps > .180). Further, we also examined observer reports of targets' emotions, "nervous", "tense", "alert", or "distressed", rated on the same *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7) scale. Similarly, targets in the authenticity condition were not less (or more) likely to be perceived by observers to have these emotions (all ps > .674).

Method: Language Inquiry and Word Count Software. Next, we examined target affect by transcribing target video-interviews and analyzing them via the Language Inquiry and Word Count software (LIWC; Pennebaker et al., 2015), specifically looking at the following emotion word categories: affect, positive emotions, negative emotions, anxiety. With this alternative method, interview transcripts of targets in the experimental (vs. control) condition were not found to contain less (or more) anxiety or broader emotion words (*all* p > .164).

Overall, across the present methods, it appears that targets in the experimental condition did not report nor were they rated by observers as feeling less (or more) anxious. Further, it appears that targets in the experimental conditions did not objectively make lesser (or greater) use of emotion-related words. This suggests that anxiety reduction may not necessarily be the primary mechanism via which the manipulation affects expressive accuracy, though future research may wish to examine other, objective indicators, such as a reduction in target physiological arousal.

Target Behavioral Congruence

We also examined whether targets had a greater tendency to behave more congruently with their personality, as indicated by subjective reports, linguistic cues, and objective behavior ratings.

Method: Observer Subjective Reports. Via subjective reports, we examined the extent to which observers rated targets as being "genuine" and "themselves", on a scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). Targets in the experimental condition were not rated by observers to be more genuine, b = -0.08, t = -1.03, p = .303, nor to be themselves to a greater extent, b = -0.03, t = -0.42, p = .673, than their control counterparts. Thus, even though targets who receive the "be yourself" manipulation report feeling that they are being themselves and behaving in line with their personality to a greater extent, this could in part result from the demand characteristics of the experimental instructions, and was not apparent to naïve observers.

Method: Language Inquiry and Word Count Software. We then examined linguistic markers of behavior congruence via the following LIWC items: "authenticity" and "negation". These two word bank categories are found to include words that reflect a less inhibited linguistic style (Newman et al., 2003), which could indirectly reflect an overall less inhibited and self-

revealing behavioral style. However, the authenticity manipulation was not significantly related to authenticity, b = 3.10, t = 1.34, p = .181, nor negation, b = 0.09, t = 1.03, p = .304, word use.

Method: Wave 1 Behavioral Coding. Lastly, we examined *distinctive personality-behavior congruence*, targets' tendency to behave in line with their distinctive personality profile, coded by a different set of observers, whom we term "coders" to avoid confusion with observers within the main study. Due to COVID-19 pausing in-person testing, followed by the last author (and Study PI) switching institutions, we were only able to collect this data for Wave 1, as participants did not consent to online viewing of their videos, nor can they be shown at the new institution. We conducted a power analysis to verify whether we had a large enough sample to detect an effect using the fabs package for R (github\jbiesanz\fabs; also see Biesanz & Schrager, 2017; McShane & Bockenholt, 2015). Specifically, we used a prior effect size estimate from Human et al. (2012), with a similar study design and analytical approach (r = .26; N = 24). We obtained 63% power, which suggests that we may be underpowered to detect a similar effect size, and that results should be interpreted with caution.

Specifically, we examined whether the manipulation influenced targets' tendency to be observed as behaving more in line with their personality criterion. We examined these via the Social Accuracy Model (Biesanz, 2010; 2020), paralleling the primary analyses, but instead of having observer personality impressions as the outcome, we had coder behavior impressions (see detailed descriptions in previous research: Human et al., 2014; Human et al., 2019). Overall, the authenticity manipulation did not promote greater behavioral congruence on average across all personality items using these coder behavior ratings, b = 0.04, z = 0.65, p = .514.

However, the manipulation interacted with item observability (b = 0.08, t = 6.08, p < .0001) and evaluativeness (b = -0.02, t = -5.21, p < .0001), to predict greater behavioral

congruence, mirroring the pattern obtained with the manipulation's effect on distinctive accuracy for more observable and evaluative items. Although the simple slopes were not significant for observability, the pattern indicates that the manipulation may have increased targets' tendency to behave in line with their more observable personality characteristics (b = 0.11, t = 1.75, p =.083), but not their less observable characteristics (b = -0.02, t = -0.26, p = .795). However, for evaluativeness, the experimental condition significantly increased targets' tendency to behave in line with their more evaluative characteristics (b = .38, t = 4.51, p < .0001) but not less evaluative characteristics (b = -.03, t = -.44, p = .664).

Further, in line with previous research (Human et al., 2014; Human et al., 2019), congruent behavior promoted distinctive accuracy, b = .02, z = 2.59, p = .010. Thus, behavioral congruence on more observable and evaluative aspects may represent a mechanism through which the manipulation enhanced distinctive accuracy. In other words, prompts to be oneself seem to promote behaving more in line with one's more observable and evaluative personality traits, which in turn promotes being seen more in line with those traits. That said, future research using higher-powered samples and other indicators of behavior, such as in-the-moment selfreports, should be conducted to further examine the influence of instructions to "be yourself" on behavioral congruence and, in turn, expressive accuracy.

Target Verbal Self-Disclosures

Method: Observer Subjective Reports. To address the verbal self-disclosure

hypothesis, we looked at how observers rated targets on the following item: "disclosed information about themselves". However, targets in the authenticity condition were not rated as disclosing significantly more information about themselves, b = -0.07, t = -.36, p = .719.

Method: Language Inquiry and Word Count Software. Our next step involved using transcripts of target video interviews, and running these transcripts through LIWC to examine potential linguistic cues of verbal self-disclosure. Specifically, we examined the following "function word category" items in association with the authenticity manipulation, as they have been found to reflect greater personal, self-relevant information and social processing (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010; Heberlein et al., 2003): personal pronouns, pronouns (in general), and verbs. We also examined function words that have been unrelated to personal information and social processing (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010): articles, adverbs, and adjectives. In addition to function words, we also examined the word category "Analytical Thinking" which has been negatively associated with personal narratives (Pennebaker et al., 2014).

Overall, targets in the authenticity condition made significantly greater use of pronouns in general, b = 0.81, t = 2.44, p = .016, as well as, to some extent, personal pronouns, b = 0.49, t = 1.91, p = .057, and verbs, b = .54, t = 1.95, p = .053, although these were not statistically significant. Further, they used fewer words related to analytical thinking (b = -5.28, t = -2.98, p = .003). Taken together, these results suggest that those in the authenticity condition made greater use of some types of self-relevant personal narrative words. Of note, the effect of the condition on function words was specific to those relating to personal narratives, as it did not significantly enhance the use of function words unrelated to personal narratives, such as articles, b = -.27, t = -1.78, p = .077, adverbs, b = .30, t = 1.28, p = .203, and adjectives, b = .07, t = .55, p = .586.

That said, enhanced pronoun use, b = 0.01, z = 0.89, p = .375, and lower levels of analytical thinking, b = -0.000, z = 0.04, p = .970, did not predict being perceived with distinctive accuracy by observers on average across items. Nonetheless, both greater pronoun use (b=.01, z=3.41, p<.001) and lower analytical thinking (b=-.001, z=-2.81, p=.005) interacted with

item observability to predict distinctive accuracy. Although the simple slopes were not significant, they were consistent with the manipulation's effect on distinctive accuracy for more observable items. Specifically, the association between greater pronoun use and distinctive accuracy was in the positive direction for high (b=.01, z=1.34, p=.181) but not low (b=-.001, z=-.07, p=.943) observability items, and the association between analytical thinking and distinctive accuracy was in the negative direction for high (b=-.001, z=-.50, p=.619), but not low (b=.001, z=.58, p=.564) observability items. However, neither pronoun use (b=-.001, z=-.178, p=.075) nor analytical thinking (b=.000, z=.13, p =.901) significantly interacted with item evaluativeness to predict distinctive accuracy. Overall, the manipulation fostered the personal relevance of verbal information, via greater pronoun use and lower reliance on analytical thinking. Of note, by being more personal, this does not mean that the information was necessarily true or in line with the target's actual personality. Nonetheless, these more personally-relevant narratives could help in leading people to be perceived with greater distinctive accuracy on more observable self-aspects.

Cue Relevance Mechanisms Summary

In sum, these analyses of potential cue relevance mechanisms suggest that targets in the experimental condition may be following the instructions to "be yourself" both behaviorally and verbally. Specifically, the manipulation may have led people to *behave more congruently* with their more evaluative characteristics, and possibly, to some extent their more observable characteristics, though the pattern was not as robust for observability considering the non-significant simple slopes. In turn, behavioral congruence was associated with greater distinctive accuracy, thus potentially representing a pathway through which the manipulation may have taken effect, especially via for evaluative and observable items. They may also be heeding instructions verbally, using more pronouns and relying less on analytical thinking, a linguistic

style which indicates greater disclosure of self-relevant personal narrative information. These linguistic characteristics may in turn promote being perceived with greater distinctive accuracy on one's more observable self-aspects, although the pattern of results was not especially robust given non-significant simple slopes. Thus, although these analyses were exploratory in nature, they shed light on potential relevance stage pathways through which instructions to "be yourself" may influence expressive accuracy.

Cue Availability

Method: Language Inquiry and Word Count Software. We examined whether the effect of the manipulation led targets to make more cues available, via greater overall word count obtained via LIWC. This was not the case, as the manipulation did not increase targets' interview word count, b = 82.14, t = .75, p = .454. Further, results held when including word count as a covariate in the association between manipulation and pronoun use, b = .70, t = 2.34, p = .021, as well as between manipulation and analytical thinking, b = -4.91, t = -2.88, p = .004, which suggests that those in the experimental condition may have provided more personally-relevant information without necessarily making more cues available overall.

Cue Detection & Utilization

Method: Observer Subjective Reports. As an indicator of cue detection and utilization, we examined if observers reported paying more attention to targets in the authenticity condition. To this end, observers rated the extent to which they found the target to be engaging during the interview, with this item, "*is engaging and interesting*", from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The authenticity manipulation did not influence the extent to which observers found the target to be engaging and interesting, b = -0.01, t = -0.12, p = .905, suggesting that targets in the

authenticity condition potentially did not influence observers' accuracy by being more engaging and drawing their attention to a greater extent, at least on a subjective level.

Analytical Approach

We conducted analyses in *R* (R Development Core Team, 2016) with the lme4 package (Version 1.1-21; Bates et al., 2014). The *R* code and raw data to recreate our primary analyses can be found here: [https://osf.io/pkt92/].

To measure accuracy, we used the social accuracy multi-level modeling approach (SAM; Biesanz, 2020). Specifically, we predicted observer ratings of each target on each personality item by both (a) the target's personality accuracy criterion (self- and close-other reports for distinctive accuracy) and (b) the average target self-reported mean on that item (for normative accuracy). Following recommendations (Biesanz, 2020), we improved convergence and interpretability by centering within-item, subtracting normative means from each target's accuracy criterion item, and we did not reverse-code items prior to analyses, thus allowing greater variation in accuracy slopes and statistical power. Both distinctive and normative accuracy criterions were allowed to vary randomly across observers and targets. We did not include dyadic random effects to improve model convergence, but when including them, all results held.

The level 1 equation was as follows:

 $Y_{pti} = \beta_{0pt} + \beta_{1pt} Target Personality_{ti} + \beta_{2pt} Normative Means_{i} + e_{pti}$ $\beta_{0pt} = \beta_{00} + u_{0p} + u_{0t}$ $\beta_{1pt} = \beta_{10} + u_{1p} + u_{1t}$ $\beta_{2pt} = \beta_{20} + u_{2p} + u_{2t}$

In this model, Y_{pti} is Observer *p*'s rating of Target *t* on item *i*; for example, Patrick's judgment that Ted is a 6 on helpful and a 2 on assertive (prior to grand mean centering). *Target Personality*_{tt} is Target *t*'s distinctive accuracy criterion (the target's average self and informant report) on item *i* after subtracting the normative profile (e.g., Ted's distinctive scores of .8 for helpful and .4 for assertive). β_{1pt} is the regression coefficient for the distinctive accuracy slope: the association between Target *t*'s distinctive accuracy criterion on item *i* predicting Observer *p*'s rating of Target *t* on the same item *i*. β_{2pt} is the regression coefficient for the normative accuracy slope: the relationship between the mean target self-report for item *i* predicting Observer *p*'s rating of the same item *i* (i.e., 5.7 on helpful and 3.5 on assertive). The average levels of distinctive and normative accuracy are reflected by β_{10} and β_{20} , respectively. In addition, the random effects variance estimates u_{1p} and u_{2p} reflect variance attributable to the observer rating multiple targets, and u_{1t} and u_{2t} reflect variance attributable to the same target being rated by multiple observers.

To test our primary question of whether the authenticity manipulation influenced expressive accuracy, we included the dummy-coded authenticity manipulation (i.e., control condition = 0, experimental condition = 1) as a moderator of the distinctive and normative validity criterion measures to predict observer impressions.

The level 2 equation was as follows:

 $\beta_{0pt} = \beta_{00} + \beta_{01}$ Authenticity Manipulation_t + $u_{0p} + u_{0t}$

 $\beta_{1pt} = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}$ Authenticity Manipulation_t + $u_{1p} + u_{1t}$

 $\beta_{2pt} = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21}$ Authenticity Manipulation_t + $u_{2p} + u_{2t}$

Our primary focus is on the coefficient β_{11} , which indicates whether the linear association between target *t*'s validity criterion and observer *p*'s ratings of target *t* is moderated the presence (1) or absence (0) of the authenticity manipulation. Thus, a significant positive interaction would indicate that targets' accuracy tends to be higher when they were randomly assigned to the authenticity condition.

Expressive Accuracy and Target Outcomes

Although the authenticity manipulation may not influence target outcomes directly, it may be that giving the advice to "be yourself" influences personal and social outcomes to the extent that targets follow the advice and express their true selves more accurately. To address this possibility, we conducted exploratory analyses examining the association between expressive accuracy and target outcomes, by including personal well-being and likability as predictors of distinctive accuracy slopes one at a time in the SAM. Targets who were perceived with higher distinctive accuracy did not experience greater post-interview well-being: b = -0.01, z = -0.74, p = .460, d = -0.11, 95% CI [-0.39, 0.18]. Though this was not the focus of the present research, we also examined associations with normative accuracy, which was not related to targets' post interview well-being: b = .01, z = .88, p = .38, d = .05, 95% CI [-.06, .16]. However, in line with previous research (Human et al., 2013; Human et al., 2020), distinctive accuracy was significantly related to target likability, b = 0.06, z = 2.46, p = .015, d = 0.35, 95% CI [0.07, 0.64], such that the more targets revealed their unique personalities, the more observers reported liking them. Again, in line with this prior work, normative accuracy was also related to observers' tendency to rate targets as likable, b = .28, z = 12.75, p < .001, d = 1.01, 95% CI [0.85, 1.16], which highlights how the normative profile in part contains variance attributable to observers' overall positive attitudes toward targets.

In sum, being perceived more accurately was linked to being liked more, indicating that learning to "be oneself" could indeed carry some positive social consequences if it is able to enhance distinctive expressive accuracy. However, in the absence of a significant direct effect of the manipulation on being liked, we did not examine expressive accuracy as a mediator, given potential issues with indirect effect analyses (Rohrer, 2019).

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Chapter 3 Supplemental Online Materials

Transparency Through the Screen: Do People Reveal Their Unique Personalities in

Videoconferencing First Impressions?

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Well-Being Indicators

In addition to examining self-esteem, life satisfaction and positive relations with others as a composite of well-being, we examined these indicators independently in association with distinctive and normative accuracy in both the videoconferencing and in-person contexts (see Table S1). We also examined additional well-being indicators, namely perceived stress, interpersonal support, loneliness, and social anxiety in association with distinctive and normative accuracy in both contexts (see Table S1).

Descriptives for Additional Well-Being Indicators

Perceived Stress

Perceived Stress was measured via the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983), asking participants to rate 10 items on a scale from 1 (Never) to 7 (Very Often), such as "*In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems*?" (Videoconferencing Study: M = 2.97, SD = 0.75; In-Person Study: M = 2.94, SD = 0.78).

Interpersonal Support

Interpersonal Support was measured via the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (Cohen et al., 1985), asking participants to rate 12 items on a scale from 1 (Definitely False) to 7 (Definitely True), such as "*I feel that there is no one I can share my most private worries and fears with*." (Videoconferencing Study: M = 5.47, SD = 0.95; In-Person Study: M = 5.39, SD = 1.03).

Loneliness

Loneliness was measured via the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell et al., 1978), asking participants to rate 20 items on a scale from 1 (Never) to 7 (Very Often), such as "*I feel left out*" (Videoconferencing Study: M = 3.48, SD = 0.80; In-Person Study: M = 3.47, SD = 0.78).

Social Anxiety

Social anxiety was measured via the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (Mattick & Clarke, 1998), asking participants to rate 6 items on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree), such as "*I have difficulty making eye contact with others*." (Videoconferencing Study: M = 3.13, SD = 1.32; In-Person Study: M = 3.20, SD = 1.27).

Associations With Distinctive and Normative Accuracy

All indicators of well-being examined, namely self-esteem, life satisfaction, positive relations with others, perceived stress, interpersonal support, loneliness, and social anxiety, were individually associated with distinctive accuracy in a statistically significant positive manner (see Table S1). However, in line with prior work, well-being indicators showed more inconsistent associations with normative accuracy, with some in the negative direction, such as self-esteem, but most others showing non-significant associations (see Table S1).

Table S1 Individual Well-Being Indicators in Association With Distinctive and Normative Accuracy

	Distinctive Accuracy		Normative Accuracy	
Well-Being Indicator Part of Well-Being Composite	Videoconferencing d [95% CI]	In-Person d [95% CI]	Videoconferencing d [95% CI]	In-Person d [95% CI]
Self-Esteem	0.74***	0.80***	-0.41***	-0.43**
	[0.57, 0.91]	[0.54, 0.99]	[-0.62, -0.20]	[-0.71, -0.15]
Life Satisfaction	0.51***	0.71***	-0.17	-0.25 [†]
	[0.33, 0.68]	[0.49, 0.94]	[-0.38, 0.05]	[-0.53, 0.03]
Positive Relations With Others	0.51***	0.51***	-0.04	-0.12
	[0.33, 0.68]	[0.27, 0.74]	[-0.25, 0.17]	[-0.40, 0.16]
Well-Being Indicator Additional Indicators	Videoconferencing d [95% CI]	In-Person d [95% CI]	Videoconferencing d [95% CI]	In-Person d [95% CI]
Perceived Stress	-0.64***	-0.53***	0.30**	0.36*
	[-0.81, -0.46]	[-0.77, -0.30]	[0.10, 0.51]	[0.08, 0.64]
Interpersonal Support	0.48***	0.49***	-0.06	-0.19
	[0.30, 0.66]	[0.26, 0.73]	[-0.27, 0.15]	[-0.47, 0.08]
Loneliness	-0.56***	-0.37**	0.25*	0.14
	[-0.74, -0.38]	[-0.61, -0.14]	[0.04, 0.46]	[-0.13, 0.42]
Social Anxiety	-0.55***	-0.61***	0.16	0.12
	[-0.73, -0.38]	[-0.84, -0.38]	[-0.04, 0.38]	[-0.16, 0.39]

Note. d = Standardized effect sizes for the associations comparable to a Cohen's d (Gelman, 2008; see Human et al. (2019) or Kerr et al. (2021), for a similar approach). These effect sizes reflect the change in the distinctive or normative accuracy slope for a 2-standard deviation (SD) change in the target well-being indicator, divided by the standard deviation from the target-level random effect estimate for that slope. *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, †p < .10. For each of these individual indicators of well-being, there was no moderation by context for either distinctive (all ps > .329) nor normative (all ps > .627) accuracy.

Covariates

Extraversion

First, extraversion was associated with distinctive accuracy levels in videoconferencing, b = 0.04, z = 3.74, p < .001, and in-person, b = 0.06, z = 4.63, p < .001. Extraversion was not associated with normative accuracy levels in videoconferencing, b = -0.004, z = -0.02, p = .985, nor in-person, b = -0.02, z = -1.46, p = .147. Further, and critically, considering strong and positive associations between extraversion and well-being (Costa & McCrae, 1980), well-being predicted distinctive accuracy above and beyond associations with extraversion, in both the videoconferencing, b = 0.11, z = 7.51, p < .001, and in-person, b = 0.08, z = 5.32, p < .001, samples, while associations between extraversion and distinctive accuracy became non-significant.

Gender

In terms of gender, dummy-coded with men = 0 and women = 1, in videoconferencing, men were perceived with greater distinctive accuracy than women, b = -0.10, z = -2.94, p < .001, but women were perceived with greater normative accuracy than men, b = 0.07, z = 2.42, p =.016. However, in person, gender was neither associated with distinctive accuracy levels, b = -0.06, z = 1.64, p = .102, nor with normative accuracy levels, b = 0.04, z = -1.30, p = .195, though the trend was in the same direction. This may be an artifact of the much larger number of women in both samples. That is, given that the normative means are based on the average person in the sample, due to the gender imbalance in the present samples, the average for each item was then based more on women than men. As such women may then have been more likely to be viewed as resembling the average, and men to be viewed as differing from it. Research with more gender-balanced samples should further examine these associations. Importantly, when including gender as a covariate, well-being predicted distinctive accuracy in both the videoconferencing, b = 0.10, z = 8.59, p < .001, and in-person, b = 0.10, z = 7.02, p < .001, samples.

Removed Dyads With Poor and Very Poor Audio-Video Quality

Importantly, in addition to examining audio-video quality as a predictor and moderator in the primary analyses within the videoconferencing sample, we also wanted to confirm that results held when removing any dyads for whom the overall validity of the interaction could have been seriously compromised due to technological issues. To this end, we removed any dyads in which the audio-quality of the interaction was rated by the perceiver as *very poor* (n = 10) and *poor* (n = 81). Importantly, all results held. That is, distinctive accuracy (b = 0.17, z = 13.56, p < .001) and normative accuracy (b = 0.95, z = 50.05, p < .001) maintained similar levels as those with the full sample. Further, well-being was similarly associated with distinctive (b = 0.11, z = 8.78, p < .001) and normative (b = -0.03, z = -2.19, p < .001) accuracy when dropping dyads with very poor and poor audio-quality.

Most critically, when dropping these low audio-video quality dyads, we nonetheless obtained an association between audio-video quality and distinctive accuracy (b = -0.03, z = 3.42, p < .001), as well as between audio-video quality and normative accuracy (b = -0.10, z = 7.69, p < .001). Further, audio-video quality still moderated the association between well-being and distinctive accuracy without these poor and very poor audio-video quality dyads (b = 0.02, z = 2.37, p = .018). Overall, then, these results suggest that audio-video quality need not be terrible to hinder the accuracy and positivity of impressions.

Target Rated Audio-Video Quality

As part of the main manuscript, we selected perceiver ratings of audio-video quality, as we considered these most pertinent to the impression formation process: If the perceiver cannot adequately view or hear the target due to technological glitches, then the detection stage of accuracy, largely in the responsibility of the perceiver (Funder, 1995), is most likely to suffer. That said, we wanted to examine the target's perspective on audio-video quality as well, as technological glitches can be frustrating and could potentially reduce one's motivation or ability to accurately express oneself. First, we found that targets' and perceivers' reports of audio-video quality were significantly and positively correlated, r = .21 95% CI [.20, .22], albeit only to a moderate degree, suggesting some discrepancies in perceptions of the audio-video quality of the interaction.

Then, we found that target audio-video quality was not associated with distinctive accuracy, b = -0.01, z = -0.91, p = .363, suggesting that audio-video quality most likely hindered the detection stage of the accuracy process. However, target audio-video quality was positively associated with the normative accuracy of impressions, b = 0.04, z = 4.15, p < .001, which potentially indicates that targets who noted that the audio-video was lower may have experienced more negative affect, which in turn may have influenced how desirably they appeared to the perceiver. Indeed, when participants rated the audio-video quality as poorer, they also reported more negative affect, in the form of greater irritability: b = -0.06, z = -3.88, p < .001.

Examining Item Characteristics

We invited a different sample of participants from the same population (N = 106) via the undergraduate student participant pool, to provide ratings for the 24 personality items used in accuracy analyses. Specifically, participants rated how observable or "visible" (M = 4.77; SD = .88) and socially desirable (M = 4.95; SD = 1.67), they considered each item, on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Observability

To approximate how observable or "visible" each item was, we averaged across participants' observability ratings for each specific item, and then grand mean-centered the item observability score.

Observability and Distinctive Accuracy

In line with previous work (e.g., Human & Biesanz, 2011), more observable items were seen with greater distinctive accuracy in general, across the two contexts (b = 0.08, z = 21.89, p < .001). However, context (dummy-coded: in-person = 0; videoconferencing = 1) significantly moderated the association between observability and distinctive accuracy; b = -0.03, z = -3.58, p < .001. That is, the association between item observability and distinctive accuracy was stronger in-person (b = 0.10, z = 16.44, p < .001, d = 0.39, 95% *CI* [0.35, 0.44]), than via videoconferencing (b = 0.07, z = 15.00, p < .001, d = 0.28, 95% *CI* [0.25, 0.32]). More specifically, for high observability items, distinctive accuracy levels were descriptively higher in-person (b = 0.26, z = 15.20, p < .001) than on Zoom (b = 0.23, z = 18.00, p < .001), whereas for low observability items, distinctive accuracy levels were descriptively higher on Zoom (b = 0.11, z = 8.18, p < .001) than in-person (b = 0.09, z = 5.11, p < .001).
Therefore, although more observable items were more accurately perceived both inperson and on Zoom, high observability, which tends to be marked by more overt behavioural cues, might especially promote distinctive accuracy in in-person contexts. In contrast, lowobservability items, generally reflective of more inner experiences and less frequent behavior, may be more accurately perceived on Zoom than in-person. But why? As theorized in the main manuscript, videoconferencing may afford access to behavioural residue (Gosling et al., 2002), such as room cleanliness, which may be reflective of what is generally less observable, such as conscientiousness. In parallel, factors like the physical limitations of the screen may limit the enactment and detection of generally more visible behavior, such as large body movements to reflect high energy or enthusiasm. Future research may shed light on these processes, for example via experimentally manipulating the amount of behavioural residue (e.g., via blurring the target's background).

Observability and Normative Accuracy

In line with previous work (e.g., Human & Biesanz, 2011), less observable items were viewed more normatively, in line with the average person, across both contexts combined (b = -0.26, z = -33.14, p < .002), possibly because people may rely on how the average person is to a lesser extent when rating these more visible items. However, the context moderated the association between observability and normative accuracy: b = -0.04, z = -2.51, p = .012. That is, the negative association between item observability and normative accuracy was stronger on Zoom (b = -0.27, z = -28.27, p < .001, d = -1.35, 95% *CI* [-1.45, -1.26]) compared to in person (b = -0.23, z = 17.16, p < .001, d = -1.15, 95% *CI* [-1.28, -1.02]). More specifically, highly observable items were perceived with descriptively greater normative accuracy in-person (b = 0.75, z = 26.56, p < .001) than on Zoom (b = 0.69, z = 33.19, p < .001). In parallel, less observable

items were perceived with descriptively similar levels of normative accuracy in person (b = 1.16, z = 42.71, p < .001) and on Zoom (b = 1.17, z = 57.79, p < .001). In other words, highly observable personality characteristics may be perceived as more normative in in-person contexts because observable qualities, such as enthusiasm and energy, may be especially desirable in an in-person interaction. Online, however, these characteristics may matter to a lesser degree for the positivity of impressions when interacting with someone via a computer screen.

Evalulativeness

Item evaluativeness was obtained by mean-centering participants' ratings of how socially desirable they deemed each item, followed by squaring this mean-centered item to remove valence, thereby obtaining more evaluative items – either very socially desirable or undesirable, such as bright or quarrelsome – at the high end, and less evaluative, more neutral items – such as tense or quiet – at the low end of the scale.

In line with previous work (e.g., John & Robins,1993), more evaluative items were viewed with lower distinctive accuracy (b = -0.01, z = -9.74, p < .001). The context however, did not moderate the association between evaluativeness and distinctive accuracy, b = 0.003, z = 1.36, p = .175. In other words, whether in-person or on Zoom, less evaluative items were perceived with greater distinctive accuracy, and to a similar degree.

In addition, more evaluative items were viewed with lower normative accuracy (b = -0.07, z = -41.62, p < .001). However, the context did moderate the association between evaluativeness and normative accuracy, b = 0.02, z = 4.92, p < .001. That is, more evaluative items were perceived with lower normative accuracy in-person (b = -0.08, z = -28.95, p < .001, d = -0.40, 95% CI [-0.43, -0.38]) compared to via Zoom (b = -0.06, z = -30.36, p < .001, d = -0.32, 95% CI [-0.34, -0.30]). Specifically, items deemed highly evaluative may have been perceived

slightly more normatively in person (b = 0.59, z = -22.64, p < .001) than on Zoom (b = 0.57, z = -29.36, p < .001). In parallel, items rated as less evaluative appear to also have been perceived more normatively in person (b = 1.03, z = -36.56, p < .001) than on Zoom (b = 0.91, z = -44.17, p < .001). That said, these differences are not large and were not compared statistically, so these results ought to be interpreted with caution.