**Positive Psychology Summer Institute 2003 Research Summaries**

**James W. Carson**  
The meditation traditions of yoga and Buddhism contain a theoretical and practical gold mine of more than 2,000 years of exploration of exceptional psychological health and the means to that end (Levine, 2000). My strongest research interests lie in developing and evaluating the efficacy of meditation-based protocols, both as they apply to clinical populations and to optimizing the lives of ordinary people.  
  
For my dissertation (Carson, Carson, Gil, & Baucom, in press), I adapted the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program (Kabat-Zinn, 1982, 2003) into a group-based relationship enhancement program designed to enrich the relationships of relatively well-functioning, non-distressed couples. "Mindfulness" is the ability to remain focused on the reality of the present moment in a nonjudgmental, nonreactive fashion. Using a randomized wait-list controlled design, this study demonstrated efficacy in favorably impacting couples' dyadic relationships as well as individual well-being; also, those who practiced mindfulness more had better outcomes.  
  
At present my focus is on directing a pilot study of an innovative forgiveness-focused, loving-kindness meditation intervention for patients suffering from persistent low back pain. Anger and resentment - about an offender perceived as causing or aggravating their condition, or related to the chronicity of their condition - are emotions that are very salient features of many persons' chronic pain experience. Anger can be a major complicating factor in the treatment of persistent pain, and have negative consequences for interactions with spouses, family members, friends, co-workers, and health care providers.  
  
Our hypothesis is that a forgiveness-focused intervention could be helpful in reducing these persons' chronic anger, and thereby lead to decreased pain and improved adjustment. Forgiveness in this context is understood as an unjustly hurt person's act of deliberately giving up anger and resentment felt toward the offender, and fostering qualities of love, understanding, and compassion in place of anger and resentment. Forgiveness, as such, is fundamentally done for one's own sake, in order to release oneself from the grip of the past and the burden of anger, resentment, and suffering that have persisted and continued to affect one's well-being. Loving-kindness meditation (Salzberg, 1995) is a centuries-old Buddhist approach to developing love and forgiveness which forms the core our intervention. This meditation involves using silent mental phrases to direct feelings of love and kindness towards someone you care a lot about, towards oneself, toward a neutral person, towards someone who has caused you harm, and lastly towards all living beings.  
  
In this randomized controlled trial, 70 patients are being assigned to the loving-kindness meditation group protocol or a standard care control condition. Measures are being collected before and after treatment and at 3 months follow-up. Preliminary analyses - based on data from the first 33 patients - suggest the intervention may be promising. After completing treatment, patients receiving the loving kindness intervention have demonstrated significant reductions in ratings of affective pain (p = .042) when compared to those in the control condition. Also, the pattern of data obtained so far suggest that, once a larger posttreatment sample is available, we are likely to find that the loving kindness intervention produces significant improvements in anxiety, hostility, and also in confidence in one's ability to forgive. If we find loving-kindness meditation is effective, future studies could apply this novel intervention to other groups for whom forgiveness may be helpful.  
  
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Postdoctoral Fellow & Clinical Associate  
Pain Prevention & Treatment Research Program  
Department of Psychiatry  
DUMC 90399, Duke University Medical Center  
725 Broad Street  
Durham, NC 27708  
Voice 919-286-2839 x226  
Fax 919-286-2922  
Email [jim.carson@duke.edu](mailto:jim.carson@duke.edu)   
  
  
**Tamlin C. Christensen Summary: Experience-Sampling and Consciousness**  
My research focuses on theoretical and practical issues in the measurement of positive subjective experiences. In the work presented at the Summer Institute, I proposed a new theoretical framework for understanding the self-report process and, in particular, experience-sampling methods (ESM). Drawing on the latest advances in memory and consciousness research, I suggest that ESM not only captures a different type of knowledge for subjective experience (i.e., time-situated episodic knowledge rather than time-independent semantic knowledge), but also may evoke a phenomenologically distinct state of conscious awareness in the respondent (i.e., time-situated “autonoetic awareness” Tulving, 1985).  
  
Using a combined laboratory and computerized ESM study (with Handspring PDAs running the Experience-Sampling Program), I tested the implications and boundary conditions of a consciousness perspective and drew two main conclusions. First, experience-sampling reports can be influenced by psychological factors that affect consciousness (i.e., psychological defense), but that we normally see affecting standard self-report procedures. Specifically, individuals who scored higher on a interview measure of defense also reported less threat, showed less variability, and less coherence in their experience-sampling reports compared to those lower in defense, consistent with predictions from clinical theory. Second, ESM may not measure the same kind of conscious awareness for all individuals. For some, EMA may measure their time-situated autonoetic awareness, but for others, these procedures may measure a more time-independent belief-focused awareness.  
  
The implication of this research for positive psychology is two-fold. First, it provides better understanding of the tools we use to assess subjective experience and strengthens the idea that momentary self-reports only yield information that a person is willing and able to represent in conscious awareness the moment a report is made. Second, this research suggests that ESM doesn’t just measure subjective experience, it evokes a particular state of consciousness, requiring people to attend to experiences they might not normally have attended to. For the future, I am planning a series of intervention studies to test the effect of training people to become autonoetically aware of their positive affect states. Results will help clarify the effect of such attention on emotional and physical well-being.  
  
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Tamlin C. Christensen, Ph.D.  
Boston College Department of Psychology  
McGuinn Hall 301  
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467  
web: www2.bc.edu/~connert   
e-mail: [connert@bc.edu](mailto:connert@bc.edu)   
  
  
**Katherine B. Curhan Summary: A Sociocultural Approach to the Study of Well-Being.**  
Research from a sociocultural perspective reveals that even such basic and seemingly individual and internal processes as cognition, motivation, and emotion are culturally patterned. Well-being also can be analyzed for the ways in which it is culturally constituted and maintained. While there is some consensus across individuals, places, and time, it is increasingly evident that well-being can take a variety of forms. These forms are often quite specifically tied to the local worlds people engage - worlds articulated by particular meanings and practices in families, churches, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Hence, people in different life conditions can report the same level of overall global well-being because they are engaging different models of well-being; both the process and the content of well-being differs.  
  
My aim is to use a sociocultural approach to explore the possibility of multiple pathways to well-being and a life well-lived. My most recent work identifies similarities and differences in understandings and practices related to well-being associated with gender and social class in America. In the future I hope to extend these studies to include comparisons according to age and racial/ethnic groups.  
  
My present research uses social class as an indicator of sociocultural contexts within America. Sixty-five blue-collar and white-collar workers, all of whom scored high on multiple survey measures of well-being and work satisfaction, answered an indirect and a direct interview question about recent positive experiences at work. Both groups of respondents were equally likely to talk about themes such as doing good for others, material rewards, superiors and inferiors, and doing something non-routine. White-collar workers were more likely to mention work success, customers, and praise. Blue-collar workers were more likely to mention coworker friends. Theoretical implications for the use of social class as factor in psychological research and for the likely possibility of multiple pathways to well-being in and out of the workplace are discussed in the resulting paper (see below).  
  
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**Eli Finkel**  
1. Predicting Prorelationship Behavior. All individuals in long-standing dyadic relationships will occasionally behave badly toward one another. Following such potentially harmful treatment from the partner, individuals tend to experience impulses toward selfish or retaliatory responding. My collaborators (notably Caryl Rusbult & Keith Campbell) and I have conducted numerous studies around a common question: When immediate self interests and relationship interests conflict, what causes an individual to behave in accord with relationship interests, foregoing impulsive, self-interested behavior? My dissertation research (Finkel & Campbell, 2001) examines the role of self-control factors as ability factors in promoting prorelationship behavior. My masters research (Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002) examines commitment to a close relationship as a motivational factor in promoting such behavior. Results from experimental and nonexperimental studies revealed that participants who experience high levels of self-control (and low levels of ego depletion) and who are highly committed are particularly forgiving.   
  
2. Why and When Relationships are Good for Health. Although overwhelming evidence supports the hypothesis that interpersonal relationships promote physical health, little attention has been paid to why this association exists. Margaret Clark and I have advanced a normative model of one set of processes linking relationship factors, emotion expression, and health. This 5-step model begins with the assertion that experiencing emotion leads to the impulse to express it (Link 1). This impulse to express an experienced emotion causes individuals to scan the social environment for an appropriate target for the emotion expression, with an appropriate target defined as someone who cares about the individual's needs (i.e., a communal partner) (Link 2). If the search for someone who cares about their needs is successful, individuals are likely to express emotion; if not, they are likely to suppress it (Link 3). The decision to express emotion to a communal partner (rather than to suppress it) results in superior physiological, cognitive, and social support processes (Link 4), which, in turn, promote health (Link 5).   
  
3. Self-Regulation as an Interpersonal Process. Recent in-depth analyses of self-regulation provide insight into self-regulatory processes. However, almost all work in the self-regulation tradition ignores how others influence our self-regulatory success, which is surprising given the degree to which others affect our goals, motivations, and so forth. I am interested in whether involvement in certain relationships fosters enhanced goal achievement. In one line of research (which I presented at the PPSI2003), my colleagues and I have found in experimental and nonexperimental studies that effortful interpersonal interaction adversely affects subsequent task performance.   
  
Future Directions. I intend to continue investigating the interplay between close relationships, the self, and health processes via these three avenues of research described above. Research linking these broad areas of inquiry is sparse, and many avenues remain unexplored. In particular, I intend to devote myself to understanding how partner help us achieve our goals. I believe this is one of the most important functions of close relationships partners can actually make each other better, more effective people.  
  
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**Eirini Flouri: Parenting and Children's Well-Being Later in Life**  
Ways of promoting children's social and emotional well being have recently risen to the top of the research agenda. It is recognised that emotional and mental health are extremely important in maximising health and well-being in its widest sense. These are determined by many other aspects of children's lives, including social circumstances, family structures, and education, and as argued below, parenting.  
  
My current fellowship project contributes to this debate and builds on my recently completed project (also funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council) on father involvement and children's psychological, social and economic well-being, which found, that 'involved fathering' in childhood was associated with positive psychological, social and educational outcomes for children later in life even after adjusting for 'involved mothering' (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002, in press (a), in press (b)). Both these projects use mainly data from sweeps of the large British birth cohort studies (www.cls.ioe.ac.uk)  
  
In the 20th century assumptions about the importance of within-family childhood socialisation have been the part of the fabric of mainstream psychological theories (Maccoby, 2000). From roughly the 1920s through the 1960s, behaviourist learning theories emphasized the 'blank slate' status of infants and the power of adults to teach young children, for good or ill, what they must learn. Psychoanalytic theories of this period emphasized the importance of early in-family experiences in determining subsequent inner conflicts, defence mechanisms, and internalisation of values. In more recent years as learning theory (as it related to socialisation) was reformulated as cognitive social learning theory, the active role of children as participants in their own socialisation was stressed (Flouri, in press a). But none of these theoretical shifts has greatly affected the underlying assumption that parents have a powerful impact on the characteristics their children develop and the direction their lives take. In fact, it has been suggested that 'parenting is the most important public health issue facing our society' (Hoghughi, 1998). The child development research literature has continued to include studies on a) familial factors (i.e. aspects of family functioning that are related to children's psychological and social well-being; b) social (e.g. poverty) and structural (e.g. family structure) conditions that affect such parenting practices as how well parents are able to monitor their children, or how responsive they are; and c) parenting behaviours as mediators of the connection between societal risk factors (e.g. poverty) and children's psychological and social well-being.  
  
However, three common problems with several of the studies within this socialisation paradigm are that:  
  
1. The connections between parental behaviours and how the children turn out are quite weak, and when parent 'effects' are found they are mainly effects on the way children behave at home and their relationships with their parents. Therefore, there is little carry-over from at-home experiences to the way children function in out-of home contexts;  
  
2. Most of the findings establishing connections between parental behaviours and practices and children's outcomes are correlational and therefore causality cannot be determined. For example, associations between authoritative parenting and children's competence have been interpreted as showing that firm and responsive parenting has beneficial effects on children, while ignoring that the causal connection might be the other way - i.e. that competent children make it easier for their parents to be firm and responsive, and  
  
3. Maybe more importantly, there is little consensus in how 'good enough' parenting is defined (Taylor et al., 2000). Historically, definitions were based on pejorative classifications, which conflated poverty with poor parenting, and more recent attempts (Hoghughi & Speight, 1998) have been criticised for considering parenting outside any social, cultural and historic context, and for failing to provide any working definitions that professionals could apply.  
  
In this project I address the first problem by extending the list of child outcomes to include not only children's behaviour at home, but also long-term psychological (Flouri, in press b), social (Flouri, in press c), educational (Flouri & Buchanan, in press a) and economic outcomes (Flouri & Buchanan, in press b), and minimise the risk for interpreting correlational findings as causal by using longitudinal data. Finally, I acknowledge that parenting can be seen as mediating the direct effects on children of material deficits: in some cases though exceptional personal resources, interpersonal or social supports. In others, personal ill health, trauma or isolation might exacerbate the consequences of these deficits. Therefore, when the social context of parenting is minimised or ignored there is a real danger of a focus of parenting becoming, as it has in the past, a further stick with which to beat the poor (Buchanan, Ten Brinke, & Flouri, 2000).  
  
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**Omri Gillath, Mario Mikulincer, Phillip R. Shaver Summary: Attachment, Compassion, and Altruism**  
The main thrust of our work was to explore the possibility that attachment security, in either its dispositional or contextually manipulated form, fosters compassion, volunteering to help others, and other forms of altruistic behavior. We examined this topic, using both correlational and experimental research designs.   
  
Two questionnaire studies (samples from 3 countries - United States, Israel, and the Netherlands, about 100 participants each) examined the contribution of a person’s chronic sense of attachment security (ECR, Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) to (a) his or her willingness to volunteer and (b) the motivations underlying volunteerism. We also examined the discriminant validity of attachment theory as a relevant framework for understanding volunteerism. Specifically, we asked whether the contribution of attachment patterns to volunteerism can be explained by psychological factors identified by related, alternative theoretical perspectives (representations of self and others (study 1), interpersonal functioning (study 2)) or whether attachment patterns are a more direct, unique contributor to volunteerism than are these other factors.   
  
In Study 1 (in all countries), attachment avoidance was negatively correlated with number of philanthropic activities engaged in and time devoted to such activities and as well as negatively with volunteering to express other-focused values and to better understand oneself and the world (non selfish reasons). Attachment anxiety was positively associated with engaging in volunteering to protect oneself, enhance one’s ego, and seek togetherness (selfish reasons). Although measures of representations of self and others were also correlated with the volunteerism variables, the associations between volunteerism and the attachment dimensions remained significant even when representations of self and others were controlled. In contrast, controlling for the attachment dimensions generally eliminated the effects of representations of self and others. Thus, attachment security and insecurity appeared to be central determinants of altruism. In study 2, the results for attachment and volunteerism variables were the same as in study 1. Moreover, although the measures of interpersonal functioning were also related to the volunteerism variables, the associations between volunteerism and the attachment dimensions remained significant even when the interpersonal functioning variables were controlled. However, controlling for the attachment dimensions generally eliminated the effects of the interpersonal functioning variables. Thus, attachment security again appeared to be a central determinant of altruism.  
  
In studies 3-4, close to 200 Israeli university students thought they were observing another participant in a nearby room via a video link. The observed participant was being asked to engage in an increasingly stressful series of tasks (e.g. handling a live tarantula). She expressed increasing discomfort with the tasks, and the actual participant (the observer) was asked how he or she felt and whether he or she would be willing to take the other participant’s place. Before watching the video, participants were primed either (study 3) subliminally or (study 4) supraliminally with a security enhancing or non-security enhancing primes. Analyses of the results revealed that the security prime, but not the other primes, increased compassionate empathy, willingness to help the distressed fellow participant, and actual agreement to help. Moreover, dispositional attachment avoidance caused participants to be less compassionately empathic, less willing to help, and less likely to agree to help. Dispositional attachment anxiety was associated with higher personal distress, but not with greater empathy or inclination to help. The fact that manipulated security did not interact with dispositional security means that a security-enhancing intervention might be equally effective for both secure and insecure individuals. Given that security can be situationally enhanced, it may be possible to apply some of our findings in interventions that enhance security and thereby enhance compassion, empathy, and altruism. Overall, our results have strongly supported our theoretical predictions and have been remarkably consistent across societies.  
  
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**Andrew Guest: Playing with Ideas about Childhood: Exploring Relationships Among Culture, Evaluations of the Self, and Play Activities in Two Poor Communities.**  
The research I presented at the Positive Psychology Summer Institute was based on my dissertation fieldwork in two impoverished communities: a Chicago public housing project I call Concrete Park, and a community of Angolan refugee camps I call Pena. My dissertation research goals were to explore the multiple paths of successful development. Specifically, I was interested in how culture relates to the psychological character of self-esteem and cooperation/teamwork, particularly as associated with recreation programs. In the presentation I focused on self-esteem, arguing that self-esteem is a cultural construct and is useful largely in understanding what it means to be a good person in different contexts.   
  
My findings suggest that, contrary to popular expectations, the two poor communities I studied had generally positive environments for middle childhood. These environments, however, differed in how they socialized conceptions of being good, which was reflected in major criteria for self-evaluation. Using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, including surveys, interviews, participant observations, and focus groups, I found that children had generally positive moods in both settings, and much hope was vested in their future. Likewise, children felt valued by families, and children had good peer relationships.   
  
In regard to self-evaluation, children in Concrete Park were socialized to focus on individualized self-reflection while children in Pena were socialized to focus on proper role behavior. There were also differences in conceptions of the life-course. Concrete Park prioritized adult skills and felt that childhood was just training for adulthood. Pena prioritized childhood as a time apart, and thus prioritized freedom, play, and learning.   
  
Finally, in regard to social comparison children in Concrete Park were socialized towards intense competitive perspectives, while children in Pena were socialized towards integration. Some of these differences were found to manifest in sport and play settings. Children in Concrete Park played games to win, in many ways prioritizing winning over participation. Conversely, children in Pena focused on participation and the opportunity to play a role. The self was defined by winning and competition in Concrete Park, while it was defined by opportunity in Pena. Further, based on differing conceptions of the life-course, children in Concrete Park learned to “work at play.” Play was conceptualized as frivolous unless it was constructed as an explicit opportunity for learning and development, as in organized settings with tangible benefit. In Pena children’s play was a natural part of childhood. Children would mock adult roles, but those were not seen as learning opportunities- rather they were simply opportunities for fun.  
  
In the immediate future I am working with this data to investigate how these cultural communities influenced self-evaluation and conceptions of the self in relation to others. In the longer term I would like to further explore the idea that such local psychological processes can help explain (and potentially create?) “good” childhoods in “bad” places. The idea is that multiple paths of successful social development are largely crafted by a community’s internal character rather than being exclusively dictated by outside influences.   
  
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**Samuel M.Y. Ho: The Positive Psychology Laboratory at the University of Hong Kong**  
In 2000 the Psychology Department of the University of Hong Kong established the region's first Positive Psychology Laboratory. This has aroused both the interest and the skepticism of local psychologists and social scientists; although Positive Psychology is emerging as a science in its own right in Western countries, until recently it was unknown as a concept to clinicians and researchers in Hong Kong.   
  
During its first year the Positive Psychology laboratory has attempted to broaden the scope of positive psychological research in Hong Kong and has begun projects on post-cancer growth (Ho, 2001a) and on post-bereavement growth (Ho, 2001b). These are extensions of my own ongoing interest in psycho-oncology. We have also been exploring the interpersonal dimension of Subjective Well-Being among Chinese, attempting to use Chinese adages and proverbs to facilitate positive emotions as well as studying post-traumatic growth among Chinese cancer patients. In the summer institute, I had focused my presentation on a study on Subjective Well-Being.  
  
In Chinese culture, happiness can be obtained either by cheering people up and freeing them from constraint, or through expressing oneself openly and interacting with others (Karcher, 1995). This "you are happy and therefore I am happy" dimension of happiness does not appear to be emphasized in the existing literature relating to SWB, but may be relevant to the Chinese and even to people of other cultures. This dimension of happiness will be referred to here as relational SWB.   
  
The present concept and assessment of SWB focuses mainly on self-appraisal, as indicated by the persistent correlation between SWB and individualism across studies, and may not be totally relevant to address the relational dimension of happiness. This explains why the Chinese think about their own SWB less frequently, and consider their own SWB to be less important, when compared with other nations (Diener, 2000). One explanation is that happiness is less important among the Chinese. However, the alternative explanation, according to the discussion above, may be that we are looking at the wrong place in the assessment of SWB among the Chinese. For the Chinese, they may think more about the happiness of significant others and consider the happiness of significant others as more important than their own happiness.   
  
Our main ideas on Relational SWB had been presented in the APA Annual Convention in August this year (Ho, 2002). In order to test the hypothesis that the relational SWB does exist among and relevant to the Chinese, we have created five Interpersonal SWB items based on the Life Satisfaction Scale of Ed Diener and have administered them, together with the original Life Satisfaction Scale, to 781 adolescents in Beijing in two independent studies. Using both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, we have demonstrated that the interpersonal dimension of SWB should be relevant to Chinese people. We shall try to see whether this dimension of SWB is also relevant to people in other countries.  
  
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**Jennifer La Guardia**  
Research in adult emotion regulation has taken on new energy in the past 20 years and has examined this topic from quite varied perspectives (e.g., psychobiology, development, motivation, personality). In this work there are implicit definitions about what is healthy and what is not, however there are few, if any, explicit definitions about what constitutes healthy emotion regulation. Why is an explicit definition important? By defining the parameters of healthy emotion regulation, we can model what emotion regulation processes conduce toward growth and development of the individual. In prior work, my collaborators and I have found that what people actually do in terms of modulating the experience and expression of their emotions, although often adaptive given the relationship or context they are in, may still result in costs to health of individual (La Guardia & Ryan, 2003; La Guardia, Ryan, Lynch, 2003; Ryan, La Guardia, Butzel, Kim, & Chirkov, 2003). We have found that it is the experience and expression of emotion, both PA and NA, in the context of supportive relationships that is vital to health.  
  
This presentation sought to outline processes that define healthy emotion regulation, and introduce a new line of research pursuing measurement of these processes. I used authenticity as hallmark of healthy emotion regulation, with authenticity defined by the component processes of awareness (openness to access one's true feelings), openness to self (active promotion of/moving towards/exploring emotional experience), openness to others (allowance of emotions to be disclosed to others). In a sample of undergraduates, I tested a new self-report measure tapping these dimensions of authenticity and related them to measures of eudaimonic and hedonic well-being, as well as existing measures of emotion regulation processes and authenticity. As expected, the new measure was positively correlated with eudaimonic and hedonic measures of well-being such as PWB (Ryff & Singer), vitality, and positive affect, and it was negatively correlated with measures of depression, anxiety, and negative affect. Further the new measure was positively correlated to other authenticity measures (e.g., Goldman & Kernis), and negatively correlated to measures of suppression (Gross), and masking (Gross & John). There was not a significant relationship to measures of reappraisal (Gross), as expected.  
  
Three representative items from this measure were then used in an 8-day daily diary study of emotion regulation conducted with a sample of elderly women (average age 73) from the Wisconsin Study of Community Relocation, a study originally designed to understand effects on older women of transition from one independent living situation to another. In wave 6 of this longitudinal study, extensive data on their social networks and how they experience and express emotions within these networks was collected. Following this, women have begun to participate in the daily phone interview based on National Study of Daily Experiences. In this interview, we assess the nature of their daily stressful and positive events, their emotional experiences associated with them, and how authentically they dealt with these emotions (awareness, what they do internally and interpersonally with these experiences) within these events. Further, we also assess self report measures of daily health and vitality, as well as daily cortisol slopes (4 assays/day). Data collection on this project is still underway. However, as presented, we see quite varied profiles of how people regulate their experiences over the course of 8 days. The data offer possibilities of linking within-person measures of emotion regulation processes to qualities of the relationships with whom they are interacting, as well as to daily cortisol and psychological health measures (e.g., vitality). Thus, we may be able to answer questions such as "On days when people compartmentalize more of their negative emotions (rather than dealing with them), do they remain elevated at the level of biology (cortisol) and/or phenomenology (subjective vitality)"?   
  
As many of the papers cited are under review or revision, and some of the newer data is still being collected, please contact me via email at jlag@watarts.uwaterloo.ca for further information on this program of research.  
  
Jennifer La Guardia  
Department of Psychology  
University of Waterloo  
200 University Avenue W.  
Waterloo, Ontario  
CANADA N2L 3G1   
  
Tel: (519) 888-4567, ext. 4844  
E-mail: [jlag@watarts.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jlag@watarts.uwaterloo.ca)   
  
  
**Richard E. Lucas: Explaining the Extraversion/Positive Affect Relation**  
The primary purpose of the study was to investigate the processes underlying the extraversion/positive affect relation. This relation is one of the strongest and most consistent findings in the study of personality and emotion, yet researchers are still unsure why the relation exists. Three possible explanations for this association have been suggested. Extraverts may be happier than introverts because: (a) Extraverts spend more time in social situations than do introverts, and social situations increase positive affect; (b) Extraverts create more positive life circumstances than do introverts; or (c) Extraverts react more strongly to pleasant stimuli than do introverts. Approximately 200 participants were recruited for a 9-month longitudinal study. Over the course of the nine months, participants completed four laboratory mood induction tasks and participated in two week-long experience sampling sessions (to assess social activity and reactivity to naturally occurring mood inductions). In addition, participants completed a number of self-report personality and affect questionnaires, and they were asked to acquire four informant reports of personality, affect, and social activity.  
  
Results showed that extraverted participants participated in more social activity, had greater amounts of high quality social support, and had more positive life events over the course of the study. Together, these effects accounted for about half of the covariance between extraversion and positive affect. Extraverts did not react more strongly than introverts to the four mood induction procedures, and they reacted only slightly more strongly to naturalistic mood inductions in the experience sampling study. Differential emotional reactivity could not account for any of the covariance between extraversion and positive affect. Thus, although extraverts do seem to create positive circumstances in their lives, these circumstances can only account for about half of the relation between extraversion and positive affect. This suggests that there is some direct and possibly temperament based factor that links the two traits. However, differential emotional reactivity is not the underlying temperamental process that is responsible for extraverts’ greater happiness.  
  
For more information, please visit my website (http://www.msu.edu/user/lucasri/) or see the following articles:  
  
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**Rebecca Ready**  
I am a clinical neuropsychologist and my research focuses on assessment of psychological constructs in aging and dementia populations. The piece of my work that is most relevant to positive psychology is the measurement of Quality of Life in dementia patients. The ultimate goal of all of my work is to learn how to help patients and their caregivers cope with the challenges of aging and dementia and to maintain and enhance life quality. In the future, I plan to move more into intervention research and outcomes assessment.  
  
The majority of my predoctoral work focused on assessment of neuropsychiatric aspects of dementia. Psychiatric symptoms are common in dementia, are the leading causes of caregiver and patient distress, and are a major reason that patients are institutionalized. This work stimulated my interest in issues related to quality of life and well-being in patients with cognitive impairment.   
  
During internship, I was awarded an NRSA postdoctoral fellowship from NIA to study quality of life (QOL) in cognitively impaired elderly. The major focus of this work has been to study assessment issues related to the measurement of QOL in elderly individuals diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), AD, and elderly controls. I studied psychometric aspects of patient- and caregiver-report QOL data and investigated associations of these reports to other important demographic and disease factors. To date, findings revealed that the factor structures of patient- and caregiver-report data are nearly identical. Self-reports are also as reliable as caregiver-reports. There are mean level differences in QOL reports from patients and caregivers, with patients routinely reporting better QOL. Failing to gather self-reported QOL data from mildly to moderate impaired patients may result in an incomplete picture of life quality in dementia. To date, there are few reasons to ask patients directly about their subjective experiences.  
  
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**Ted Robles: Marriage, Stress, and Wound Healing: A Focus on Relationship Cognitions.**  
This research focuses on the role of positive cognitions in marital relationships and their influence on spousal interactions and immunological mechanisms underlying wound healing. Cognitions and cognitive processes have been proposed as a “final common pathway” through which stress and behavior influence the outcomes of close relationships [1]. These data come from our ongoing study of married couples, who participate in two 26-hour admissions to The Ohio State University Clinical Research Center (CRC) separated by approximately 7 weeks. To date, 42 couples have completed both admissions. During the morning portion of the admissions, couples participate in several marital interaction tasks. To assess the effects of these interactions on wound healing, we raise suction blisters on each spouse’s arm prior to the marital interaction tasks. This allows us to assess immunological mechanisms related to wound healing from fluids collected directly at the wound site [2].   
  
During the first admission, couples participate in a 20-min social support task developed by Pasch and colleagues, designed to elicit spousal support. This is followed by a 45-min task where couples discuss the history of their relationship. During the second admission several weeks later, couples participate in a problem-solving/conflict discussion in which they are asked to resolve one or two problems in their relationship.  
  
Immediately following these interactions and during the late afternoon of their hospital stay, spouses separately and privately audiotape their previous thoughts and feelings during the interactions for 2 minutes. Recordings from this thought-listing task [3] are transcribed and coded into “thought units,” which are coded for valence (positive, negative, neutral) and referent (e.g., self, spouse, relationship) using a coding system I developed for this research. This study reports results from positively and negatively valenced cognitions pertaining to the relationship, including one’s spouse, the discussion itself, and the relationship as a whole. The main focus was on determining the value of assessing thoughts in predicting later behavior, and the relationship between positive and negative cognitions on immune cells related to wound healing.  
  
Increased husbands’ negative cognitions predicted later withdrawal behavior and decreased constructive behavior during a conflict discussion several weeks later. Increased wives’ positive cognitions predicted less dysphoric affect during the later discussion. Finally, increased negative cognitions during the CRC visit were significantly related to lower numbers of immune cells (granulocytes and monocytes) that serve as key mediators of wound healing in fluids collected from the wound site at 22 hours after wounding.  
  
These preliminary data suggest that individual’s thoughts about their relationships predict later patterns of behavior. Moreover, these data suggest a potential relationship between the content of spouses’ thoughts and cellular mediators of wound healing. This study will continue to offer unique insights into cognition in marital relationships. In general, I hypothesize that couples characterized by a consistent positive cognitive style across occasions will demonstrate less conflictual interpersonal interactions. This study also provides an unprecedented opportunity to examine relationship cognitions and their potential influence on immunological mechanisms related to stress and wound healing.   
  
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Also see: Robles, T. F., & Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K. (2003). The physiology of marriage: Pathways to health. Physiology and Behavior, 79, 409-416. Special Issue: A tribute to Paul MacLean: The neurobiological relevance of social behavior.  
  
For more information, visit: <http://pni.psychiatry.ohio-state.edu/jkg/>

**David A. Sbarrra: Social Connectedness and Health: On the Benefits of Being Attached**  
Personal ties are essential for well-being, productivity, and happiness. Humans thrive in close relationships, and considerable evidence now indicates that, when satisfactory and fulfilling, adult bonds of affection are associated with host of positive mental and physical health outcomes. Indeed, it is posited that the need to belong is a fundamental human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). My main scientific interests and expertise focus on investigating the mechanisms linking social connectedness with both mental and physical health outcomes. What processes operating within love relationships confer health benefits? This question and its offshoots form the foundation of the work I conduct related to Positive Psychology.  
  
The present work was guided by two related observations. First, although the adult attachment literature is voluminous and addresses many important clinical, developmental, and social psychological questions, few studies have investigated the normative aspects of pair-bonding (Mikulincer, Birnbaum, Woddis, & Nachmias, 2000; Simpson & Rholes, 1998). In other words, not enough research emphasis is placed on the fundamental questions of what attachments are and how they operate. Furthermore, research that does investigate these topics is typically conceived within the parameters of distress alleviation, which obfuscates the important process of pleasure induction operating in the development and maintenance of long-term relationships. Second, despite the paucity of human studies in this area, considerable progress has been made in modeling attachment processes in animals.   
  
Several research programs have now converged to suggest that pair-bonding is subserved by a definite neurobiology serving to down-regulate autonomic physiological arousal and maintain physical homeostasis (see, for example, Insel, 2000). The primary aim of the present study was to build off these ideas by investigating psychological arousal modulation within adult human relationships. Specifically, it was hypothesized that individuals in long-term committed partnerships would evidence patterns of interwoven physiology whereby, following a laboratory stressor task, changes/decreases in one partner’s autonomic arousal would lead changes in another partners.   
  
Preliminary evidence from the Cornell Cold Press study of 143 couples supported this thesis: Clear evidence was found indicating that (1) heart rate (HR) recovery was quicker among individuals who reported using their partner as a primary attachment figure; and, (2) in bivariate models of change in HR following the stressful interaction task, decreased in Partner B’s HR could be reliably predicted as a function of changes in Partner A’s HR in attached couple but not in non-attached couples.  
  
This work provides preliminary evidence that the benefits of being attached are conferred through a process of arousal regulation. Positive psychology is ripe for deeper inquiry into this findings, and, in collaboration with Cindy Hazan (at Cornell University) and Emilio Ferrer-Caja (at UC Davis), we are investigating the notion of co-regulation, the idea than an emergent property of attachment is an intertwined regulation of physical states that serves to both alleviate distress and induce pleasure. It is anticipated that this work will open many new avenues for better understanding, simply stated, what’s so great about being in love.  
  
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**Shauna L. Shapiro Summary: Exploring Mindfulness**  
The majority of my research has involved clinical intervention studies, focusing specifically on Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), a patient-centered educational approach that uses training in mindfulness meditation as the core of a program to teach people to live healthier, more adaptive lives. A simple definition of mindfulness is: 1) Paying attention in the present moment, and 2) How we pay attention e.g. with acceptance, compassion, openness and curiosity. Although mindfulness developed within an Eastern religious/cultural context, Western psychology has focused on extracting the essence of the practice, and applying it as a universal technique for health and healing. Research over the past two decades has demonstrated significant positive psychological and physical outcomes of mindfulness practice.  
  
My research on mindfulness has attempted to examine both traditional western scientific dependent variables (e.g. psychological distress), as well as positive psychological variables such as empathy, spirituality, sense of coherence, and acceptance. .Recently I co-authored a chapter in the Handbook of Positive Psychology (Snyder & Lopez, 2002), discussing the importance of exploring the potential positive aspects of meditation intervention. I have completed randomized clinical intervention studies on the effects of MBSR across diverse clinical and non-clinical populations including breast cancer patients (Shapiro Lopez, Schwartz, Bootzin, Figueredo, et al, 2002, Journal of Clinical Psychology) insomnia patients (Shapiro, Bootzin, Manber, et al. in preparation), medical students (Shapiro, Schwartz, & Bonner, 1998, Journal of Behavioral Medicine), depressed and anxious graduate and undergraduate students (Jain, Shapiro, Schwartz, in preparation), health care professionals (Shapiro, Bishop, Cordova, in preparation) and adolescent drug users (Bootzin, Shapiro, et al., in preparation).   
  
All of my research to date (and the majority of the research in the field!) has focused on clinical intervention studies to evaluate the efficacy of mindfulness, what can be referred to as addressing the first order questions: Is mindfulness effective? Clearly this line of research is fundamental to validating mindfulness as an efficacious psychological intervention, and this research should continue. However, another important direction for future research is what I refer to as the second order question: How do mindfulness-based interventions work? There is still much that is not known about how and why mindfulness interventions are effective. The next logical step in clinical trials is to investigate questions concerning the mediating role and mechanisms of action of mindfulness. First, it seems important to determine if the positive effects are due to the development of mindfulness itself? Which requires And precisely defining and measuring mindfulness. I am currently collaborating in the development of a state measure of mindfulness. Another important step will be to explore the exact mechanisms of action and active ingredients of mindfulness intervention through RCT and dismantling. I plan to focus my future research in better understanding how mindfulness works.   
  
Lastly, my intention is to focus my future research on the positive effects of mindfulness. I believe that future research could benefit from expanding the paradigm: From Pathology to Positivity and the Transpersonal. To date, the majority of research in mindfulness has used the traditional biomedical paradigm in which the focus is on symptom reduction. Although this research has led to important contributions in symptom alleviation and treating illness, few researchers have examined meditation original purpose as a self-liberation strategy to enhance qualities such as compassion, understanding, and wisdom. Mindfulness developed within an Eastern cultural/religious context, and the original intention of the practice was to attain spiritual enlightenment. According to Walsh, a pioneer in the field of meditation research, more attention has been given to heart rate than heart opening. With the development of the field of positive psychology, there are now more methodological tools and theories to explore the positive effects of mindfulness practice. Future research could benefit by including variables that are more consistent with the classical intentions of the practice, such as happiness, empathy, compassion, gratitude, wisdom and awe.   
  
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**Maya Tamir: Positive Affect as a Spotlight: Emotional Experience and Selective Attention**  
Visual attention orients the individual towards goal-relevant information. Linking motivation to cognition, emotions might be expected to direct selective attention to affect-consistent goals. From an evolutionary perspective, urgent goals (e.g., avoiding a deadly snake bite) are likely to influence attention mechanisms. Therefore, past research has focused mainly on emotion and selective attention to threat (for a review, see Mathews & MacLeod, 1994). The present research, however, is based on the assumption that rapid orienting to motivationally relevant stimuli may be adaptive not only when dealing with threats, but also when dealing with rewards. Consequently, as anxiety serves to direct initial orienting to potential threats, we predicted that positive emotions may serve to direct initial orienting to potential rewards. We therefore examined, perhaps for the first time, the effect of positive emotions on selective attention.  
  
In support of our prediction, in 4 studies we demonstrate that positive emotions lead to an increased focus on rewarding information. Consistent with existing models of emotion and selective attention (Mogg & Bradley, 1998), this attentional bias was specifically linked to approach-related positive affect, rather than pleasant feelings per se or negative affect. Effects on selective attention were examined by performance in a probe detection task (MacLeod, Mathews, & Tata, 1986). Affect was examined by aggregated reports of emotion over a weeklong period as well as experimentally induced mood states. Overall, the findings indicate that positive affect influences selective attention, leading to the quick detection of potentially rewarding stimuli.  
  
In the future, I hope to replicate these results and address several ensuing questions. For example, can positive emotions orient selective attention to reward even when it is presented outside of awareness? Replicating the effect with subliminal presentations of reward would have important implications to functional accounts of positive affect, pointing to its relevance for immediate, short-term goals. Second, is it possible to increase positive emotional responses to rewards by manipulating selective visual attention? MacLeod and colleagues (2002) have recently shown that training people to disengage their attention from threat decreased their reactivity to environmental stressors. Similarly, it may be the case that training people to orient their attention to reward increases subsequent reactivity to positive events. These are some of the future directions I plan to pursue.  
  
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**John Updegraff: What Makes Experiences Satisfying? The Interaction of Approach-Avoidance Motivations and Emotions in Well-Being**  
In this line of research, I employ a motivational framework to understand how individual differences and situational factors influence emotional experiences, self-judgments, and well-being. My interest in examining these phenomenon from such a perspective draws upon recent convergence in social and personality research suggesting that thoughts, emotions and behavior are guided by two independent motivational systems (cf Gray, 1990; Carver, Sutton, & Scheier, 2000). One system, an approach-related system, appears to regulate individual behavior towards the attainment of positive and rewarding experiences. The other system, an avoidance-related system, is thought to regulate behavior away from potentially negative or threatening experiences. Examining well-being from this approach has been fruitful because the approach-avoidance framework offers a functional conceptualization of major personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism, and also provides a parsimonious model for understanding how individual differences and situational factors interact in guiding emotions, thought, and behavior.  
  
The most consistent, and perhaps most surprising, finding in the literature on happiness is the fact that people’s evaluations of their own well-being are considerably tied to basic personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Yet, relatively little research has investigated the basic processes that underlie this convergence between personality and judgments of well-being. To address this issue, I examined how individual differences in approach and avoidance motivations influence the degree to which people derive a sense of satisfaction from their emotional experiences.   
  
Specifically, I hypothesized that strongly approach-motivated individuals would report greater happiness because their judgments of satisfaction and well-being would be more strongly tied to positive emotional experiences and less strongly tied to the negative emotional experiences. In two studies that used both laboratory-based and experience-sampling methodologies, this hypothesis was supported and the findings painted a provocative picture of how personality shapes well-being. Not only did approach-motivated individuals experience more positive emotions over time (as compared to less approach-motivated individuals), but their broader sense of well-being was more strongly tied to positive emotional experiences and was relatively unaffected by negative experiences. Additional analyses suggested that these findings were attributable to differences in how approach-motivated people valued their past emotional experiences, rather than whether they simply misremembered them.  
  
These findings suggest a number of additional avenues of research. First, although these studies attest to the influence of individual differences on how people form judgments about their experiences, they leave the question of situational influence unexamined. I am currently initiating studies to examine whether manipulating the structure of a goal-related situation (e.g., task performance and social interactions) to engage either an approach or avoidance motivational orientation will also lead to differences in the way that such integrative and evaluative judgments are made. Secondly, the findings from the studies suggest that avoidance-related motivations may have led to divergent judgmental processes ¬ one style that focuses on negative information and another style that discounts negative information ¬ and a next step is to identify the conditions under which each of the judgmental styles is likely to occur.  
  
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