After this [transformation] my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything. God’s excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, and trees; in the water and all nature, which used greatly to fix my mind.

— Jonathan Edwards (Dwight, 1830 as reported in James, 1902, p. 243)

Positive psychology has caught on. Psychologists from all corners of the discipline, so it appears, seem eager to accept Seligman’s (1999; Seligman & Cszikszentmihalyi, 2000) challenge to take seriously a view of human nature that considers such strengths and virtues as altruism, courage, and honesty as authentic rather than derivative human experience. Given positive psychology’s scientific study of the “good life” as its central mission, the question for the psychologist of religion is obvious: to what extent does religious and spiritual experience help foster those human strengths and virtues that lie at the heart of our understanding of what makes life worth living?

The study of positive psychology can start in any number of places. I begin this analysis of positive psychology with the following premise: people have an inherent need to make meaning of their lives. Meaning making is linked to positive psychology through: 1) a sense of purpose (Becker, 1992; Overholser, 1999; Sandage & Hill, in press), that is, positive psychological virtues or strengths will be developed consistent with the goals or purposes embedded within one’s meaning framework (Emmons, 1999); 2) stress-induced growth, that is, making meaning of life’s adversities as a catalyst for personal growth (Park, Cohen, & Murch, 1996; Schaefer & Moos, 1992; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995; Tedeschi, Park, & Calhoun, 1998); and 3) life satisfaction (Wong & Fry, 1998). Though the reasonableness of this need for meaning has been refuted by some (e.g., Baumeister, 1991), the premise itself, that people strongly desire to find meaning, has rarely been questioned.

Elsewhere (Hill, 1999), I have warned that psychologists will only prolong past errors if they choose, as they are prone to do, to decontextualize the study of human meaning and virtue. That is, a person conceptualizes and experiences human meaning and virtue through a Wittgensteinian “grammar” — some larger belief structure that will help define “the kind of ‘life’ lived by someone who possesses the virtue in question” (Roberts, 1987, p. 193). Ignoring the larger belief

(Continued on page 2)
structure will yield a substantially inadequate analysis. For the spiritual or religious person, that grammar of meaning and virtue will be embedded either within a formal religious tradition or in some other system of thought and experience that facilitates a spiritual sense.

The question I would like to address today focuses specifically on the role, if any, that spiritual transformation may play in our understanding of human flourishing. To investigate this question, we shall first examine what is meant by spiritual transformation and then appraise the role of affect as a basic psychological mechanism in the transformation process. In particular, we will consider what part positive emotions play in spiritual transformation and then conclude by considering how an understanding of positive emotions can enhance our comprehension not only of spiritual transformation, but also the more general topic of religious or spiritual experience.

Conceptualizing Spiritual Transformation

We will soon be entering the year in which we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the publication of psychology of religion’s greatest classic, William James’ (1902) *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. James referred to “the hot place in a man’s consciousness, the group of ideas to which he devotes himself, and from which he works” (p. 193) as the “habitual centre of personal energy.” According to James,

> It makes a great difference to a man whether one set of his ideas, or another, be the centre of his energy; and it makes a great difference, as regards any set of ideas which he may possess, whether they become central or remain peripheral in him. To say that a man is “converted” means, in these terms, that religious ideas, previously peripheral in his consciousness, now take a central place, and that religious aims form the habitual centre of his energy. (p. 193)

Perhaps more than anything else, the center of energy, that “hot place” in consciousness, is where an individual finds meaning. For James, the religious convert who has undergone a spiritual transformation has moved that sense of meaning from an autonomous centeredness to a sacred mooring. In Pargament’s (1997) words, that new center of energy devotes itself to the “search for significance in relation to the sacred” (p. 32).

Finding Life’s Meaning

The search for meaning has a long history of study in moral philosophy and theology but, for all intents and purposes, any formal research effort on the subject in contemporary psychological science has been sadly lacking. The search for meaning can be conducted at different levels with higher-level meanings differentiated by: 1) their greater number of associative links with other objects or events in life and 2) by their longer time perspective (Baumeister, 1991). These two dimensions suggest that when meaning is infused with a religious, spiritual, or moral sense, meaning-making is dealing with higher-level issues. Hence, we find claims in the literature such as Clark’s (1958): “religion more than any other human function satisfies the need for meaning in life” (p. 419). Despite Baumeister’s assertion that religion may no longer hold the sway that it once had, surveys (e.g., Gallup, 1994; Gallup & Castelli, 1989; also see Shorto, 1997) repeatedly show that religion and spirituality remain surprisingly resilient, at least in the US populace. It is safe to assume that religion and spirituality continue to provide important meaning frameworks.

Baumeister (1991) also points out our four overlapping needs for meaning: purpose (seeing one’s life as oriented toward some imagined goal or state), value (seeing one’s actions as right or justifiable), efficacy (one’s sense of control over events), and self-worth (seeing one’s life as having positive value). These needs will provide an important framework later in this presentation. However, most importantly for this analysis, a major psychological function of meaning is its ability to help regulate internal states such as behavior and affect (Baumeister, 1991).

3 Pargament’s (1997) use of the term significance is closely related to the term meaning as it is used here.
For example, meaning often expands emotion in the sense that we can be emotionally “moved” by a meaningful experience. This self-control function of meaning suggests that life is not just guided by sensations of pain and pleasure, but also by pleasant and unpleasant emotions. Hence, while it might seem pleasurable to play golf or go to the beach all day every day, even the most ardent golfer or sunbather might find that in the absence of greater meaning, a life-long daily routine of such pleasurely would not be especially enjoyable. Sometimes we are even willing to endure unpleasant sensations for the sake of meaning.

**Transformation as a Process**

Among the numerous varieties of religious experience identified, James spent what may seem to some to be an inordinate amount of time (two lectures of the twenty that collectively make up *The Varieties* — though it was a recurring theme in many of the other lectures as well) discussing conversion, a fascination shared by many early North American psychologists. In fact, soon following the publication of *The Varieties*, conversion became a dominant systematic focus of early psychology of religion proper. For James, himself concerned with the philosophical justification of religious faith (yet without proclaiming a religious creed), what is unique to the religious state, as opposed to other states of mind, is the potential power of its transforming influence on the lives of people who experience it. Though not all religious people demonstrate such transforming power — for example, the piety of the ordinary person for whom an imitative religion is dismised by James as nothing more than a dull habit — clearly the central component of religious nature is formed. It is quite simply a new way of being (Gelpi, 1987). If we are not careful, James’ emphasis on the dramatic — a radical and sudden change — can limit our understanding of transformation to only a switching of allegiance. There are, however, transformational processes of an ongoing deepening process that can be just as radical: a spiritual maturing, solidifying, or actualization. In this sense, spiritual transformation, relative to conversion, is a broader and therefore a preferred concept for the purposes of this paper.

Regardless of whether the conversion is sudden or gradual, classical or contemporary, within or outside a traditional religious context, it involves a transformation of the self. Change is its primary feature. Conversion is, as James puts it, a recentering of consciousness as a new habitual center of personal energy, now of a religious nature (or a different religious nature), is formed. It is quite simply a new way of being (Gelpi, 1987). If we are not careful, James’ emphasis on the dramatic — a radical and sudden change — can limit our understanding of transformation to only a switching of allegiance. There are, however, transformational processes of an ongoing deepening process that can be just as radical: a spiritual maturing, solidifying, or actualization. In this sense, spiritual transformation, relative to conversion, is a broader and therefore a preferred concept for the purposes of this paper.

A religious conversion may involve many steps such as: an initial transition perhaps through an attempt to answer some of life’s troubling questions, a coming to grips with the claims of that faith system on one’s life, a greater immersion into the depth of the converted life, and then as a result of that deepening process, a total transformation. In many Christian traditions, for example, sanctification of the entire person as a working of the Holy Spirit is that totally transforming commitment. While this maturing or solidifying process may involve some form of self-improvement or growth, such psychological processes in and of themselves do not capture the degree, the centrality, or perhaps the sense of urgency or necessity of change conveyed here (Pargament, 1997). At the heart of the change is the conviction that something fundamentally is lacking in life and it is high time to do something about it. Whether whole or complete within a brief time period, or spread out in a series of steps over time, a new habitual center of personal energy is formed.

**The Self**

What is it that is being transformed? In the language of virtually all conversion models, it is a transformation of the self. But what does this mean in the context of substantial change in light of one’s religious or spiritual commitments?

A folk conception of the self, particularly in relation to religious conversion or commitment, is something akin to Erikson’s notion of identity — a summation of answers to the question “Who am I.” Later we will come back to this notion of identification and unification, for they both play a crucial role in transformation. However, to analyze what is being transformed, this folk conception is of limited value.

Of course, James thought much about the nature of the self and his views of self as multiple is still standard among self theorists today. But James did not view all selves as equal nor was he an ethical relativist (Lydon, 1996). In *Principles of Psychology* (1890/1950) he stated: “So the seeker of his truest, strongest, deepest self must review the list carefully and pick out the one on which to stake his salvation . . . the fortunes of this self.”

(Continued on page 4)
are real. Its failures are real failures, its triumphs real triumphs, carrying shame and gladness with them” (p. 310). For James, the habitual center of personal energy emanates from that “truest, strongest, deepest self.”

A latent variable. Perhaps it is best to conceptualize the self as a latent construct with specific components: core beliefs, values and identities (Lydon, 1996). Lydon suggests that core beliefs are those overarching assumptive beliefs that I have about myself and the world of which I am a part. These core beliefs are not necessarily conscious at any given point but, when called upon, are highly accessible to the individual and demand commitment to the point that people are ready to affirm such beliefs when they are threatened. Examples of core beliefs are “I follow the teachings of Mohammed” and “The wages of sin is death.” Core beliefs serve as premises about one’s world and oneself.

In contrast, values serve as standards by which to evaluate the world and the self. Lydon (1996) borrows from Rokeach’s definition of values, a definition that is helpful to the discussion here. Values are those “shared prescriptive or proscriptive beliefs about ideal modes of behavior and end-states of existence that are activated by, yet transcend object and situation” (Rokeach, 1980, p. 262). In a similar way, Gorsuch (1986), in applying a “reasoned action” model to religious experience, defines values as views of an ultimate end, desirable for all people under all circumstances. A person will judge objects or events in light of one’s values. In addition, a person will assess their options in terms of the importance and relevance those options have for one’s values. Examples of values are “People should not be sexually active unless married” and “Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s.”

Finally, Lydon (1996) believes the self consists of identities. Identities, understood as specific roles or self-conceptions, vary in personal importance and centrality and, unlike the lay conception of identity discussed earlier, reflect James’ notion of multiplicity. For the spiritually transformed person, a spiritual identity will likely be of great importance and centrality and will therefore be relevant to a large number of specific life events. Lydon points out, however, that a specific life event will likely have different implications for different identities (a student’s decision to play a varsity sport may reflect more on his identity as an athlete than a religious person).

Furthermore, some identities such as a spiritual identity may be more complex and may include a number of potentially conflicting sub-identities (see Linville’s, 1987, notion of self-complexity). For example, the spiritually committed person considering divorce may see positive implications from her identity as an independent and autonomous person, but negative implications for her ability to remain committed to a personal relationship, both of which are components to her spiritual identity. The relative strength of the core beliefs and values associated with her spiritual identity (the importance of individual autonomy versus relational commitment) will likely predict to which option she will become committed.

This example of the woman considering a divorce shows that core beliefs, values and identities are not independent of each other. Lydon’s (1996) discussion of these self components was in the relation to the psychological study of commitment and he argued that these components collectively predict one’s level of commitment to such phenomena as goals, life tasks, personal projects and strivings. In line with Lydon’s model, Paloutzian et al.’s (1999) review of a number of studies suggest that though religious conversion has minimal effect on elemental personality functions (such as the Big Five traits), it has rather profound effects on “mid-level” personality functions such as values, goals, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as the more self-defining personality functions of life meaning and personal identity.

From Self to Sacred Identity. In the midst of change, religion is often found. Pargament (1997) reminds us that transformation is not easy: “It requires a shift in direction from old destinations that no longer seem viable to new, more compelling ones. Giving up deeply held values and discovering replacements can be a wrenching experience” (pp. 234-235).
For the spiritually transformed person, the self’s old destination, wherever that may be, has become identified with that which is sacred (Pargament, 1997). In the words of James, the sacred, previously peripheral in consciousness, now takes a central place. Pargament suggests that this transformation consists of two separate but related processes: 1) acknowledging self-limitation, and 2) incorporating the sacred into the self. He points out that a “dying to self” for the religious convert is more precisely a dying to self-absorption or self-centeredness; the new center of personal consciousness is “an identification with something larger than the self, something sacred” (p. 263). In similar fashion, James concluded that there are two things in the mind of the convert: the inability to do anything significant about the present incompleteness or wrongness and the positive ideal longed for. As one of Starbuck’s (1899) converts put it: “I simply said: ‘Lord, I have done all I can; I leave the matter with thee; and immediately there came to me a great peace.’”

The Role of Affect

Long before psychology’s existence as a formal discipline, the great preacher, writer, and thinker of the early 18th Century, Jonathan Edwards, claimed that true religion consists largely of what he called “holy affections.” Similarly, for James, the fundamental element of religion is feeling, much in line with the Schleiermacher’s (1799/1893) religious feeling as “absolute dependence” and Otto’s (1923/1973) “numinous” sense of the holy. In his final Gifford lecture, James (1902) stressed his conviction on the primacy of affect in religious experience.

By being religious we establish ourselves in possession of ultimate reality at the only points at which reality is given us to guard. Our responsible concern is with our private destiny, after all. You see now why I have been so individualistic throughout these lectures, and why I have seemed so bent on rehabilitating the element of feeling in religion and subordinating it intellectual part. Individuality is founded in feeling; and the recesses of feeling, the darker, blinder strata of character, are the only places in the world in which we catch real fact in the making, and directly perceive how events happen, and how work is actually done. (pp. 491–492)

James’ scrutiny of conversion records led him to conclude that there are four characteristics of affective experience most common to the transformed individual’s newly discovered “state of assurance.” First is the loss of all worry, that ultimately all is well, even should outer conditions remain the same. This sense of peace or contentment becomes “the glowing center of this state of mind” (p. 243). The second feature is insight whereby the “mysteries of life become lucid” (p. 243) though usually not to the point of an articulated solution. Articulation of the insight, James believed, is a postponed cognitive function. Third is the appearance of change in the objective world – a sense of newness that beautifies every object. The experience reported by Jonathan Edwards at the beginning of this presentation clearly articulates this appearance of objective change. Finally, and most common of characteristics of affect, is the ecstasy of happiness produced. Throughout the many conversion accounts described in The Varieties, a theme repeated over and over is perhaps most vividly described by Stephen Bradley from a scarce 1830 pamphlet is a consummate sense of joy or happiness. “It [the Holy Spirit] took complete possession of my soul, for I am certain that I desired the Lord, while in the midst of it, not to give me any more happiness, for it seemed I could not contain what I had got. My heart seemed as if it would burst, but it did not stop until I felt as if I was unutterably full of the love and grace of God” (p. 188).

Despite James’ insistence that the personal significance of religious experience is grounded in our emotions, contemporary psychology of religion has not until recently seriously engaged emotions literature (see Hill, 1995; Hill & Hood, 1999). Perhaps this disregard by psychologists of religion can be excused, in part, because the study of affect has lagged far behind most other major domains of study in psychology as a whole. But this state of affairs is rapidly changing and promising theoretical models of emotion, with important implications for the function of emotions in religious experience, are emerging. We will now consider one of these promising young models and apply it to spiritual transformation.

Negative and Positive Emotions in Self-Transformation

I wish not to get too sidetracked on technical issues here, but it is important that we have clear in our mind what terms like affect, emotions, response tendencies, etc. mean before we can meaningfully apply them to the study of spiritual transformation. Emotions are distinct from the more general concept of affect in several ways (see Fredrickson, 2001).

• Emotions are viewed as specific affective states that fit into discrete categories that are sometimes related into families; affect is conceptualized in terms of broad dimensions.

• Emotions involve the appraisal of the personal meaning of some antecedent event (a meaningful circumstance); affect, in the form of moods, tends to be more object-less or free-floating.

• Emotions are typically brief and involve multi-component response tendencies (facial expression, cognitive processing, physiological changes, and subjective experience); affect tends
The structure of consciously experienced affective states (i.e., emotions) has been debated now for some years. There are numerous models, some circumplex, (i.e., emotions are spread more or less evenly around the perimeter of a twodimensional space) — some simple (i.e., emotions fall into rather tight clusters, with gaps between the clusters), some with orthogonal fundamental dimensions — some with nonorthogonal dimensions, some with two primary dimensions — some with one primary dimension, and so forth. Feldman Barrett and Russell (1999; Yik, Russell, & Feldman Barrett, 1999), however, after reviewing the literature, convincingly argue in favor of an emerging consensus that affective states are structured in a circumplex manner that is underpinned by two bipolar but independent dimensions of experience: pleasure (positive vs. negative) and activation (high vs. low).

Fredrickson (2000, 2001) has proposed what she calls a “broaden-and-build theory” whereby phenomenologically discrete positive emotions such as love, joy, contentment, and so forth “all share the ability to broaden people’s momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources” (2001, p. 219, italics added). The prevailing view (e.g., Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991) is that discrete emotions (e.g., anger) yield specific action tendencies (e.g., the urge to attack). The accompanying multi-component response tendencies (e.g., facial expression, subjective experience, physiological responses) all coalesce around the focused response.

Fredrickson maintains that this link between specific emotion and specific action tendency is well established for negative emotions, whereby it is evolutionarily adaptive to narrow in on specific behavioral options. However, the action tendencies are different for positive emotions, in part because positive emotions do not usually occur in a life-threatening context that may require a focused response. Instead, she argues (with data), that positive emotions have an opposing but complementary effect by widening one’s repertoire of possible thoughts and actions. Positive emotions are, therefore, adaptive in an indirect and long-term manner by building enduring personal resources that later can be utilized to manage further threats. Results from her research program empirically support the hypotheses that positive emotions: 1) broaden thought-action repertoires, 2) undo lingering negative emotions, 3) fuel psychological resiliency, and 4) trigger upward spirals toward improved emotional well-being.

For the remaining part of this presentation, I would like us to consider spiritual transformation in light of Fredrickson’s (2001) theory as a complex and sophisticated specific action tendency. I do not mean to imply that this is a complete account of spiritual transformation or conversion. Such a radically reductionistic approach would do far more harm than good. However, corresponding action tendencies of both negative and positive emotions have important implications for spiritual transformation. By defining spiritual transformation in this admittedly limited fashion, we can perhaps better understand its underlying affective base. From this perspective, I will argue that negative emotions are powerful motivators for a specific, radical, and usually sudden (or at least time-limited) transformation process. In contrast, positive emotions may also serve as motivators, but do not point the individual in such a radically discontinuous direction. Rather, the lure of religion or spirituality in light of positive emotions is a more gradual opening to new life understandings and experiences. Whether sudden or gradual, motivated by negative or positive affect, the transformation, if indeed capable of providing meaning and thus satisfying, will yield positive emotions that should further 1) broaden thought-action repertoires, 2) undo lingering negative emotions, 3) fuel psychological resiliency, and 4) trigger upward spirals toward improved emotional well-being.

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4 The specific action tendency may or may not result in a behavioral response. To be more precise, it is the individual’s momentary toward-action repertoire rather than a specific tendency.
Negative Emotions: 
Motivators of Spiritual Transformation

Meaningful circumstances. To understand why a person might engage in a specific action tendency, the personal relevance of the appraisal that leads to the negative emotion requires a meaningful circumstance. For example, a person may “try religion” (a specific action tendency) in response to fear (a negative emotion) of the unknown (a meaningful circumstance). Of course, the nature of meaningful circumstances varies greatly and we should expect specific action tendencies to negative emotions to be far removed from religion or spirituality if the meaningful circumstance is not dealing with broader, more ultimate, issues. In Baumeister’s terms, these would be lower-level questions of meaning. For instance, even the fervently religious professional baseball player who feels dejected over a recent hitting slump will likely not enter into an existential crisis over his problems at the plate. Rather, his specific action tendency could be any number (or combination) of other things: he may utilize some positive imagery, look for specific aspects of his swing that he is doing wrong, or simply take some extra batting practice to retrain his muscles to overcome his slump. Other than possibly using prayer, it is unlikely that he will seek a religious solution.

The notion of self-surrender (a specific action tendency) may be a response to the frustration (a negative emotion) of an inability to cope with life (a meaningful circumstance). James believed that the converted individual’s self-surrender is an indispensable latter step in dealing with one’s sense of “wrongness” of life. “The sense of present wrongness is a far more distinct piece of our consciousness than is the imagination of any possible ideal we can aim at. In a majority of cases, indeed, the ‘sin’ almost exclusively engrosses the attention, so that conversion is [to quote Starbuck, 1899, p. 64] ‘a process of struggling away from sin rather than of striving towards righ-

teousness’ ” (p. 205, emphasis in the original).

Unmet needs for meaning. This sense of wrongness, this struggle away from sin, has been conceptualized in numerous models (e.g., Lofland & Stark, 1965; Rambo, 1993) of religious conversion (especially of the sudden, dramatic type) as a crisis that involves enduring, acutely felt tensions from the extensive gap between the actual and ideal (Paloutzian, 1996). For our purposes, it is useful to think of this crisis in terms of the four needs for meaning discussed by Baumeister (1991) and earlier identified here. This powerful sense of wrongness can be a crisis of purpose, the “is there all there is?” phenomenon. The most likely candidate might be the person who has achieved certain goals (financial, family, professional, etc.) only to find out that such achievement was far less fulfilling than expected. Perhaps the most seminal work of this sort of crisis is Levinson’s (1978) studies of adult males. Levinson found that early in their adult lives (during their 30’s) meaning was vested in professional goals. When they discovered (usually in their early 40’s) however, that either they were not going to ever reach those goals or that they were successful in reaching them but the expected sense of fulfillment was, at best, fleeting, these men attempted to restructure life’s meaning around other fulfillment expectations.

The second sense of wrongness is a crisis of value. In this case, people may have some aversive feeling such as guilt or sorrow because they see their actions or thoughts as wrong and unjustifiable. This is often what Christians (and perhaps other religious individuals) experience when they speak of being brought under “conviction.” The personal accounts of a value crisis are numerous in The Varieties, though I will only refer to the young Oxford graduate who was battling alcohol as recounted by James from an 1843 letter. “In all this period, that is, up to thirty-three years of age, I never had a desire to reform on reli-
gious grounds. But all my pangs were due to some terrible remorse I used to feel after a heavy carousal, the remorse taking the shape of regret after my folly in wasting my life in such a way — a man of superior talents and education. This terrible remorse turned me gray in one night, and whenever it came upon me I was perceptibly gray the next morning” (pp. 216-217).

The third sense of wrongness or incompleteness is a crisis of efficacy. Further along in the account, the young Oxford graduate described his battle with drink and his inability to overcome this “sin of the flesh.” In fact, he reported getting drunk while working in a hay-field the very next day after his conversion experience. He reported “I did not ask to be forgiven; I felt that was no good, for I would be sure to fall again” (p. 218). The learned helplessness model (Maier & Seligman, 1976) and its reformulations (Abramson, Metalsky, & Alloy, 1989; Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1987; also see Peterson, Maier, & Seligman, 1993 ) show how distressing an efficacy crisis can be. Helplessness theory has discovered explanatory style to be a key predictive element, especially for what are perceived to be uncontrollable bad events. All things being equal, people tend to display habitual tendencies in explanations for bad (though also good — however, it might be a different habitual tendency) events of life. For example, a “depressogenic” explanatory style is one which interprets a bad event as stable (“it’s going to be around for a long time”), global (“it’s going to undermine everything”), and internal (“it’s my fault”). Abramson et al. (1989) suggested that the related concept of hopelessness is a function of stable and global explanations of bad events, but the events themselves must be of a high degree of importance.

The final sense of wrongness is a crisis of self-worth, that is, when people see no positive value to their life.

(Continued on page 8)
Among the most dominant themes in the psychology of religion literature is that some sort of debility or breakdown is what compels an individual toward religion. Hood et al. (1996) term this the "defensive/protective tradition" and identify such emotions as fear, anxiety, and guilt as underlying mechanisms. To determine value you need some sort of standard and social psychologists have long argued that a major standard used for self-evaluation and sense of worth is one of social comparison. Glock's (1964) work on the importance of deprivation, the sense of disadvantage in comparison either to others or to a set of ideals, in religious group information is helpful. Though Glock's deprivation concept was far more inclusive than my brief consideration of it here (economic, social ethical, psychic, and organismic), in the final analysis, the individual's sense of self-worth is affected.

Each of these meaning crises involves negative emotions. For example, a crisis of purpose may result in tension, bewilderment, or confusion; a crisis of value may include guilt, shame, or a sense of dreadfulness; a crisis of efficacy may lead to a lack of confidence, nervousness, or hopelessness; a crisis of self-worth may involve lethargy, fatigue, or depression. These negative emotions motivate the individual to narrow his or her focus toward discrete action tendencies that will remove the specific negativity of the emotion itself (i.e., the person suffering a crisis of purpose will seek something that will remove tension or bewilderment rather than something that will remove lethargy or guilt). Now admittedly, when discrete emotion theorists talk about the evolutionarily adaptive nature of negative emotions, they usually speak of specific action tendencies in relation to basic emotions (e.g., the urge to escape when facing fear). Here I am speaking of response tendencies to emotions that emanate from meaning, a complex variable that can be experienced at different levels. The action tendencies themselves may be more complex and perhaps not so specific. It is unknown at this point whether the link between negative emotions based on unmet needs for meaning and action tendencies is similar to that for more basic affective processes. However, the idea is intriguing, worthy of exploration, and of potentially great value in understanding spiritual transformation.

Finally, due to their discrete nature, many different action tendencies may be used by different people (or even the same person at different times) in relation to the same negative emotion and meaningful circumstance. Therefore, one person's action tendency in relation to the sense of bewilderment from a crisis of purpose may be a religious conversion, while for another the action tendency may be greater devotion to family or community. However, it seems plausible to expect action tendencies to involve religion or spirituality more when: 1) the individual is experiencing higher level needs (i.e., longer time perspectives and needs that are central within the complex web of meaning); 2) the individual in crisis has observed someone else turn to religion or spirituality when going through a similar crisis; and 3) when the individual encounters an advocate of the religious or spiritual solution (Lofland & Stark, 1965; Rambo, 1993).

Positive Emotions: Motivators and Consequences of Spiritual Transformation

“From the instant [moment of conversion] I realized these cancer spots of worry and anger were removable, they left me…. From that time life has had an entirely different aspect. Although from that moment the possibility and desirability of freedom from the depressing passions has been a reality to me, it took me some months to feel absolute security in my new position; but, as the usual occasions for worry and anger have presented themselves over and over again, and I have been unable to feel them in the slightest degree, I no longer dread or guard against them, and I am amazed at my increased energy and vigor of mind: at my strength to meet situations of all kinds, and at my disposition to love and appreciate everything.

— Horace Fletcher, Menticulture (as reported in James, 1902, p. 178)
Whereas negative emotions tend to narrow the individual's momentary specific action tendency, positive emotions broaden the thought-action repertoire, thus taking a less prescriptive role about what particular actions should be taken and even questioning whether action (versus just thoughts) is a necessary response tendency (Fredrickson, 2000). What is proposed here is that at some point during religious or spiritual transformation, perhaps at the point of self-surrender, the process becomes, to quote Starbuck (1899) less a “struggling away from sin” and more a “striving toward righteousness.” It is during this latter process that an emphasis on finding positive meaning through the religious or spiritual experience is likely to emerge. Major models of religious conversion (e.g., Lofland & Stark, 1965; Rambo, 1993) emphasize the reinforcing value of positive consequences that confirm the convert the legitimacy of the transforming experience.

Satisfied Needs for Meaning. Even as the affective experience of “struggling away from sin” can be conceptualized in terms of unmet needs for meaning, so too can this “striving toward righteousness,” a sense of progress and direction, be considered in light of affective components associated with the satisfaction of those meaning needs met. Again, my discussion will center around the four needs for meaning identified by Baumeister (1991). First, this righteous striving can create a sense of purpose. Pargament (1997) points out that underlying the sense of religious purpose is the belief that life has an ultimate goal. By finding God or God’s will for one’s life, one is provided the sense reassurance that the search for the highest or greatest (the “ultimate”) purpose has been met. Thus, purpose may result in the positive emotion of assuredness — the sense that ultimately, as summed up in a traditional hymn of the Christian faith, “all is well with my soul.” This high degree of certainty in a situation appraised as safe is the ideal context for such “mindful” positive emotions as contentment, serenity and tranquility (Fredrickson, 2000). Contentment involves full awareness of, and openness to, momentary experiences; it carries the urge to savor and integrate those experiences, which in turn creates a new sense of self and a new world view” (p.6). It creates in the words attributed to Horace Fletcher in the above quotation the “disposition to love and appreciate everything.”

Striving toward righteousness can also create a sense of value in that the transformed individual may have a more comprehensive, pointed, and accessible framework from which to justify or legitimize his or her actions — to feel that his or her behavior is rooted in that which is right and good. Frequently this involves a re-prioritizing of one’s values, perhaps resulting in an entirely different system. The new or at least substantially modified value system then sets the standard for evaluation of the self and provides the transformed individual a motivation to behave morally. Now, of course, the individual may not always live up to that standard and thereby experience negative emotions of conflict, frustration, or even feelings of defeat. Yet relative to the crisis of value from the pre-transformation sense of wrongness, there is likely a change toward positive emotional states that may fuel positive reappraisal — the cognitive process of reframing adverse events with positive value. This ability to find positive meaning in ordinary events is a major application of the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2000). For example, Moskowitz, Folkman, Collette, and Vittinghoff (1996) found that positive reappraisal was consistently associated with positive emotion among AIDS-related caregivers, both during caregiving and after the partner’s death. Such positive affect may be especially important in helping people sustain stressful efforts in difficult situations. However, such resilience from positive reappraisal will likely require deeply held values (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2001), sometimes resulting in a meaning through suffering (Frankl, 1959; also see Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). From this, however, may flow the positive emotion of love (when the stressful agent involves caring for another) or commitment (when the stressful agent involves holding on to an ideal), accompanied by an expanded appreciation and understanding of the emotion itself. The virtues of a positive psychology that may reflect the transformed individual’s newly discovered sense of value therefore include such positive emotions of love (Levin, 2000), humility (Tangney, 2000), gratitude (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000; McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001), and forgiveness (McCullough, 2000).

The sense of efficacy is yet another positive affective resulting from the transformation process. Gordon (1984) found that converts to a fundamentalist group that stressed self-surrender had, in fact, made positive changes in their lives by abandoning unproductive ways of living and learning more adaptive functioning patterns. He discovered that a “dying to self” was paradoxically enabling people to implement greater ego control and strength (also see Pargament, 1997, pp. 250-253). Making the case for self-control as the “master virtue,” Baumeister and Exline (1999) contend that cultivation of virtue must exercise the “moral muscle” of self-control. For example, to cultivate the medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas’ Cardinal virtue of temperance (the restraint of passion and the prohibition of success), one must practice self-control. Their slant on the virtues of positive psychology demonstrate the centrality and importance of our sense of efficacy. This view of self-control or strength of habit resonates with Smith’s (1991) observation that the concept of virtue in many worlds religions goes beyond just a statement of moral excellence to include a sense of personal empowerment (Sandage & Hill, in press). Certainly one of the most important positive emotions associated with this sense of efficacy is hope (Snyder, 2000).

The sense of self-worth is the fourth and final positive emotion discussed here associated with a satisfied need for meaning. In folk psychology,

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people often speak of “finding their niche” — finding something meaningful that they can do well. In the New Testament Christians are encouraged to identify and use particular gifts or abilities that they possess. Even one’s standing as a “child of God” connotes a certain privileged, self-affirming position. Such self-worth might facilitate positive emotions like confidence and appreciation as well as a sense of responsibility to use these gifts in a constructive fashion.

Concluding Remarks

The major focus of this presentation has centered on spiritual transformation as an affective experience. However, I also wish to encourage psychologists of religion to enlarge the net and consider the role of emotions to the general psychological study of religion and spirituality. My claim a number of years ago is as true today as it was then: “there are no general overarching theories of affect guiding research on religious experience” (Hill, 1995, p. 355). The one dominant research tradition in the psychology of religion, Allport’s (Allport, 1950; Allport & Ross, 1967) intrinsic-extrinsic conceptualization, posits affectively based motivational processes. There are also what I will call well developed “mid-level” theories such as Kirkpatrick’s (1999) adaptation of attachment, Pargament’s (1997) theory on religious coping, Emmons’ (1999) theory of ultimate concern as well as a number of formulations from an object-relations perspective. These are extremely important and heuristically valuable theories to our understanding of religious and spiritual experience. However, embedded throughout all of these theories are basic psychological emotions that we have yet to systematically investigate.

I still feel, as I did in 1995, that psychologists of religion can hardly be blamed for this lack of systematic theory. Until the 1980s and 90s, the study of affect had been largely ignored in psychology as a whole, either because of a behaviorist tradition that was suspicious of subjective concepts or a strongly oriented cognitive view that saw emotion as little more than an “interrupt rule” of mental operations (Leventhal & Tomarken, 1986). The one exception, Schachter’s cognitive-arousal conceptualization of emotion (Schachter, 1964; Schachter & Singer, 1962), as valuable as it was and still is, was nonetheless dominated by a heavy cognitive emphasis. However, psychology’s agenda has gone through its own radical transformation and the study of affect has finally achieved its own independent status.

The recent developments in our understanding of emotions, including Frederickson’s (2000, 2001) broaden-and-build model of positive emotions, now provide a fundamental framework from which psychologists can study the affective basis of religious and spiritual experience. It is my hope that we can use this framework to further “flesh out” much of the fine work currently underway in the psychology of religion.

References


Council met all day on Thursday, August 23, and a half-day on Sunday, August 26. Among the announcements were: the Bylaw change to add the word “health” to the mission statement of APA was overwhelmingly approved by vote of the APA membership. Dr. Ray Fowler, CEO, reported on a number of income successes. The new Publication Manual has come out and promises to equal the widespread acceptance of its predecessor (which has contributed nicely to APA’s coffers). The American Psychological Foundation has had a phenomenal growth in its endowment Fund and has thus been able to expand on its awards and grants. Finally, the net worth of APA’s buildings continues to grow. Because these buildings are fully leased, the income from the buildings is steadily paying off the loans which were obtained to build them. In consequence, in about 10 years with the loans paid off, the income from them will substantially help to cover APA’s expenses and help to hold down dues.

Much time was spent in discussion involving the details of a proposed change in the “Wild Card Plan” which is used to determine representation on Council. The proposal would enable all states, territories and provinces to have at least one seat on Council. The change would not affect the number of seats allocated to divisions. Rather, it amounts to a shift in allocations of seats from the larger states to enable the now seatless groups to have representation. The details of the mechanism of the proposal were hashed out at length and then passed with recommendation that there be no pro-con statement accompanying the ballot.

A second major area of discussion followed the report of the Board of Convention Affairs (BCA) with respect to changes to take place in the Chicago meeting in 2002. Because of previously announced problems of scheduling, the Chicago meeting has to be confined to four days instead of the present five. To do this, many events will have to be condensed or eliminated. The BCA has worked to try to produce a plan by which there will be less conflict of programs by eliminating the mini conventions, increasing poster sessions, etc. It was estimated that the divisions would lose about one hour of program time apiece (about 10%) whereas social hours, and other non-substantive events will be cut about 20%. To minimize content overlap, the divisions have been grouped into clusters of five or six on a basis of assumed “commonality of interest” and urged to come up with some broad based, common interest significant speakers and activities. It was this aspect of the plan which created the greatest concern. Whereas some clusters had obvious commonality, there were others wherein the common denominator was very difficult to discern. Division 36 was assigned to a cluster with teaching, history, philosophy and art. There was obviously a breakdown in communication in determining the clusters because many divisions felt that they had had no real say in their assignment. It was reiterated that this is to be an experimental procedure, that there will be a full evaluation with input from the divisions and, if it is decided to retain the cluster concept for future meetings, that divisions will have a choice in their cluster groupings.

Additional extensive debate arose around a proposal intended to increase diversity representation on Council. To date, efforts to produce such an increase have been relatively ineffective. The new proposal was intended to motivate the divisions, states, territories and provinces to elect minorities as Council Representatives. It would have APA reimburse the divisions, states, territories and/or provinces for the expenses incurred by minority member Representatives’ attendance at the two Council meetings. "Reimbursement will be provided for transportation, hotel and meal expenses for both the February and August meetings.” The debate over this item centered around its potential effectiveness in actually solving the problem of minority under representation. In particular, it was emphasized that the core of the problem is the under representation in APA as a whole as well as low minority membership numbers in the different divisions, states, etc. In the absence of any alternative proposals, and with a recognition of the serious need to try almost anything to resolve the problem, the proposal was ultimately passed.

—William Hathaway, Mary E. Reuder
1. Attendance roll

Peter Hill, Division 36 President, conducted the meeting.

Members present: Peter Hill, Bob Lovinger, Mary Reuder, Scott Richards, Todd Hall, Doug Hardy, Ralph Hood, David Wulff, Mark Krejci, Ed Shafranske, Lisa Miller, William Hathaway.

Members absent: Donna Goetz, Ralph Piedmont

2. Minutes from last year's executive committee meeting were approved.

3. Announcement of election results
   (by Bob Lovinger, Past President)

Crystal Hall: President-elect
William Hathaway: Council representative
Lisa Miller: Member-at-large

Current treasurer, Donna Goetz, can’t serve after this year and so Division 36 will need to have an election for treasurer next year.

4. Council Representative Report
   (Mary Reuder)

Health promotion has been added to the mission of APA. New publication manual is out. AP Foundation is becoming successful with endowed money and scholarships, etc, are being given. APA is paying off its buildings through rent on them and will eventually own them outright which will make them a source of income. All states and provinces will have a seat on the APA Council and on Divisions. The APA 2002 convention in Chicago will be condensed from 5 to 4 days (will run Thursday through Sunday). Division 36 should only lose about 1 hour of programming for the convention. Attendance at conventions has been going doing percentage wise. Mini conventions have been eliminated. Divisions have been grouped into clusters based on similarity. Many concerns about division clusters were raised but Division 36 and other divisions did not get input on cluster assignments. Division 36 was clustered with the divisions on teaching, philosophy, humanistic psychology, and arts. Ralph Piedmont will represent Division 36 on the cluster committee. Questionnaires will be sent out to division presidents asking for their input for future conventions. APA dues will increase $7 this year and will continue to gradually increase as a cost of living increase. APA has had to file a delayed tax return the last few years because of individual divisions that haven’t complied with IRS reporting requirements. If divisions don’t comply they will have to turn their finances over to APA for them to handle. APA would like divisions to increase minority group member representation in their leadership and on the APA council. APA will pay costs of minority representatives to attend APA Council meetings. This issue is still being discussed on the APA council. Action item: A vote was taken and passed unanimously to have Division 36 pay $50 so that Division 36 can have representation on the Coalition for Academic, Scientific, and Applied Psychology.

5. Treasurer’s Report (Donna Goetz)

Donna submitted a printed report that was passed out by Peter Hill. Division 36 is doing well financially. Total assets at the end of the year 2000 were $41,597. A proposed budget for 2001–2002 was included on the printed report (total proposed budget was $19,250). There was some discussion about the cost of the hospitality suite, but general agreement that it is well worth it. A motion was passed to approve the 2001–2002 proposed budget submitted by Donna with a slight increase.

6. Report from Chairs

Todd Hall (Convention Program Chair):
Todd submitted a printed copy of data on the program. Eighty paper proposals were submitted to the Division 36 program committee this year; 64 of these were scheduled on the program; 33 of these were scheduled in poster sessions; 9 symposia proposals were submitted; 5 of these were scheduled on the program; there were also 8 traditional paper sessions.

Doug Hardy (Hospitality Suite Chair):
Doug gave a brief summary of some of the events occurring at the hospitality suite.

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suite and encouraged members to enjoy the suite.

**RALPH HOOD (Awards Chair):** Ralph submitted a printed report of award nominations for 2002. The Division 36 executive committee approved the nominations. Bier Award: Siang-Yang Tan; Gorman Early Career Award: Todd Hall; Seed Grant: Timothy B. Smith

**MARK KREJCI (Newsletter Report):** Mark has 1 year left to serve. He proposed that Division 36 develop a website and indicated he may be willing to assist with this when his term as newsletter editor ends.

**DAVID WULFF (Fellows Chair):** Division 36 submitted one nomination for fellow to APA this year (Jacob Belzen). His nomination was approved. Members can make application themselves to be fellows.

**7. President’s Report and Discussion (Peter Hill)**

Peter presented a letter from the APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation that proposes to eliminate Footnote 4 to Domain D. of the accreditation guidelines and principles. Footnote 4 says that the requirement of diversity will not exclude religiously affiliated programs from accreditation provided that such programs meet certain other criteria (e.g., public notice of their policies). There was much discussion about Footnote 4 by Division 36 executive committee members and unanimous agreement that APA should not remove Footnote 4 due to the belief that this footnote provides protection to religiously affiliated programs, many of which participate actively in Division 36. The Division 36 Executive Committee voted to submit a letter to APA that informs them of their view that APA should not remove Footnote 4. Peter Hill, Division 36 President, agreed to submit this letter. Members of Division 36 who would like a copy of the letter can obtain it by requesting it from the Division 36 secretary, P. Scott Richards <scott_richards@byu.edu>.

Peter Hill also asked members of the executive committee to give thought to how Division 36 can connect more with people from other APA divisions in order to spread our influence more throughout APA. He mentioned that he and other members of Division 36 will be meeting with Division 8 in Baltimore this year. He also asked the executive committee to give thought to how Division 36 can do more to involve its members more. Peter also mentioned that next year is the 100-year anniversary of the publication of William James’ “Varieties of Religious Experience.” There was considerable discussion about ways that Division 36 could celebrate this important anniversary, including possibly devoting part of the 2002 Division 36 APA convention program to this theme and pursuing publication outlets about this theme (e.g., a book, special issue of a journal, etc). Ed Shafranske, the incoming Division 36 President said that he would pursue discussions about these possibilities with members of the executive committee and with leaders of other APA divisions who may be interested in contributing (e.g., History and Philosophy divisions).

**8. Visit from APA Public Policy Office Representative**

A representative from the APA Public Policy Office, attended part of the Division 36 Executive Committee meeting in order to solicit the committee’s viewpoints about if and how APA should take a position on President Bush’s “faith-based initiative.” There was much discussion of this issue in the meeting and the Division 36 leadership expressed a diversity of opinions about it. The fact that members of Division 36 hold a diversity of viewpoints about this issue was emphasized. The APA representative shared his belief that APA will “try not to offend anyone” and will stick to taking a position on issues of licensing and competency of service providers and will stay out of hiring and possible discrimination issues.

—Submitted by P. Scott Richards, Division 36 Secretary October 3, 2001
1. Peter Hill, Division 36 President, gave a presidential address. Concluding his address, he conducted the business meeting.

2. Minutes from last year’s business meeting were approved.

3. Robert Lovinger, Past President of Division 36, gave a report on the election results (see Executive Committee meeting minutes).

4. Various reports were given, including a Council Representative report (by Mary Reuder), Treasure’s report (by Peter Hill on behalf of Donna Goetz who was unable to be in attendance), and the Fellows Chair report (by David Wulff). Details about these reports can be found in the Executive Committee meeting minutes.

5. Ralph Hood announced Division 36’s 2001 awards.
   - *Distinguished Service Award:* Hendrika Vande Kamp
   - *Early Career Award:* Paul Williamson
   - *William C. Bier Award:* William W. Meissner
   - *Virginia Sexton Mentoring Award:* Allen E. Bergin

Next year’s awards were also announced (see Executive Committee meeting minutes).

6. Peter Hill expressed appreciation to those who served Division 36 this year, including
   - Todd Hall (*Convention Program chair*)
   - Doug Hardy (*Hospitality Suite chair*)
   - Ralph Hood (*Awards chair*)
   - Ralph Piedmont (*Membership chair*)
   - Donna Goetz (*Treasurer*), and
   - Mark Krejci (*Newsletter editor*),

   as well as to all members of the Division 36 Executive Committee.

7. Peter Hill passed the traditional Presidential gavel to Ed Shafranske, the new President of Division 36.

8. After brief remarks from Ed Shafranske, the meeting was adjourned.

—Submitted by P. Scott Richards
Division 36 Secretary
October 3, 2001
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