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Thieves of thankfulness: inhibitors of gratitude

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THIEVES OF THANKFULNESS: INHIBITORS OF GRATITUDE

A Thesis

Presented To

Eastern Washington University

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Clinical Psychology (Master of Science)

By

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MASTER'S THESIS

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Abstract

Gratitude has often been called the “poster child” of positive psychology as a result of demonstrated links to a number of positive outcomes across diverse areas of life (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010). This study investigated four possible inhibitors of trait gratitude: cynicism, materialism/envy, indebtedness, and narcissism. The study sample consisted of upper-level undergraduate psychology college students from a university in eastern Washington. These potential inhibitors were measured, along with trait gratitude, at Time 1. Two months later, inhibitors and trait gratitude were once again measured. Partial correlational analyses were computed between Time 1 inhibitors and Time 2 gratitude while controlling for Time 1 gratitude. Results showed a significant negative relationship between Time 1 cynicism and Time 2 trait gratitude, Time 1 indebtedness and Time 2 trait gratitude, and Time 1 narcissism and Time 2 trait gratitude. Implications of this research suggest that the development of gratitude can be reduced in the presence of certain personality traits. Suggestions for future research, including examining external and internal indebtedness, are discussed.

Keywords: Gratitude, inhibitors, cynicism, indebtedness, narcissism

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Thieves of Thankfulness: Inhibitors of Gratitude

Pride slays thanksgiving, but an humble mind is the soil out of which thanks naturally grows. A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves. ~ Henry Ward Beecher

The growth of gratitude, as Ward Beecher asserts above, tends to be linked to a modest mindset that opens the soul to the seed of the thanksgiving, allowing it to take root and prosper. Any gardener can attest that growing a good flower requires knowledge of not only what nourishes the bloom but also what poisons it. And so it may be with positive emotions. In the garden of the psyche in which some flowers in the form of positive emotions thrive, while others wither and die, excessive pride contributes to a toxic environment, crushing the grateful spirit beneath the rocky soil of entitlement.

The field of positive psychology has made great strides in the last decade toward identifying those factors that contribute to the life well lived. Park, Peterson, and Seligman (2004) sampled 5,299 adults from three internet samples using the well-validated Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS: Peterson & Seligman, 2004), which measures character strengths. Along with hope, zest, love, and curiosity, gratitude was consistently associated with satisfaction with life. Although many signs have pointed toward gratitude as playing an integral part in the good life, research thus far has been nearly entirely focused on the conditions under which gratitude thrives. To date, little to no research has been focused on conditions that may impede the growth of gratitude. The aim of this project is to examine traits that may produce inhibitory effects on gratitude. Specifically, this paper explores the putative traits of cynicism, materialism/envy, indebtedness, and narcissism.

Literature Review

Gratitude

While psychological research has generally focused on the myriad of ways that life can go wrong, positive psychology research has been devoted to discovering what can go right. This focus on psychological strength instead of weakness has led to a clearer understanding of the conditions under which the human spirit thrives. Gratitude has been dubbed by some as the poster child of positive psychology (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010), and appears to play an important part in the life well-lived. If asked, most people could easily define the emotion of gratitude. We teach our children at a young age the social graces of saying “thank you” in response to a gift or kind act, we have devoted a holiday to the act of giving thanks, and many families, both religious and non-religious, still pause to say grace and offer thanks before a meal. But how does psychological science define gratitude?

Gratitude, like other affects, can be conceptualized using Rosenberg’s (1998) tri-level hierarchical theory of affective experiences. The three levels consist of traits, moods, and emotions. Traits are viewed as predispositions that are stable over time forming a broad umbrella over mood states and emotions. Dispositional, or trait gratitude, has been defined by McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002, p. 112) as “a generalized tendency to recognize and respond with grateful emotion to the roles of other people’s benevolence in the positive experiences and outcomes that one obtains.” Individuals high in trait gratitude are cognizant of the kindness and contribution of others in relation to the good in their life. Trait gratitude lowers the threshold for the experience of the emotion of gratitude which is experienced when one recognizes the occurrence of

an intentional benefit and attributes the responsibility for the good benefit to someone else (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, and Larson, 2001). Individuals with high trait gratitude should feel the emotion of gratitude more frequently, more intensely, and across a wide variety of situations (McCullough et al, 2002).

Using this tri-level theory, gratitude can also be conceptualized at the mood, or state level. According to Rosenberg (1998), moods “wax and wane, fluctuating throughout or across days” (p. 250). In addition, moods are comprised of a stable component that is the result of individual personality differences, as well as a transient component that varies throughout the day based on an individual’s surroundings and the events that occur. State gratitude is therefore the result of the predisposition to feel gratitude (trait gratitude) plus surroundings or events that evoke the emotion of gratefulness. One may feel state gratitude in response to a kind word or act by another, receiving a gift, or learning of good news.

The Good of Gratitude

Gratitude has been linked to a number of positive outcomes across a broad spectrum of areas, from subjective well-being to interpersonal relationships, complete with higher levels of positive affect, lower levels of negative affect, and greater satisfaction with life. One of the most studied areas is the relation of gratitude to subjective well-being. One hypothesis for the avenue in which gratitude may contribute to happiness is through a life orientation process that involves recognition and appreciation of the positive aspects of life (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010). Personality traits have been found to be more robust predictors of subjective well-being than

demographic variables such as age and marital status (DeNeve, 1999). This lends credence to the notion that trait gratitude can reliably predict well-being.

McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2002) in their creation of the topography of the grateful disposition found trait gratitude to be linked to each of the Big Five domains, and specifically to be positively correlated with Agreeableness and Extraversion and negatively correlated with Neuroticism. This study used not only self-ratings of the factors, but also included peer-ratings of the factors in which the same correlations were found. In addition, this same study found a strong correlation between gratitude and satisfaction with life. Another study by McCullough, Tsang, and Emmons (2004) found that the traits of Agreeableness and Extraversion could reliably predict levels of daily grateful moods in two different populations. Studies by Wood, Joseph, & Maltby (2008, 2009) have found that gratitude can predict life satisfaction and psychological well-being, above and beyond the predictive powers of the Big Five.

Gratitude and Well-Being

Both correlational and experimental studies have linked gratitude to emotional well-being. Markers of emotional well-being include the presence of high positive affective, low negative affect, and satisfaction with life (Joseph & Wood, 2010).

Gratitude appears to be closely related to the three markers of emotional well-being.

It may be that the habitual recognition of the benevolence of others that is central to trait gratitude helps bolster well-being. A number of interventions in which participants focus on blessings, or express gratitude to others have been shown to increase positive affect (Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, Boehm, & Sheldon, 2011; Froh, Kashdan, Ozimkowski, & Miller, 2009; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006; Seligman, Steen,

Park, & Peterson, 2005; Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Watkins, Woodward, Stone, & Kolts, 2003). This is important because most people desire to be happier (Diener & Diener, 1996). A study by McCullough, Emmons, and Tsang (2004) found that higher levels of positive emotions could reliably predict the experience of higher levels of grateful mood. The evidence that gratitude contributes to positive affect continues to accumulate, with the relationship being shown across a number of life circumstances, diverse age groups, and cultures, including with Vietnam veterans (Adler & Fagely, 2005) and adolescent Asians (Chen & Kee, 2007).

Research has shown that the experience of gratitude has a positive valence, meaning the experience of gratitude is pleasant for most people (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). In what has come to be referred to as the “Nun study,” Danner, Snowden, and Friesen (2001) analyzed the journals of nuns written in their early twenties. The authors focused on the content of the journal entries, specifically isolating statements related to positive, negative, or neutral emotions. They found that they could predict survival rates 50 to 70 years later based merely on the presence of positive emotional content in the nuns’ journal entries. Clearly the correlational nature of this research bars us from concluding that happier people live longer simply because they are happier, but it does suggest important implications about the complex interplay of factors relating to positive emotions and longevity.

Some evidence suggests that gratitude may serve as a type of insulating factor against depression and anxiety. A number of studies have shown an inverse relation between gratitude and psychopathology. Higher levels of trait gratitude were found to be associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety (Watkins et al, 2003; McCullough

et al. 2002), while other studies have shown gratitude can serve as a type of insulating protective factor during difficult times, contributing to healthy coping (Lambert, Fincham, & Stillman, 2011; Watkins, Cruz, Holben, & Kolts, 2008; Wood, Maltby, Gillett, Linley, & Joseph, 2008; Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003). A large study by Kendler, Liu, Gardner, McCullough, Larson, and Prescott (2003) found that thankfulness in a religious context was to lower lifetime risk of major depression and anxiety disorders. In addition, thankfulness was also related to lower levels of alcohol dependence and substance abuse.

Gratitude has a strong relationship with satisfaction with life. Early research points toward grateful individuals as being happier individuals, both as rated by self-report and the report of others (Watkins et al, 2003; McCullough et al, 2002). A number of studies have found gratitude to be a unique predictor of satisfaction with life while controlling for the influence of the Big Five personality factors (Fagely, 2012; Wood et al, 2008; McCullough et al, 2003), and one of the most predictive of the character strengths of life satisfaction (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004).

Gratitude and Social Well-Being

Gratitude is an emotion that certainly has important social underpinnings, and indeed many studies have linked gratitude to a number of markers of social well-being. Many of the studies have suggested a link between gratitude and increased prosocial behavior (Bartlett & Desteno, 2006; Tsang, 2006; McCullough et al., 2001) whereby feelings of gratitude toward benefactors increase the future likelihood of helping behaviors by beneficiaries. Gratitude appears to play an important function in the development and maintenance of social ties, a role that has been examined in studies

involving sororities (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008) and romantic relationships (Gordon, Impett, Kogan, Oveis, & Keltner, 2012).

In an experiment utilizing an emotion induction task, gratitude was associated with higher levels of self-reported trust regarding the trustworthiness of another person and the intent to trust that person (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). Trait gratitude has been linked with greater perceived social support during a life transition, and lower levels of stress and depression (Wood, Maltby, Gillett, Linley, & Joseph, 2008).

The evidence above when taken as a whole strongly points to gratitude as wielding great influence on the life well-lived. The number of positive outcomes related to gratitude suggests that it is a trait that should be cultivated and nurtured. As mentioned earlier, in order to truly understand what contributes to the growth of gratitude, it is important to understand what factors thwart that growth. The four traits this study will explore are cynicism, materialism/envy, indebtedness, and narcissism. These traits may have the potential to squash the grateful spirit and to negate the potential positive effects of gratitude.

Inhibitors of Gratitude

Cynicism

A suspicious view of the motives of others may be one of thieves of thankfulness. As we have seen, gratitude involves recognition of the benevolence of others in relation to positive outcomes in one's life. Cynicism, or lack of trust, may serve as a set of blinders that blocks an individual from recognizing the good that others have contributed to their life. It is difficult to feel thankful for the acts of others if one attributes their motivations to nefarious reasons.

Although I know of no studies to date that have directly examined the relationship between a cynical mindset and gratitude, a study by Watkins, Scheer, Ovnicek, and Kolts (2006) lends credence to the notion that cynicism regarding the motives of others has a detrimental effect on gratitude. Participants in one condition who read a story in which a favor was imbued but it was made clear that a similar favor would be required in return reported less gratitude than participants in two other conditions in which no return favor was involved. The participants who knew a return favor would be expected had good reason to question the motives of the giver, suspecting the favor was given simply to garner return favors. Generosity is difficult to see in the presence of cynical attributions regarding the motives of others.

Materialism/Envy

Another suspected inhibitor of gratitude is materialism/envy. Materialism and envy tend to go hand in hand and it is not difficult to see why. Materialistic individuals highly value the acquisition of wealth and material goods (Richins & Dawson, 1992). The pursuit of physical goods is used as a means to obtain goals in life such as happiness. Belk (1985) has linked materialism to the personality trait of envy which he defines as wanting something that another person has. In essence, materialistic individuals are not satisfied with what they have, are looking to acquire more, and want what others have. Materialism and envy short-circuit the appreciation of benefits that one has received through prompting individuals to constantly want more. Research showing a negative association between materialism and gratitude is growing. This research reveals a negative correlation between gratitude and materialism (Lambert, Fincham, Stillman, & Dean, 2009; Polak & McCullough, 2006; McCullough et al, 2002) and shows gratitude to

be a much stronger predictor of well-being than materialism (Froh, Emmons, Card, Bono, & Wilson, 2011; Kashdan & Breen, 2007). It is possible that individuals who are high in gratitude are able to appreciate the material goods they do have, and thus combat the hedonistic treadmill of materialism.

Indebtedness

Indebtedness may interfere with gratitude by lowering the view of the benefactor as benevolent. Indebtedness has been defined as feeling obligated to repay (Greenberg, 1980). At first blush the traits of gratitude and indebtedness appear to be intimately related in a social sense. When one receives a gift one should feel the need to repay the kindness. However, one empirical study by Watkins et al. (2006) has shown that indebtedness and gratitude are actually two distinct emotional states, and that feelings of indebtedness related to the obligation to repay the benefactor of a gift lead to lower levels of grateful feelings. This suggests that while one may feel intrinsically motivated to repay the kindness of another by bestowing kindness back on that individual, when one feels an obligation to repay the gift it serves to diminish the view of the good of gifts received.

Narcissism

Logic tends to dictate that the sense of entitlement related to narcissism would lower both the experience of the emotion of gratitude and levels of trait gratitude. This study used the conceptualization of narcissism by Pincus et al. (2009) in which narcissism is operationalized as the maintenance of a positive self-image through a variety of processes. This leads to the individuals' need for validation, and the tendency to search for self-enhancement opportunities. Gratitude researchers have long suspected the same, that narcissism should inhibit gratitude (McCullough et al., 2001). If one

believes that one is deserving of a particular gift it makes it difficult to recognize the benevolence of the giver. Narcissism as a personality trait can occur across a spectrum from a normal, adaptive response that may serve to enhance self-esteem, to a more extreme form of pathology that interferes with life (Pincus, Ansell, Pimentel, Cain, Wright, & Levy, 2009). While any amount of narcissism has the potential to inhibit gratitude, it is logical to assume that the higher the levels of narcissism, the greater the inhibitory effects on gratitude will be.

Perhaps the most easily recognized trait of the narcissist is an overinflated sense of self. This grandiosity leaves narcissists wide open to frequent occurrences of the self-serving bias. As a result they are much more likely to take personal credit for the good in their life and blame the bad in their life on others (Miller & Campbell, 2010).

Recognition of the benevolent contribution to the good in one's life is a tenet central to trait gratitude. The self-serving bias central to narcissism makes it difficult, if not impossible, to recognize the positive impact that others have made.

Narcissistic individuals tend to pursue the goal of superiority in interpersonal relationships (Boldt, 2007). More than likely this is related to the narcissist's extreme sense of entitlement. Gratitude involves the recognition of the benevolence of others, and this sense of entitlement has the potential to blind one to the generosity of others.

Narcissists simply believe they rightly deserve the good that comes to them and are likely to view benefactors in an instrumental light, as someone who exists merely to meet their needs.

Taken together, the evidence shows that gratitude plays an important part in the fulfillment of the good life. While much research thus far has been focused on the

development of gratitude and interventions meant to increase gratitude, the sheer dearth of research exploring traits that may lead to the inhibition of gratitude is surprising.

Although a number of studies have shown negative correlations between the putative inhibitors of gratitude and the trait of gratitude, the cross-sectional nature of these studies allows for many interpretations. For example, it could be that these suggested inhibitors do not in fact inhibit gratitude, but rather, gratitude inhibits these factors. A prospective design would allow us to more carefully evaluate the theory that these factors indeed inhibit the development of gratitude. The present study measures the correlations between trait gratitude and cynicism, materialism/envy, indebtedness, and narcissism over time. I expect negative correlations between Time 1 inhibitors and Time 2 trait gratitude after controlling for Time 1 trait gratitude.

Method

Design and Procedure

The study employed a partial correlation design. Participants were recruited during class time by the class professor. Participants were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire packet for partial extra class credit. They were told that participation was voluntary and that they could skip any question or leave the study at any time without penalty. Participants completed paper-and-pencil questionnaire packets during scheduled class time. Each participant was assigned a packet number that was then assigned to their name. A master file of participant names and numbers was kept in the lead researchers locked filing cabinet within his locked office. Participants were notified that data was confidential rather than anonymous. Eight weeks later during the same

school quarter, participants were asked to complete the same questionnaire packet again. The collection of data took part in two separate rounds over two school quarter periods.

Participants

Participants were 88 upper-level undergraduate psychology students from a university in eastern Washington. Participants received partial course credit for their voluntary participation. Due to an oversight, demographic data were only collected for about half of the participants. Of those participants for which demographic data was available ($N = 49$; 69% women and 31% men), ages ranged from 19 to 45 years ($M = 23.3$ years, $SD = 4.7$ years).

Materials

In the present study, trait gratitude was measured using the GQ-6 (McCullough et al., 2006). This 6-item measure asks participants to rate statements pertaining to feelings of thanks or gratitude on a 7-point Likert scale. The scores are averaged across the six items, $M = 36.08$, $SD = 4.77$. Cronbach's alpha was .79 for the present study. The Gratitude, Resentment, and Appreciation Test-Short (S-GRAT: Watkins et al., 2003) was also used to measure trait gratitude. This 16-item measure asks participants to rate statements pertaining to feelings of appreciation on 9-point Likert scale. The scores are averaged across the 16 items, $M = 119.32$, $SD = 16.98$. Cronbach's alpha was .88 for the present study. The Gratitude Affect Scale (GAS) of the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS: Watson & Clark, 1994) was used as a measure of state level, or present affect gratitude. This 20-item measure asks participants to rate words and phrases related to gratitude on a 5-point Likert scale. The scores are averaged across the 20 items, $M = 11.58$, $SD = 3.02$. Cronbach's alpha was .88 for the present study.

A number of measures were used to measure narcissism in the present study. The 52-item Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI; Pincus et al., 2009) asks participants to rate statements regarding their view of self and others on a 6-point Likert scale. The scores are averaged across the 52 items, $M = 118.06$, $SD = 36.91$. Cronbach's alpha was .95 for the present study. The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979) was also used to measure narcissism. This 40-item measure asks participants to answer True or False to statements about views of the self in social situations, such as leadership positions. The scores are averaged across the 40 items, $M = 17.20$, $SD = 5.73$. Cronbach's alpha was .79 for the present study. In addition, the Selfism Scale (Phares & Erksine, 1984) was also used to measure narcissism. This 40-item measure asks participants to rate statements about their worldviews on a 5-point Likert scale. The scores are averaged across the 40 items, $M = 67.88$, $SD = 12.12$. Cronbach's alpha was .80 for the present study.

The remaining three proposed inhibitors were measured with the following measures. Cynicism was measured using the Feelings of Trust and Cynicism Scale (TCS; Watkins, 2012). This 23-item measure asks participants to rate statements regarding recent feelings trust of others on a 9-point Likert scale. The scores are averaged across the 23 items, $M = 80.63$, $SD = 26.54$. Cronbach's alpha was .92 for the present study. Materialism/envy was measured using the Belk Materialism Scale (Belk, 1984). This 24-item measure asks participants to rate statements about wealth and material goods on a 5-point Likert scale. The scores are averaged across the 24 items, $M = 20.82$, $SD = 4.81$. This measure had low internal consistency reliability in the present study; Cronbach's alpha was .48 for the total measure, and .56 for the envy scale. The Indebtedness Scale

(IS-R: Van Gelder, et al., 2007; Elster, et al., 2005) was used to measure indebtedness in the present study. This 22-item scale asks participants to rate statements about feelings of owing others on a 6-point Likert Scale. Scores are averaged across the 22 items, $M = 5.42$, $SD = 27.17$. Cronbach's alpha was .93 for the present study.

In addition, subjective happiness was measured using the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS: Diener, et al., 1985). This 5-item measure asks participants to rate statements about how content they are with the conditions of their lives on a 5-point Likert scale. Scores are averaged across the 5 items, $M = 26.2$, $SD = 6.16$. Cronbach's alpha for the current study was .88 for the present study. Finally, to control for the positive correlation between gratitude and self-esteem, and the positive correlation between narcissism and self-esteem, self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES: Rosenberg, 1965). This 10-item scale asks participants to rate statements about attitudes toward self and feelings of worth. Scores are averaged across the 10 items, $M = 40.02$, $SD = 7.5$. Cronbach's alpha for the present study was .89.

In order to control for the positive relationship between narcissism and self-esteem, scores from the narcissism measures and the self-esteem measure were standardized, and then self-esteem was subtracted from the narcissism measure scores. This allowed a "pure" measure of narcissism that has removed the healthy aspect of self-esteem.

Results

Partial Correlational Analyses

In order to investigate how putative factors might inhibit gratitude, the primary analyses consisted of partial correlations between each of the proposed Time 1 inhibitors

and Time 2 trait gratitude while controlling for Time 1 trait gratitude. The following analyses all followed that approach. All reported p values were calculated using Pearson's r .

Cynicism & Trait Gratitude.

Partial correlational analyses controlling for Time 1 gratitude revealed a negative relationship between Time 1 cynicism scores and Time 2 trait gratitude scores. With the exception of the GRAT, $r(84) = -.20, p = .071$, significance was reached in correlations with all measures of gratitude. Specifically, cynicism was negatively correlated with the GQ-6, $r(85) = -.31, p = .004$, and the Gratitude Affect Scale (GAS) of the PANAS, $r(85) = -.33, p = .002$.

Materialism/Envy & Trait Gratitude.

Partial correlational analyses controlling for Time 1 gratitude revealed no significant correlation between Time 1 materialism/envy scores and Time 2 trait gratitude scores. The correlations for the materialism total score were as follows: the GRAT, $r(86) = -.11, p = .316$; GQ-6, $r(87) = -.10, p = .352$; GAS, $r(87) = -.18, p = .094$. The correlations for the envy subscale of the materialism scale were as follows: the GRAT, $r(86) = -.13, p = .23$; GQ-6, $r(87) = -.17, p = .117$; GAS, $r(87) = -.17, p = .111$.

Indebtedness & Trait Gratitude.

Partial correlations computed between Time 1 indebtedness and the three measures of Time 2 gratitude after controlling for Time 1 gratitude reached significance with the GRAT, but not the other two measures of gratitude. Levels of indebtedness were negatively correlated with levels of trait gratitude as measured by the GRAT, $r(82) = -.23, p = .037$. However, no significant correlation was found between indebtedness

and the GQ-6, $r(82) = -.14, p = .206$; and indebtedness and the GAS, $r(82) = -.10, p = .387$.

Narcissism & Trait Gratitude.

Several correlations were computed using measures of gratitude and various measures of narcissism. In order to control for the positive relationship between narcissism and self-esteem, scores from the narcissism measures and the self-esteem measure were standardized, and then self-esteem was subtracted from each of the narcissism measure scores. Scores on the PNI were partially negatively correlated with GRAT scores, $r(84) = -.26, p = .017$; and GAS scores, $r(84) = -.32, p = .003$. Significance was not reached in correlations between the PNI and the GQ-6, $r(84) = -.20, p = .066$.

Correlations computed using measures of gratitude and the NPI reached significance with the GRAT, $r(83) = -.27, p = .012$; and the GAS, $r(83) = -.37, p = .001$. Significance was not reached in correlations between the NPI and the GQ-6, $r(83) = -.17, p = .130$.

Using the Selfism scale, a significant correlation was found with the GAS, $r(84) = -.27, p = .011$. No significant correlations were found between the Selfism scale and the GRAT, $r(84) = -.13, p = .246$; and the Selfism scale and the GQ-6, $r(84) = -.17, p = .129$.

Cynicism & Narcissism.

A bivariate correlation was computed between the variables of cynicism and narcissism to explore the relationship between the two variables. There was a significant relationship between levels of cynicism and levels of narcissism when using the PNI, $r(84) = .51, p = .48$ (two-tailed) $< .01$; and the Selfism scale, $r(85) = .45, p = .60$ (two-tailed) $< .01$, as the narcissism measure.

Discussion

The results generally support the theory that levels of gratitude may be reduced in the presence of certain personality traits. Specifically, higher levels of cynicism, higher levels of indebtedness, and higher levels of narcissism predicted lower levels of trait gratitude over time. As previously mentioned, no prior studies have prospectively examined the relationship between inhibiting factors and trait gratitude.

Cynicism

I predicted that higher levels of cynicism would predict lower levels of trait gratitude over time. This hypothesis was supported by the data. Negative correlations were found between the Time 1 cynicism measure and Time 2 GQ-6 after controlling for Time 1 GQ-6 levels. This finding was replicated with the cynicism measure and the gratitude scale of the PANAS. Thus, results support the theory that cynicism and lack of trust inhibit gratitude.

Returning to the definition of trait gratitude is helpful to understanding how cynicism may inhibit thankfulness. Trait gratitude is the habitual response of grateful emotion following the benevolent acts of others that result in positive outcomes. This necessitates the recognition of the good intentions of the benefactor by the beneficiary. The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* defines cynical as “believing that people are motivated purely by self-interest; skeptical; contemptuous; mocking.” This definition suggests that the cynic possesses a general attitude of contempt regarding the values and motives of others. Cynics would be hard-pressed to identify anyone who is benevolently motivated, deciding instead that others have self-serving motives behind their actions.

Thus, the cynic may be unable to recognize good intentions from potential benefactors, effectively snuffing out feelings of gratitude that may arise as a result.

Materialism/Envy

The prediction that higher levels of materialism and envy would correlate with lower levels of trait gratitude over time was not supported by the data. It is possible that even though materialists value the acquisition of wealth and physical goods and see them as a way to find happiness, that they still feel gratitude for what they have. Just because the materialistic individual desires to acquire more goods does not automatically mean they are not thankful for the goods they do have. Furthermore, just because the materialist tends to value material goods over human relationships, this does not automatically exclude those individuals from being able to recognize the good that others have contributed to the positive outcomes in their lives. Thus, while materialism and gratitude seem to be unlikely bedfellows, higher levels of materialism do not correlate with lower levels of trait gratitude in this research.

This runs contrary to prior research by Lambert, Fincham, Stillman, and Dean (2009) which showed that participants in a high gratitude condition for whom gratitude was experimentally induced showed lower levels of materialism combined with higher levels of satisfaction with life. However, the authors used the Richins and Dawson (1992) materialism measure, while this study utilized the Belk (1995) Materialism Scale. Furthermore, the materialism measure used in the current study showed poor psychometrics properties. Cronbach's α for both the total Belk scale and for the envy subscale were both below .55 in this study. Differences in question content and subscale scoring may be one explanation for the differences in results. In addition, the Lambert et

al. (2009) study employed an experimental design, while this study relied on a prospective correlational design.

Indebtedness

I predicted that higher levels of indebtedness would be correlated with lower levels of trait gratitude over time. Mixed support was found for this hypothesis. Although the expected negative correlation was found between the indebtedness scale and the GRAT, correlations between the indebtedness scale and the GQ-6 and the GAS failed to reach significance, although the relationships were in the expected direction. This result is consistent with previous findings of experimental research by Watkins et al. (2006) showing that higher levels of indebtedness result in lower levels of trait gratitude as measured by the GRAT. The GRAT and the GQ-6 are both measures of trait gratitude. However, question content varies significantly between the two measures, and the GRAT is a more in-depth measure than the GQ-6, containing 16 items as opposed to 6 items. It is possible that the measures are tapping into slightly different aspects of gratitude, and that the content of the GRAT may reveal a relationship of gratitude to indebtedness that the content of the GQ-6 is not able to capture.

All indebtedness is not created equal, and perhaps the origins of feelings of indebtedness play a role in relation to gratitude. In the original Watkins et al (2006) study, participants were told that the benefactors would be expecting a favor (to help them move) from the beneficiaries in the future. This is an external source of indebtedness: someone who did you a favor says, in essence, “You owe me now.” Contrast this with an internal source of indebtedness, in which someone has done something nice without expecting anything in return, and the individual feels internally

compelled to someday return the favor to them. The former feels forced on you, while the latter feels like a personal choice. It seems that the external source of indebtedness would be more likely to inhibit gratitude than the internal source. Perhaps the correlational design of the study was unable to tease out some of these intricacies within feelings of indebtedness.

Future research employing an experimental design meant to induce either feelings of externally created indebtedness or feelings of internally created indebtedness would be interesting and useful. One way to do this may be to ask participants to complete a series of timed tasks in which a crucial piece of equipment or information needed to complete the first task have been omitted. A confederate posing as another participant would be in possession of that critical task-solving piece of equipment or information and offer it to the other participant. Participants in the external indebtedness group would be told by the confederate that they will be expected to help them complete their next task in return for the help the confederate just gave them. Participants in the internal indebtedness group would receive help from the confederate, but with no implicit stipulation that the favor be returned. Levels of indebtedness and gratitude would be measured before and after the experiment.

Narcissism

The prediction that higher levels of narcissism would be correlated with lower levels of trait gratitude over time was supported by the data. Prospective negative correlations were found between the PNI and the GRAT, and the PNI and the GAS; the NPI and the GRAT, and the NPI and the GAS, after self-esteem was removed from the narcissism measures. It is important to highlight that significant relationships were not

found between gratitude and the raw scores of the narcissism measures. This is due to both self-esteem being positively correlated with both gratitude and narcissism, thus tending to result in simple relationships between gratitude and narcissism being hidden. However, by controlling for self-esteem in the narcissism measures, I was able to look at a more unhealthy form of narcissism that is removed from self-esteem, and its relationship with gratitude. Indeed, the results support the theory that unhealthy narcissism inhibits gratitude.

One proposed theory for conceptualizing narcissism is the continuum hypothesis (Watson, Sawrie, Greene, & Arredondo, 2002). This theory posits that narcissism occurs across a spectrum that ranges from healthy narcissism (high levels of self-esteem) to maladaptive narcissism (Narcissistic Personality Disorder, NPD). This conceptualization is particularly relevant to the current study for two reasons. First, this study controlled for self-esteem when measuring narcissism in order to factor out the positive correlation between narcissism and self-esteem. Second, this study used undergraduate participants, a population that is less likely than a clinical population to have NPD. Using this hypothesis for conceptualization, we can see how individuals who fall somewhere in the middle of the narcissism continuum, as opposed to those on the extreme narcissistic end, could display lower levels of trait gratitude. In other words, it is not just the full-blown, clinically diagnosable narcissist that we would expect to have lower levels of trait gratitude; even moderate levels of narcissism seem to be detrimental to the growth of gratitude.

An overinflated sense of self and the resulting sense of entitlement are central characteristics of narcissism. Recall for a moment the definition of trait gratitude, which

involves the recognition of and response to the benevolence of others. While the narcissist's expectations that others should automatically provide them with what they want and need would not prevent feelings of gratitude that result from recognizing the kindness of others, the expectation that others should provide for them would make the recognition of the kindness of others less likely to occur. Since there is an automatic expectation on the part of the narcissist that others will fulfill their wants and needs (entitlement), the recognition of the benevolence of others, and thus the resulting feelings of gratitude, seems less likely. This is the first study actually providing prospective evidence that these aspects of narcissism may indeed inhibit the growth of gratitude. Although a number of theorists have proposed that narcissism inhibits gratitude, this is the first study to offer strong evidence that narcissism actually does prevent the growth of gratitude.

Implications.

These results shed some light on the development of gratitude by helping us to understand what thwarts the growth of trait gratitude. The results also hint at the interpersonal nature of gratitude. Gratitude is almost exclusively felt in response to another person, a higher power, or even fate. People may feel grateful for personal attributes or traits they have, but they almost always feel gratitude for someone who either helped them foster an attribute, such as intelligence, or for someone who contributed to a certain trait, such as blue eyes. We almost never feel grateful for or toward ourselves. Those who do might very well be considered narcissists.

Gratitude involves the recognition of the benevolence of another person or entity. It is a primarily other-focused trait and emotion with a positive valence. Both cynicism

and narcissism disrupt this positive valence. Cynicism is primarily negative. While it is still an other-focused trait, the emphasis is not on the benevolence of others, in fact, the attention is shifted to recognizing the malevolence of others, and perhaps more specifically, the malevolence of others towards oneself. Narcissism on the other hand shifts the attention completely away from others and any potential benevolence, and places the focus squarely on the self. It appears that a healthy view of and attention to others may be a crucial component of the development of gratitude.

Considering the interpersonal nature of gratitude, it would be interesting to see if fostering interpersonal intelligence may help nurture the growth of gratitude as a means to counteract the inhibitory effects of cynicism and narcissism. Conversely, traditional gratitude interventions such as gratitude journals could be supplemented to target reduction of inhibitory traits. For example, an intervention aimed at lowering cynicism might involve the participants keeping a journal of kind acts that others have done for them. They would also be asked to list 3 selfless or kind-hearted reasons for why the other individual may have performed this act. Ideally, the repetitive act of assigning good intentions to others when related to gratitude would counteract some of the inhibitory effects of cynicism.

The current generation of college students who comprised the majority of our participants has increasingly come to be known as “generation me” (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman 2008), a moniker that denotes a rather narcissistic view of the world. Could this excessive focus on the self and sense of entitlement be thwarting the growth of gratitude in young people? The current generation was raised by parents who tended to focus on cultivating self-esteem in their children (Seligman, Reivich,

Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995). However, this self-esteem may be rather artificial, based on constant praise, and trophies awarded not only to members of the winning team, but those of the losing team as well. This type of self-esteem stands in stark contrast to that which is developed naturally through hard work and mastery (Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995). A meta-analysis by Twenge et al., 2008 documented an increase in narcissism levels over 24 years among college students. Although some debate these findings, contrary evidence has yet to be produced, and the results of this study would suggest that this increased narcissism might inhibit the growth of gratitude.

Another study examined academic entitlement: the expectation of receiving high grades for minimal work (Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008). The authors found academic entitlement to be strongly related to exploitive attitudes toward others and moderately related to a sense of entitlement and narcissism. I suspect that it is this sense of entitlement related to narcissism that is most detrimental to trait gratitude. When individuals automatically expect others to do for them, it makes it much less likely that they will have a generalized tendency to recognize the benevolence of others. One area for future research that might yield useful results is to compare levels of narcissism and gratitude in a sample of college students with levels of narcissism and gratitude in a middle-aged sample. My current research combined with the research cited above suggests that we would see a decrease in narcissism rates and an increase in trait gratitude scores as the age of the participants rises.

One interesting avenue for further exploration regarding narcissism and gratitude would be to see how state, as opposed to trait, narcissism affects gratitude. Would subjects with temporarily over-inflated egos show decrements in gratitude, or is it only

stable and prolonged narcissism that inhibits gratitude? An experiment to study this could attempt to induce narcissism and entitlement in a laboratory. Participants could be asked to complete a mental task and told that the task is very difficult and that very few people manage to complete it. Participants would be then told because they completed this task they will receive special help on the next task, a timed scavenger hunt. Participants in the control group would also be told they can receive help during the scavenger hunt, but would not be told only a few people completed the first task. Following the completion of the scavenger hunt, participants would complete measures to rate feelings of gratitude toward the helper that provided them the needed item to finish the scavenger hunt, as well as individual levels of narcissism and entitlement. Results from my current study suggest that participants in the experimental group should show higher levels of narcissism and entitlement and lower levels of gratitude.

The Relationship Between Cynicism & Narcissism.

It is possible that narcissism may actually cause individuals to be cynical about others. A need to maintain a feeling of self-importance and grandiosity may spur narcissists to ascribe malevolent motives to others. A lack of trust is adaptive for the narcissist because it helps to support their over-inflated sense of self. It allows the narcissist to save face when, for example, being fired from a job. In such a situation, the narcissist can tell themselves “I was fired because the boss feels threatened by my talent, and is worried that I will take over his job.”

Cynicism may even help support the narcissist’s sense of entitlement. By holding the belief that others are motivated purely by self-interest, the narcissist is able to justify his/her propensity to take and take from others while giving little in return. It is a do-

unto-others-before-they-do-unto-you type of mentality, which the narcissist seems to use to ensure that she/he gets all they deserve. It just may be a cynical view of others and of the world that aids in the manifestation of this mindset.

Limitations

Although the correlational design of this study was strengthened by the addition of the prospective aspect, the design was nonetheless one limitation of this research. The results tell us that a relationship exists between cynicism and trait gratitude, and narcissism and trait gratitude. However, the nature of correlational studies limits the ability to draw conclusions about the how or why of those relationships. It could be that some unknown, third factor is in play that increases these personality traits and inhibits gratitude.

One such variable may be depression. Three correlational studies by Watson et al. (2002) found a positive correlation between narcissism and depression in three distinct samples. Depression could potentially raise levels of cynicism, with many depressed individuals believing that there is the nothing good in the world, and doubting the virtuous intentions of others. In addition, depression may raise levels of narcissism by narrowing an individual's focus strictly to oneself and the suffering being experienced. Finally, depression may lower levels of gratitude (i.e. nothing ever turns out right in my life anyway, what do I have to be thankful for?). Thus, depression could possibly be responsible for the relationships found in this study.

Another limitation to this study may be the measures used for the inhibitors, particularly the Belk scale used to measure materialism and envy. Of all the measures in this study, the Belk scale displayed the weakest psychometrics. As mentioned in the

discussion, a correlational relationship was found in previous research between materialism and gratitude using a different measure of materialism. Future research should consider alternative measures of materialism.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study had several limitations as a result of the correlational design. However, based on the lack of prospective research on this subject, an exploratory correlation study was necessary to establish putative relationships. Now that relationships have been established, the next step for research on this topic would be to employ an experimental research design to further explore the two potential inhibitory factors of cynicism and narcissism. In addition, the factor of indebtedness shows promise as evidenced by correlations found with one measure of trait gratitude.

Looking at the relationship between depression, narcissism, cynicism, and gratitude may also be useful for future research. Such research could even be conducted using a simple correlational design in order to determine if a relationship between these factors exist before employing a more detailed experimental design to examine the relationship. Employing a prospective design such as the one this current study used would be especially helpful for exploring the potential relationship between depression and cynicism, narcissism, and gratitude.

Conclusion

In this study some evidence supported the theory that cynicism and indebtedness inhibit gratitude, but the strongest inhibitor of gratitude appeared to be narcissism. Long before positive psychology began examining the virtues of gratitude, poets, philosophers, and public speakers recognized the critical role that a grateful spirit plays in a rich and

fulfilling life. The results of this study lend veracity to the words that Henry Ward Beecher spoke over a century ago that were quoted in the epigraph of this paper. The piercing self-pride of narcissism slays thanksgiving much like the sharp edge of the scythe mows down tender wheat, too immature to yet be harvested. In the delicate ecosystem that comprises the garden of the psyche, cynicism and narcissism become the marauding deer or swarming pests ripping out the blooms of gratitude by the roots, and snacking on the tender buds of thanks until they are decimated. There is, however, hope for conservation of this delicate psychic garden. Armed with the knowledge of what destroys his garden, the gardener can take whatever steps are necessary to vigilantly protect his precious garden from the thieves of thankfulness.

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Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Primary Measures

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
GRATITUDE MEASURES:			
GQ-6	36.08	4.77	.79
S-GRAT	119.32	16.98	.88
GAS	11.58	3.02	.88
NARCISSISM MEASURES:			
PNI	118.06	36.91	.95
NPI	17.02	5.73	.79
NS	67.88	12.12	.80
CYNICISM MEASURE:			
TCS	80.63	26.54	.92
MATERIALISM MEASURE:			
Belk	20.82	4.81	.48
INDEBTEDNESS MEASURE:			
IS	5.42	27.17	.93
WELL-BEING MEASURE:			
SWLS	26.20	6.16	.88
SELF-ESTEEM MEASURE:			
RSE	40.02	7.50	.89

Table 2
Correlation Matrix (Part 1 of 2)

		NS t1 Z Score Difference	NPI t1 Z Score Difference	PNI t1 Z Score Difference	IS t1 Total	IS t2 Total	RSE t1 Total	RSE t2 Total	TCS t1 Total	TCS t2 Total
NS t1 Z Score Difference	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	1 128	.646** .000 125	.773** .000 127	.368** .000 122	.230* .032 87	-.755** .000 128	-.637** .000 88	.599** .000 124	.475** .000 88
NPI t1 Z Score Difference	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.646** .000 125	1 .000 126	.737** .000 125	.148 .104 121	.080 .464 86	-.602** .000 126	-.512** .000 87	.322** .000 123	.406** .000 87
PNI t1 Z Score Difference	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.773** .000 127	.737** .000 125	1 .000 128	.374** .000 122	.280** .009 87	-.850** .000 128	-.719** .000 88	.482** .000 124	.455** .000 88
IS t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.368** .000 122	.148 .104 121	.374** .000 122	1 .000 125	.765** .000 84	-.319** .000 123	-.267* .013 86	.457** .000 11	.242* .025 86
IS t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.230 .032 87	.080 .464 86	.280** .009 87	.765** .000 84	1 .095 89	-.179 .095 88	-.254* .016 89	.276** .010 87	.434** .000 89
RSE t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.755** .000 128	-.602** .000 126	-.850** .000 128	-.319** .000 123	-.179 .095 88	1 .095 130	.818** .000 89	-.426** .000 126	-.389** .000 89
RSE t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.637*** .000 88	-.512** .000 87	-.719** .000 88	-.267* .013 86	-.254* .016 89	.818** .000 89	1 .000 91	-.510** .000 89	-.464** .000 91
TCS t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.599** .000 124	.322** .000 123	.482** .000 124	.457** .000 122	.276** .000 87	-.426** .000 126	-.10** .000 89	1 .000 128	.554** .000 89
TCS t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.475** .000 88	.406** .000 87	.455** .000 88	.242* .025 86	.434** .000 89	-.389** .000 89	-.464** .000 91	.554** .000 89	1 .000 91
GRAT t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.357** .000 128	-.256** .004 126	-.313** .000 128	-.120 .182 125	-.167 .119 88	.303** .000 90	.430** .000 90	-.328** .000 127	-.315** .002 90
GRAT t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.387** .000 87	-.389** .000 86	-.453** .000 87	-.293** .006 85	-.325** .002 88	.430** .000 88	.558** .000 90	-.430** .000 88	-.459** .000 90
GAS t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.247** .005 128	-.247** .005 128	-.110 .220 126	-.282** .001 128	-.051 .570 125	-.133 .214 89	.351** .000 130	.320** .002 128	-.199 .059 91

GAS t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.337** .001 87	-.373** .000 86	-.410** .000 85	-.051 .645 85	-.129 .231 88	.372** .000 88	.494** .000 90	-.367** .000 88	-.404** .000 90
SWLS t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.544** .000 127	-.430** .000 126	-.641** .000 127	-.179* .045 125	-.109 .312 88	.696** .000 128	.593** .000 90	-.426** .000 127	-3.04** .004 90
SWLS t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.455** .000 88	-.529** .000 87	-.636** .000 88	-.095 .382 86	-.203 .056 89	.572** .000 89	.630** .000 91	-.285** .007 89	-.367** .000 91
GQ t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.294** .001 127	-.142 .115 125	-.294** .001 127	-.082 .366 124	-.138 .200 88	.345** .000 129	.37-** .000 90	-.142 .111 127	-.192 .070 90
GQ t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.315** .003 88	-.200 .063 87	-.313** .003 88	-.185 .088 86	-.197 .064 89	.337** .001 89	.496** .000 91	-.377** .000 89	-.386** .000 91

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlation Matrix (Part 2 of 2)

		GRAT t1 Total	GRAT t2 Total	GAS t1 Total	GAS t2 Total	SWLS t1 Total	SWLS t2 Total	GQ t1 Total	GQ t2 Total
NS t1 Z Score Difference	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.357** .000 87	-.387** .000 87	-.247** .005 128	-.337** .001 87	-.544** .000 127	-.455** .000 88	-.294** .001 127	-.315** .003 88
NPI t1 Z Score Difference	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.256** .004 126	-.389** .000 86	-.110 .220 126	-.373** .000 86	-.430** .000 126	-.529** .000 87	-.142 .115 125	-.200 .063 87
PNI t1 Z Score Difference	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.313** .000 128	-.453** .000 87	-.282** .001 128	-.410** .000 87	-.641** .000 127	-.636** .000 88	-.294** .001 127	-.313** .003 88
IS t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.120 .182 125	-.293** .006 85	-.051 .570 125	-.051 .645 85	-.179 .045 125	-.095 .328 86	-.082 .366 124	-.185 .088 86
IS t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.167 .119 88	-.325** .002 88	-.133 .214 89	-.129 .231 88	-.109 .312 88	-.203 .056 89	-.138 .200 129	.337** .001 89
RSE t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.303** .000 129	.430** .000 88	.351** .000 130	.372** .000 88	.696** .000 128	.572** .000 89	.345** .000 129	.337** .001 89
RSE t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.430** .000 90	.558** .000 90	.320** .002 91	.494** .000 90	.593** .000 90	.630** .000 91	.370** .000 90	.496** .000 91
TCS t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.328** .000 127	-.430** .000 88	-.284** .001 128	-.367** .000 88	-.426** .000 127	-.285** .007 89	-.142 .111 127	-.377** .000 89
TCS t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	-.315** .002 90	-.459** .000 90	-.199 .059 91	-.404** .000 90	-.304** .004 90	-.367** .000 91	-.192 .070 90	-.386** .000 91
GRAT t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	1 .000 132	.641** .000 89	.412** .000 132	.488** .000 89	.429** .000 130	.362** .000 90	.714** .000 131	.469** .000 90
GRAT t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.641** .000 89	1 .000 90	.459** .000 90	.627** .000 89	.491** .000 89	.474** .000 90	.465** .000 89	.736** .000 90
GAS t1 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed) N	.412** .000 132	.459** .000 90	1 .000 133	.599** .000 130	.545** .000 130	.401** .000 91	.398** .000 132	.440** .000 91
GAS t2 Total	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2- tailed)	.488** .000	.627** .000	.599** .000	1 .000	.469** .000	.549** .000	.371** .000	.589** .000

	N	89	89	90	90	89	90	89	90
SWLS t1 Total	Pearson Correlation	.429**	.491**	.545**	.469**	1	.722**	.353**	.303**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.004
	N	130	89	130	89	130	90	129	90
SWLS t2 Total	Pearson Correlation	.362**	.474**	.401**	.549**	.722**	1	.230*	.326**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.029	.002
	N	90	90	91	90	90	91	90	91
GQ t1 Total	Pearson Correlation	.714**	.465**	.398**	.371**	.353**	.230*	1	.493**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.029		.000
	N	131	89	132	89	90	90	132	90
GQ t2 Total	Pearson Correlation	.469**	.736**	.440**	.589**	.303**	.326**	.493**	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004	.002	.000	
	N	.90	90	91	90	90	91	90	91

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



Philip C. Watkins, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

Department of Psychology, 151 Martin Hall Cheney, WA 99004-2423

Consent Form

Psychology Experiment

Principal Investigator: Rebecca C Solom, Student, Psychology, Ph. 509-359-6174,
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Responsible Project Investigator: Philip C Watkins, Ph.D., Professor, Ph. 509-359-6174,
pwatkins@ewu.edu

Investigators statement

Purpose and Benefits

This is a study that intends to investigate how people view statements about their personality. This study will help us obtain information about the relationship between various personality traits. This study will be beneficial to you by helping you gain greater knowledge about yourself. This research is being performed for the principal investigator's Master's thesis.

Procedures

In this study you will be asked to complete a packet of questionnaires. The time required to complete these questionnaires should not exceed an hour. The questionnaires being administered ask you various questions about your current feelings and opinions on issues, for example how much you agree with the statement "I typically get very angry when I'm unable to get what I want from others", "The people in my life are good people", and "More bad things have happened to me in my life than I deserve." After this initial session, we will administer the questionnaire packet again in two months. This packet will contain similar questions to those in the initial session, and will take 50 to 60 minutes to complete.

Risk, Stress or Discomfort

This experiment involves little or no risk to your emotional or physical well-being, and involves less than minimal risk to your well-being. Completing all of the questionnaires in full may be somewhat lengthy and you may find this to be tiring. Your participation in this experiment is confidential. You may find that some questions relate to sensitive issues (e.g., "I certainly feel useless at times."), however, remember that all of your responses are confidential. You may choose not to answer any question that you find objectionable. Access to information is restricted to the principal investigator, the responsible project investigator, and his research assistants. You may choose to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. The data obtained in this experiment will be used to promote our understanding of psychological traits. Five years after completion of this study your data will be destroyed via shredding.

Other Information

You will receive class credit for participating in this experiment. Credit received will be commensurate with time spent, and actual amount of credit awarded is up to the discretion of the faculty member who is awarding it. Remember that you have the option to choose another project that is not research oriented. Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this research or any complaints you wish to make, you may contact Ruth Galm, Human Protections Administrator (509-359-7971/6567), rgalm@ewu.edu

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Subject's Statement

The study described above has been explained to me, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions. I am aware that there are other options which I may receive credit besides participation in this study. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. I understand I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Date

Research Participant

The Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6)

Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how much you agree with it.

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = neutral

5 = slightly agree

6 = agree

7 = strongly agree

___ 1. I have so much in life to be thankful for.

___ 2. If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.

___ 3. When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.*

___ 4. I am grateful to a wide variety of people.

___ 5. As I get older I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.

___ 6. Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone.*

OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE- S-GRAT

Please provide your honest feelings and beliefs about the following statements which relate to you. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. We would like to know how much you feel these statements are true or not true of you. Please try to indicate your true feelings and beliefs, as opposed to what you would like to believe. Respond to the following statements by circling the number that best represents your real feelings. Please use the scale provided below, and please choose one number for each statement (i.e. don't circle the space between two numbers), and record your choice in the blank preceding each statement.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I strongly disagree			I disagree somewhat			I feel neutral about the statement		
I mostly agree with the statement				I strongly agree with the statement				

- ____ 1. I couldn't have gotten where I am today without the help of many people.
- ____ 2. Life has been good to me.
- ____ 3. There never seems to be enough to go around and I never seem to get my share.
- ____ 4. Oftentimes I have been overwhelmed at the beauty of nature.
- ____ 5. Although I think it's important to feel good about your accomplishments, I think that it's also important to remember how others have contributed to my accomplishments.
- ____ 6. I really don't think that I've gotten all the good things that I deserve in life.
- ____ 7. Every Fall I really enjoy watching the leaves change colors.
- ____ 8. Although I'm basically in control of my life, I can't help but think about all those who have supported me and helped me along the way.
- ____ 9. I think that it's important to "Stop and smell the roses."
- ____ 10. More bad things have happened to me in my life than I deserve.
- ____ 11. Because of what I've gone through in my life, I really feel like the world owes me something.
- ____ 12. I think that it's important to pause often to "count my blessings."
- ____ 13. I think it's important to enjoy the simple things in life.
- ____ 14. I feel deeply appreciative for the things others have done for me in my life.
- ____ 15. For some reason I don't seem to get the advantages that others get.
- ____ 16. I think it's important to appreciate each day that you are alive.

PANAS Questionnaire

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then list the number from the scale below next to each word. Indicate the extent you have felt this way over the past week.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Slightly	A Little	Moderately	Quite a Bit	Extremely

_____ 1. Interested	_____ 11. Irritable
_____ 2. Distressed	_____ 12. Alert
_____ 3. Excited	_____ 13. Ashamed
_____ 4. Upset	_____ 14. Inspired
_____ 5. Strong	_____ 15. Nervous
_____ 6. Guilty	_____ 16. Determined
_____ 7. Scared	_____ 17. Attentive
_____ 8. Hostile	_____ 18. Jittery
_____ 9. Enthusiastic	_____ 19. Active
_____ 10. Proud	_____ 20. Afraid

PNI

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability as they pertain to you. Rate each item from 0 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me). Do not skip any items.

- ___ 1. I often fantasize about being admired and respected.
- ___ 2. My self-esteem fluctuates a lot.
- ___ 3. I sometimes feel ashamed about my expectations of others when they disappoint me.
- ___ 4. I can usually talk my way out of anything.
- ___ 5. It's hard to feel good about myself when I'm alone.
- ___ 6. I can make myself feel good by caring for others.
- ___ 7. I hate asking for help.
- ___ 8. When people don't notice me, I start to feel bad about myself.
- ___ 9. I often hide my needs for fear that others will see me as needy and dependent.
- ___ 10. I can make anyone believe anything I want them to.
- ___ 11. I get mad when people don't notice all that I do for them.
- ___ 12. I get annoyed by people who are not interested in what I say or do.
- ___ 13. I wouldn't disclose all my intimate thoughts and feelings to someone I didn't admire.
- ___ 14. I often fantasize about having a huge impact on the world around me.
- ___ 15. I find it easy to manipulate people.
- ___ 16. When others don't notice me, I start to feel worthless.
- ___ 17. Sometimes I avoid people because I'm concerned that they'll disappoint me.
- ___ 18. I typically get very angry when I'm unable to get what I want from others.
- ___ 19. I sometimes need important others in my life to reassure me of my self-worth.
- ___ 20. When I do things for other people, I expect them to do things for me.
- ___ 21. When others don't meet my expectations, I often feel ashamed about what I wanted.
- ___ 22. I feel important when others rely on me.
- ___ 23. I can read people like a book.
- ___ 24. When others disappoint me, I often get angry at myself.
- ___ 25. Sacrificing for others makes me the better person.
- ___ 26. I often fantasize about accomplishing things that are probably beyond my means.
- ___ 27. Sometimes I avoid people because I'm afraid they won't do what I want them to.
- ___ 28. It's hard to show others the weaknesses I feel inside.
- ___ 29. I get angry when criticized.
- ___ 30. It's hard to feel good about myself unless I know other people admire me.
- ___ 31. I often fantasize about being rewarded for my efforts.
- ___ 32. I am preoccupied with thoughts and concerns that most people are not interested in me.
- ___ 33. I like to have friends who rely on me because it makes me feel important.
- ___ 34. Sometimes I avoid people because I'm concerned they won't acknowledge what I do for them.
- ___ 35. Everybody likes to hear my stories.
- ___ 36. It's hard for me to feel good about myself unless I know other people like me.
- ___ 37. It irritates me when people don't notice how good a person I am.
- ___ 38. I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.
- ___ 39. I try to show what a good person I am through my sacrifices.
- ___ 40. I am disappointed when people don't notice me.
- ___ 41. I often find myself envying others' accomplishments.
- ___ 42. I often fantasize about performing heroic deeds.
- ___ 43. I help others in order to prove I'm a good person.
- ___ 44. It's important to show people I can do it on my own, even if I have some doubts inside.
- ___ 45. I often fantasize about being recognized for my accomplishments.
- ___ 46. I can't stand relying on other people because it makes me feel weak.
- ___ 47. When others don't respond to me the way that I would like them to, it is hard for me to still feel ok with myself
- ___ 48. I need others to acknowledge me.

- ___ 49. I want to amount to something in the eyes of the world.
- ___ 50. When others get a glimpse of my needs, I feel anxious and ashamed.
- ___ 51. Sometimes it's easier to be alone than to face not getting everything I want from other people.
- ___ 52. I can get pretty angry when others disagree with me.

Selfism Scale

Listed below are 40 statements that deal with personal attitudes and feelings about a variety of things. Obviously, there are no right or wrong answers--only opinions. Read each item and then decide how you personally feel. Mark your answers to the left of each item according to the following scheme:

5 = Strongly agree
 4 = Mildly agree
 3 = Agree and disagree equally
 2 = Mildly disagree
 1 = Strongly disagree

- _____ 1. The widespread interest in professional sports is just another example of escapism.
- _____ 2. In times of shortages it is sometimes necessary for one to engage in a little hoarding.
- _____ 3. Thinking of yourself first is no sin in this world today.
- _____ 4. The prospect of becoming very close to another person worries me a good bit.
- _____ 5. The really significant contributions in the world have very frequently been made by people who were preoccupied with themselves.
- _____ 6. Every older American deserves a guaranteed income to live in dignity.
- _____ 7. It is more important to live for yourself rather than for other people, parents, or for posterity.
- _____ 8. Organized religious groups are too concerned with raising funds these days.
- _____ 9. I regard myself as someone who looks after his/her personal interests.
- _____ 10. The trouble with getting too close to people is that they start making emotional demands on you.
- _____ 11. Having children keeps you from engaging in a lot of self-fulfilling activities.
- _____ 12. Many of our production problems in this country are due to the fact that workers no longer take pride
 in their jobs.
- _____ 13. It's best to live for the present and not to worry about tomorrow.
- _____ 14. Call it selfishness if you will, but in this world today we all have to look out for ourselves first.
- _____ 15. Education is too job oriented these days; there is not enough emphasis on basic education.
- _____ 16. It seems impossible to imagine the world without me in it.
- _____ 17. You can hardly overestimate the importance of selling yourself in getting ahead.
- _____ 18. The difficulty with marriage is that it locks you into a relationship.
- _____ 19. Movies emphasize sex and violence too much.
- _____ 20. If it feels right, it is right.

5 = Strongly agree 4 = Mildly agree 3 = Agree and disagree equally 2 = Mildly disagree 1 = Strongly disagree

- _____ 21. Breaks in life are nonsense. The real story is pursuing your self-interests aggressively.
- _____ 22. An individual's worth will often pass unrecognized unless that person thinks of himself or herself first.
- _____ 23. Consumers need a stronger voice in governmental affairs.
- _____ 24. Getting ahead in life depends mainly on thinking of yourself first.
- _____ 25. In general, couples should seek a divorce when they find the marriage is not a fulfilling one.
- _____ 26. Too often, voting means choosing between the lesser of two evils.
- _____ 27. In striving to reach one's true potential, it is sometimes necessary to worry less about other people
- _____ 28. When choosing clothes I generally consider style before matters such as comfort or durability.
- _____ 29. I believe people have the right to live any damn way they please.
- _____ 30. Too many people have given up reading to passively watch TV.
- _____ 31. Owing money is not so bad if it's the only way one can live without depriving oneself of the good life.
- _____ 32. Not enough people live for the present.
- _____ 33. I don't see anything wrong with people spending a lot of time and effort on their personal appearance.
- _____ 34. Physical punishment is necessary to raise children properly.
- _____ 35. The Peace Corps would be a good idea if it did not delay one's getting started along the road to a personal career.
- _____ 36. It simply does not pay to become sad or upset about friends, loved ones, or events that don't turn out well.

NPI

Please indicate your answers by circling T for True, or F for False.

1. T/ F I would prefer to be a leader.
2. T/ F I see myself as a good leader.
3. T/ F I will be a success.
4. T/ F People always seem to recognize my authority.
5. T/ F I have a natural talent for influencing people.
6. T/ F I am assertive.
7. T/ F I like to have authority over other people.
8. T/ F I am a born leader.
9. T/ F I rarely depend on anyone else to get things done.
10. T/ F I like to take responsibility for making decisions.
11. T/ F I am more capable than other people.
12. T/ F I can live my life in any way I want to.
13. T/ F I always know what I am doing.
14. T/ F I am going to be a great person.
15. T/ F I am an extraordinary person.
16. T/ F I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.
17. T/ F I like to be complimented.
18. T/ F I think I am a special person.
19. T/ F I wish somebody would someday write my biography.
20. T/ F I am apt to show off, if I get the chance.
21. T/ F Modesty does not become me.
22. T/ F I get upset when people don't notice how I look when I go out in public.
23. T/ F I like to be the center of attention.
24. T/ F I would do almost anything on a dare.
25. T/ F I really like to be the center of attention.
26. T/ F I like to start new fads and fashions.
27. T/ F I can read people like a book.
28. T/ F I can make anybody believe anything I want them to.
29. T/ F I find it easy to manipulate people.
30. T/ F I can usually talk my way out of anything.
31. T/ F Everybody likes to hear my stories.
32. T/ F I like to look at my body.
33. T/ F I like to look at myself in the mirror.
34. T/ F I like to display my body.
35. T/ F I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.
36. T/ F I expect a great deal from other people.
37. T/ F I want to amount to something in the eyes of the world.
38. T/ F I have a strong will to power.
39. T/ F I insist upon getting the respect that is due me.
40. T/ F If I ruled the world, it would be a much better place.

RSE

Please decide to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Remember, there are no correct or incorrect responses.

Please answer each item using a number from 1 to 5, using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly		Neither		Strongly
Disagree		agree nor		agree
		Disagree		

- ___ I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.
- ___ I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
- ___ All in all I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
- ___ I am able to do things as well as most other people.
- ___ I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
- ___ I take a positive attitude toward myself.
- ___ On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
- ___ I wish I could have more respect for myself.
- ___ I certainly feel useless at times.
- ___ At times I think I am no good at all.

IS

Please indicate your response to the following items by circling the number that best represents your agreement or disagreement. There are no right or wrong answers to these items, so please provide as honest assessment of your agreement as you can.

Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree					
	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
1. One should return favors from a friend as quickly as possible 3 in order to preserve the friendship.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
2. Owing someone a favor makes me uncomfortable. 3	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
3. One should not borrow money from a friend unless it is 3 absolutely necessary.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
4. Asking for another's help gives them power over your life. 3	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
5. Never a borrower or a lender be. 3	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
6. I'd be embarrassed if someone had to remind me of a debt I 3 owed them.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
7. As a rule, I don't accept a favor if I can't return the favor. 3	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
8. If someone pays for my dinner or invites me to eat at their 3 place, I feel obligated to buy them dinner the next time or to invite them to eat at my place.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
9. I get very upset when I discover I have forgotten to return 3 something I borrowed.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
10. If someone goes out of their way to help me, I feel as though 3 I should do more for them than merely return the favor.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
11. When someone does me a favor it often bothers me because 3 I immediately wonder how I will repay them.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
12. I like to make sure I don't owe anybody anything. 3	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
13. Sometimes I find myself worrying about whether I have 3 repaid all the favors I have received.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
14. When someone gives me something or provides a favor to 3 me, I usually feel somewhat uncomfortable at first.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
15. I'd rather do things myself than have someone help me 3	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2

because I don't like feeling obligated to return their favor. 16. I don't receive gifts very well. 3	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
17. If someone buys me an expensive gift, I worry a lot about 3 whether I will be able to repay them.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
18. In good friendships you should make sure that you pay 3 back all the favors you have received from your friend.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
19. If someone does me a favor, I usually try to pay them back 3 as soon as possible.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
20. I get very uncomfortable when someone surprises me with a 3 large or expensive gift.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
21. When I am able to repay a favor or gift, it brings me great 3 relief.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2
22. Often I have trouble enjoying gifts from others because 3 I'm concerned about what I will give them in return.	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2

Belk Materialism Scale

Please use the scale below to indicate the extent of your agreement/disagreement with the statements below.

1 = Disagree

5 = Agree

- | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.) | Renting or leasing a car is more appealing to me than owning one. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2.) | I tend to hang on to things I should probably throw out. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3.) | I get very upset if something is stolen from me, even if it has little monetary value. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4.) | I don't get particularly upset when I lose things. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5.) | I am less likely than most people to lock things up. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6.) | I would rather buy something I need than borrow it from someone. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7.) | I worry about people taking my possessions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8.) | When I travel, I like to take a lot of photographs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9.) | I never discard old pictures or snapshots. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.) | I enjoy having guests stay in my home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11.) | I enjoy sharing what I have. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12.) | I don't like to lend things, even to good friends. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13.) | It makes sense to buy a lawnmower with a neighbor and share it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14.) | I don't mind giving rides to those who don't have a car. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15.) | I don't like to have anyone in my home when I'm not there. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16.) | I enjoy donating things to charity. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17.) | I am bothered when I see people who buy anything they want. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18.) | I don't know anyone whose spouse or steady date I would like to have as my own. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19.) | When friends do better than me in competition, it usually makes me happy for them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20.) | People who are very wealthy often feel they are too good to talk to average people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21.) | There are certain people I would like to trade places with. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22.) | When friends have things I cannot afford it bothers me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23.) | I don't seem to get what is coming to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24.) | When Hollywood stars or prominent politicians have things stolen, I really feel sorry for them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

TCS

Please respond to the following items for how you have been feeling recently about those around you. There are no right or wrong answers, simply provide your most honest response. Circle the number below each item that best represents your agreement/disagreement for each statement.

1. Lately, I have found that it has been easier to trust others.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
2. When I think about the people I know, most of them can be trusted.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
3. The people I know in my work, school, and social life are largely just out for themselves.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
4. The people in my life are good people.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
5. Recently, people have been taking advantage of me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
6. I would be making a lot more progress towards my goals if the people in my life could be more supportive.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
7. Recently, I've noticed that the people in my life have been exceptionally good to me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
8. Lately, I've noticed that when others do something for me they often have ulterior motives.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
9. I'm really glad for the family that I have.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
10. Although they won't say it to my face, I believe that lately people have been criticizing me behind my back.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
11. When someone helps me in the store they're just trying to get me to buy something.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree			Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Strongly Agree								
12. When I think about what others have done for me recently, I'm amazed out how good they have been to me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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SWLS

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Slightly disagree
- 4 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 5 = Slightly agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

- _____ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
- _____ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
- _____ 3. I am satisfied with my life.
- _____ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
- _____ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

VITA

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