**Wholeness and Holiness: The Spiritual Dimension of Eudaimonics**

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**Abstract** In this chapter, we offer an understanding of eudaimonic well-being as wholeness in an individual’s orienting system, which is comprised of values, beliefs, practices, emotions, and relationships that offer direction and stability in the search for significance. To begin unpacking the meaning of wholeness, we focus on five sets of elements that distinguish greater wholeness from greater brokenness: (a) purposive vs. aimless; (b) broad and deep vs. narrow and shallow; (c) flexible and enduring vs. rigid and unstable; (d) balanced, cohesive, and discerning vs. imbalanced, incohesive, and non-reflective; (e) benevolent and life-affirming vs. non-benevolent and life-limiting. Because wholeness is intimately tied to holiness, our discussion of these elements highlights dynamic contributions from spirituality and religion. In addition, we discuss how people may achieve greater wholeness in their lives, emphasizing the vital role of spiritual struggles in this process. We conclude with a review of the practical implications of this perspective for efforts to cultivate wholeness and holiness.

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Robert Oxnam was a broken man. He stumbled through life disoriented, spinning from role to role while in the grips of alcoholism, bulimia, and depression. In coping with childhood trauma, his personality split into separate identities. He describes these fragmented experiences living with multiple personality disorder, now known as dissociative identity disorder, in his memoir, *A Fractured Mind* (2005). During the course of his therapy, Oxnam delved inward and united parts of himself that were previously divided. The process of integration was only partially successful by the end of his narrative; yet Oxnam’s three remaining personalities agreed to live alongside each other, re-oriented to a shared search for significance within one body. Today he is also known as President Emeritus of the Asia Society, an accomplished scholar on China, and an artist.

Although most people’s experiences of brokenness are less dramatic, there are numerous examples of individuals who turn their lives around and experience growth. Some commit themselves to a healthier lifestyle. Others shift careers in pursuit of something more meaningful. Still others embrace a worldview that transforms their lives. How do we understand this type of profound change for the better? Over the past 50 years, theorists have offered a number of valuable frameworks for understanding growth and well-being (e.g., Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004, on post-traumatic growth; Ryff, 1989, on well-being; Peterson & Seligman, 2004, on character strengths and virtues). In this chapter, we suggest another potentially valuable construct for understanding eudaimonics, one with deep ties to the concept of spirituality and one which holds important theoretical, empirical, and practical implications for the ways we consider people at their best. Our focus here is on the concept of wholeness and its particular links to spirituality (i.e., holiness).

Certainly, we are neither the first to suggest that wholeness is a construct central to well-being nor the first to highlight the ties between wholeness and spirituality. That people are in some ways broken is a precept fundamental to the world’s great religious traditions. And each tradition offers an antidote to our brokenness that in some way or another involves a movement toward greater wholeness. In this vein, it is interesting to note that the term “holy” is an etymological descendant of the Old English word *hālig,* which translates into wholeness, health, and happiness (New World Encyclopedia, 2008). For example, according to Jewish mystical tradition, in the creative process, God withdrew to form a finite space or vessel within the infinite realm and then injected a ray of divine light into this vessel (Frankel, 2005). However, the vessel was unable to fully contain this light and shattered. In this sense, the universe was broken from its inception. It is up to humankind to repair the damage by acts of caring, compassion, and justice that bring wholeness and healing back to a fragmented world. According to classical Christian thought, sin and death were brought into the world when Adam and Eve ate from the fruit of the tree that had been forbidden to them by God. In doing so, they lost their free and unrestricted access to God (Smith, 1958). This breach was ultimately repaired through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, who is said to offer a connection to God to all those who accept him as savior. Nontheistic religions also provide guidelines for approaching greater wholeness. According to Buddhist philosophy, suffering is a natural state of imperfection, or brokenness, that is fundamental to human existence. The Mahayana tradition tells how Buddha provided a solution to suffering for the Dragon King through wholesome ways of action, which serve as ethical practices that move individuals toward enlightenment, an ideal state of completeness (Bhikkhu, 1985).

More recently, psychologists have also stressed the movement from brokenness to wholeness as an essential developmental task. For instance, Palmer (2004) maintains that each of us contains an inner wholeness. Yet internal and external constraints prevent us from realizing this wholeness and, as a result, we experience the pain of disconnectedness from our authentic selves and disconnection from others. People face the developmental challenge of overcoming this division by rediscovering and cultivating their true spirit. Fowler (1981) also proposes a shift in development, and faith development in particular, over the lifespan from less to greater wholeness. He describes the movement from undifferentiated, literal, and socially conventional stages of faith to more individually reflective and ultimately universalizing stages which place the emphasis on inclusive visions of humanity. Such broad perspectives, as we will explain further, are signals of wholeness. Building on this tradition of work, this chapter will consider some of the more recent contributions of theory, research, and practice to our understanding of wholeness, holiness, and eudaimonic well-being.

As a prelude to this discussion, it is important to note that our exploration of wholeness and holiness rests on some assumptions, previously articulated by Pargament in 1997, 2011, and 2013: Humans are proactive beings, motivated to seek out and foster a relationship with whatever they may hold to be of value or significance in life. People do not approach this search for significance empty-handed; they are guided by an orienting system. The orienting system refers to an individual’s general framework of values, beliefs, practices, emotions, and relationships that offer direction and stability in the search for significance. Think of the orienting system as a “general way of viewing and dealing with the world,” a blueprint that provides a design for living and aids in helping the individual come to terms with life’s transitions and traumas (Pargament, 1997, p. 99). This orienting system is also embedded in and shaped by a larger socio-cultural context. But not all orienting systems are equivalent. They can vary in their strength, their capacity to help people negotiate life’s demands and realize their goals. Individuals with stronger orienting systems are better equipped to face life’s challenges, while those with more limited orienting systems are more vulnerable in the face of transitions and trauma. Pargament has stressed that the key to a stronger orienting system lies not in one particular value, belief, or practice; rather it involves the degree to which the individual’s life framework is well-integrated, whole, and cohesive.

Pargament and Mahoney (2005) also make the assumption that people are spiritual beings, fundamentally concerned about aspects of life they hold sacred. By sacred, they are referring not only to concepts of divinity, God, and higher powers, but also to other life domains that have been imbued with divine-like qualities, such as transcendence, ultimacy, and boundlessness. Once sanctified, a practice can become a ritual, a thought can become a religious belief, a dramatic event can become a miracle, relationships can become a religious congregation, a goal can become a life vocation. And these expressions of spirituality can be fully interwoven into the individual’s orientation to life. In fact, as we will see, spirituality often serves as an integrative dimension in the orienting system, a force for wholeness that provides the individual with higher-order overarching values and an ultimate source of meaning that organizes lower-order goals and gives life a consistent unifying direction. Thus, the pursuit of wholeness and holiness can go hand-in-hand for some individuals. At the same time, we will acknowledge the darker side to spirituality; spirituality can be a force for disharmony, disintegration, and brokenness. And that darker potential must also enter into any discussion of wholeness and holiness.

With these assumptions in mind, we now turn our attention to what it means to be whole in terms of one’s orienting system, drawing on both psychological and spiritual contributions. Because wholeness, like spirituality, is a multi-faced numinous construct, our analysis will be illustrative rather than comprehensive. We will consider the meaning of wholeness and zero in on five sets of elements that distinguish greater wholeness vs. greater brokenness in the orienting system (see Pargament, 1997, for further discussion): (a) deeply purposive vs. aimless; (b) broad and deep vs. narrow and shallow; (c) flexible and enduring vs. rigid and unstable; (d) balanced, cohesive, and discerning vs. imbalanced, incohesive, and non-reflective; (e) benevolent and life-affirming vs. non-benevolent and life-limiting. Our discussion of these five sets of elements will place particular emphasis on spiritual contributions to wholeness and brokenness. We will then discuss how people may grow to achieve greater wholeness in their lives, emphasizing the vital role that spiritual struggles can play in this process. We will conclude with a review of the practical implications of this perspective for efforts to cultivate wholeness and holiness.

# Elements of Wholeness and Brokenness

How do we best describe wholeness? The term “whole” may seem overwhelming, encompassing virtually anything and everything. In speaking about wholeness, we turn away from the simplicity of a single key or set of keys that may unlock the mystery of well-being. Instead, we have to grapple with life in its greater complexity, the fact that we are biological, psychological, social, and spiritual beings. The language of wholeness speaks to the quality of the interplay between all of the bits and pieces that make up a life. It calls for a different language. In this discussion of wholeness we will use terms such as breadth, depth, connectedness, cohesiveness, balance, and harmony. The converse of wholeness, brokenness, calls for its own language as well, including terms such as shallowness, narrowness, disconnection, fragmentation, imbalance, and discord. Perhaps, in its most basic form, wholeness has to do with how well we put our lives together. Of course, we can put our lives together in many ways; there are, in short, many ways to be whole. We are left then with the challenging question of how to evaluate the degree to which a life is well put together.

In this chapter we consider five sets of elements that distinguish greater wholeness from greater brokenness. These elements are different yet interconnected. You might think of them as indicators of the degree to which orienting systems are more or less whole or broken. We will see that signals of wholeness are often related to other signs of health and well-being, whereas aspects of brokenness are associated with signs of poorer health and deep despair.

As a prelude to this discussion, it is important to emphasize that, although it is useful to contrast the elements of wholeness and brokenness, the reality is that each of us is in part whole and in part broken. Wholeness is always a work in progress; no one can achieve full wholeness because we remain human, finite, and flawed. The challenge in the search for significance is to become as whole as possible in the context of our human woundedness, limitations, frailties, and struggles. Wholeness and brokenness then are not two black-and-white options for living. They are interrelated. In fact, as we will see later in the chapter, human weakness, vulnerability, and brokenness can become a spur to greater wholeness.

**Purposive vs. Aimless**

Wholeness is marked by a deep sense of purpose and direction in life. The quality of purposiveness within an orienting system is encapsulated by thirteen-year-old Anne Frank’s (2010, p. 214) declaration: “I know what I want, I have a goal, an opinion, I have a religion and love. Let me be myself and then I am satisfied.” Her diary reveals a clear, guiding vision of herself and her life within the chaotic context of the Nazi regime bent on its destructive agenda beyond her hiding space. When the orienting system is purposive, the search for significance becomes itself significant. Life is made meaningful.

Spirituality is often intimately involved in the articulation of human purpose (Pargament, 1997). Theologian Paul Tillich (1957) defined faith as “the state of being ultimately concerned” and “the centered movement of the whole personality toward something of ultimate meaning and significance” (p. 123). Building on this perspective, Emmons (1999, 2005) conducted research in which he asked people to define their key goals or strivings in life. Individuals who reported a higher proportion of spiritual strivings in their list of goals manifested less conflict among their goals as a whole and a greater purpose in life. Thus, spirituality appeared to serve as a higher-order framework of meaning providing people with an overarching organization to lower-level goals and values by bringing them into the realm of the sacred. Other studies have also shown that having an ultimate concern has important implications for well-being (Ryff, 1989; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). In a national U. S. survey of older adults, Krause (2003) found that those who experienced greater meaning in life derived from religion reported greater life satisfaction, self-esteem, and optimism. Generally, people who infuse their goals with sacred purpose also endorse greater levels of investment and commitment to those strivings, and benefit from increased meaning in life and positive emotions (Mahoney et al., 2005; Martos, Kézdy, & Horváth- Szabó, 2011; Todd, Houston, & Odahl-Ruan, 2014; Todd, McConnell, & Suffrin, 2014).

On the dark side, however, people who struggle to find an ultimate meaning experience lower levels of life satisfaction and poorer mental health, including more depressive symptoms, generalized anxiety, anger, and loneliness (Exline, Pargament, Grubbs, & Yali, 2014). Like those drifting on a boat rudderless at sea, people who are unable to discover or construct a greater meaning to their lives find themselves totally at the mercy of the larger forces that surround them. Aimless and facing an existential void, individuals become more likely to fill that void with unsatisfactory substitutes, such as devotion to destructive leaders or addictions to drugs, alcohol, sex, gambling, and materialism (Faigin, Pargament, & Abu-Raiya, 2014).

**Broad and Deep vs. Narrow and Shallow**

An orienting system that is whole is broad and deep. Breadth is the orienting capacity to encompass the full range of challenges and transitions that life brings. Depth refers to the ability to see more deeply into life, and to be able to grapple with complex, intense, and paradoxical experiences. Spiritual and political leader Mahatma Gandhi exhibited both of these qualities in his personal vision for religious pluralism in India, proclaiming, “I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.” As this quote highlights, Gandhi was able to perceive other people, including those from faiths outside of his own, as spiritual beings. His capacity to see the sacred in the stranger was, in turn, linked with a spirituality marked by tremendous breath and openness to engaging others. Indeed, interfaith engagement represents one pathway to a broader and deeper orienting system (Patel, 2012). In this vein, Mayhew (2014) conducted a longitudinal national survey in which he linked college students’ interfaith activities with more appreciative attitudes towards other beliefs, a more pluralistic orientation toward other religions, and greater time spent reflecting upon their religious perspective in relation to those of others. This suggests that when individuals adopt a mindset of religious pluralism, faith deepens and perspective expands.

In contrast, a less whole or well-integrated orienting system is narrow and shallow. This lack of range and depth tends to cause problems for individuals and those around them. For instance, Phillips (1997) introduced the problem of “small gods” -- one-dimensional, underdeveloped representations of the sacred. Gods can become too small in many possible ways: when they are perceived as purely punitive beings lacking mercy or compassion, when they are viewed as indulgent deities that fail to challenge individuals to live better lives, when they are seen as passively removed from the affairs of this world, or when they offer love and protection only to those who affirm a particular religious identification. These limited representations of the sacred fail to equip people with the full range of resources needed to handle life’s complex problems (Pargament, 2011). Moreover, small gods can cause problems for others. Unfortunately, in the world today, there is no shortage of religious groups that define those who fall outside the protective shield of their own religious umbrella and exclusivist gods, as transgressors, ungodly, and even evil (Doehring, 2013).

Rather than being limited to any one religious group, religious exclusivism can be found among most major religious traditions, including Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. Followers of Nichiren Buddhism, for instance, believed solely in the teachings of the Lotus scripture and forcefully proselytized these beliefs in Japan during the Kamakura period (Anesaki, 1916). Another example that is salient today would be the Islamic State’s efforts to force its radical version of Islam on other people. Using meta-analysis, Hall, Matz, and Wood (2010) have shown that measures of religious exclusivism predict greater right-wing authoritarianism, which is in turn linked to greater prejudice toward out-group members such as sexual minorities (Laythe, Finkel, Bringle, & Kirkpatrick, 2002), African Americans (Brandt & Reyna, 2014) Jews (Pargament, Trevino, Mahoney, & Silberman, 2007), and Muslims (Abu-Raiya, Pargament, Mahoney, & Trevino, 2008). According to Abu-Raiya, Pargament, Mahoney, and Trevino (2011), prejudice comes from the perception of having one’s sacred values threatened by the out-group. And once others are defined as dangerous outsiders rather than fellow children of God, the stage is set for acts of violence justified in the name of the most sacred ideals. Based on content analyses of interviews with college students, Hunsberger and Jackson (2005) have also posited that people with highly exclusivist orientations tend to think less complexly about existential or religious topics, which impedes their capacity to integrate challenging experiences into their religious schemas. In this way, the prejudice and bigotry generated by exclusivist orienting systems could be explained, in part, by a narrow perspective of the sacred which can lead in turn to the inhumane treatment of those who do not believe in that same God.

**Flexible and Enduring vs. Rigid and Unstable**

Whole orienting systems are also flexible and enduring. They are able to adapt to changing environments, while maintaining a level of continuity and lasting commitment to the pursuit of significant ends (Pargament, Desai, & McConnell, 2006). Without flexibility and openness to change, the individual would be fixed and frozen, unable to learn from experience, grow, and mature. Without continuity, the individual would be subject to the whims of changing times, moods, and circumstances, disconnected from any guiding commitment that might sustain an enduring sense of identity. A study by McIntosh, Inglehart, and Pacini (1990) provides a case in point. They identified college students who scored highly on both a measure of religious flexibility and a measure of religious commitment. Compared to other religious orientations, these highly religiously flexible and committed students manifested greater well-being, better adjustment to life events, and fewer physical health symptoms. Flexible and enduring orienting systems also help generate new solutions to problems while sustaining the individual’s underlying approach to life. Religious purification, a form of religious coping, involves this type of change; the individual experiences the profound benefit of spiritual cleansing while maintaining a commitment to a religious worldview (Pargament, 1997). Consider this example from a Christian woman who spoke about her changes in faith after she was raped:

[God had] given me a chance to cleanse myself and to renew myself. …Now, after the incident I have a much, much deeper understanding of why I go to church to practice my religion. … I’m able to live my life daily in a new way, a new purpose and with so much more meaning. (de Castella & Simmonds, 2013, p. 544-547)

When stressors threaten the stability of the orienting system, flexibility and continuity help people find new ways to preserve their relationship with the sacred rather than losing faith and significance in their journey.

Orienting systems that are less whole are marked by rigidity and/or instability in the pursuit of significant goals. Religious scrupulosity provides a case in point. The problem here is a rigid spiritual system characterized by religious obsessions and compulsions. In fact, this problem has been labeled a sub-type of obsessive-compulsive disorder, marked by excessive concern with adherence to religious rules (Greenberg & Huppert, 2010). Sadly, the adherence to these rigid rules, though founded on deep commitment, is ultimately unstable for it interferes with the ability to pursue and reach the more elevated goals of spiritual life. Thus, a religious individual so concerned with the laws of religious purity (e.g., washing hands) may miss attending religious services in which he/she feels a deep connection to God. Scrupulosity has been associated with lower levels of spiritual well-being, life satisfaction, and self-esteem and higher levels of anxiety and depression (Allen & Wang, 2014; Greenberg & Huppert, 2010).

**Balanced, Cohesive, and Discerning vs Unbalanced, Incohesive, and Non-Reflective**

A great piece of music is more than a random set of notes, tempos, and volumes. A composer puts these and other elements of music together to create a work that has its own distinctive integrity and wholeness. Consider how a celebrated composer’s repertoire also fits together authentically and cohesively; a piece by Bach sounds different from a piece by Stravinsky. Composing calls for discernment on the part of the musical creator – the ability to find the right response to the right challenge in the right context at the right time. These same abilities are essential elements of a whole orienting system and wisdom (Kitchener & Brenner, 1990; Sternberg, 2004) more generally. In an orienting system of greater wholeness, the individual is able to use his/her discernment to put the diverse pieces of life together into a cohesive pattern. This can be a challenging process, given life’s competing demands: how to balance role commitments to work and family, how to integrate desires for personal autonomy and social intimacy, how to make a mark on the world while coming to terms with human limitations and finitude. Some empirical research suggests that people who are able to integrate these competing desires and demands have higher levels of well-being and less stress and depression (Ménard & Brunet, 2011; Ryan, LaGuardia, & Rawsthorne, 2005).

Balance, cohesion, and discernment are also emphasized in diverse religious traditions. In the *Serenity Prayer*, the final line (“God grant me the serenity to accept things I cannot change, Courage to change things I can, and wisdom to know the difference”) is an appeal to God for the wisdom to discern between the changeable and unchangeable aspects of one’s life. Taoist teachings are primarily concerned with harmony and balance, symbolized by the opposing *yin and yang* energies (Tzu, 2012). In fact, the Taoist practice of *tai chi,* a martial art known for its calm, meditative movements, is empirically linked with various health benefits, including psychological well-being (Wang et al., 2010), improved cognitive functioning (Wayne et al., 2014), and better sleep-quality in older adults (Du et al., 2015). Wallace and Shapiro (2006) also provide an excellent conceptualization of well-being, informed by Buddhist principles, as four types of mental balance: Conative balance is maintained through wholesome intentions that contribute to the long-term welfare of oneself and others; attentional balance is the capacity for sustained focus and awareness; cognitive balance comes from an undistorted view of the world; and affective balance is rooted in stable and appropriate emotional reactions. In addition to balance within each area, we suggest that balance among all life domains, including the spiritual, is essential to a whole orienting system. For instance, work-life balance is associated with better physical and mental health, higher levels of life and job satisfaction, and lower levels of anxiety and depression (Haar, Russo, Suñe, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2014; Lunau, Bambra, Eikemo, van der Wel, & Dragano, 2014).

In contrast, individuals with more broken orienting systems have difficulty negotiating competing demands, roles, needs, and challenges. They may lack a capacity to reflect on themselves and their lives, and as a result, are unable to succeed in pulling the disparate pieces together into a cohesive pattern. Recall the dramatic case of Robert Oxnam who, prior to treatment, was unable to integrate his different personalities into a unifying, overarching identity. Palmer (2004) described his own battle negotiating his desires for success as an academic psychologist with his more deeply felt desire to explore spirituality and well-being. For many years, he hid his “true self.” But confronted with periods of depression, Palmer engaged in reflective soul-searching and transformed his life to one more consistent with his sacred aspirations. Or consider how people can lose their balance in the religious realm, by conflating religious teachings with self-serving beliefs. One active street criminal justified his violent behavior on religious grounds, saying he’s “giving punishment to them for Jesus” (Topalli, Brezina, & Bernhardt, 2012, p. 12). Indeed, research has shown that people who are low in mindfulness tend to exhibit poorer coping mechanisms (Pepping, O’Donovan, Zimmer-Gembeck, & Hanisch, 2014) and act less ethically (Ruedy & Schweitzer, 2011). Conversely, mindfulness interventions have led to improved well-being and decreased stress in both clinical and non-clinical samples (Gu, Strauss, Bond, & Cavanagh, 2015). Through the practice of nonjudgmental focus on one’s present thoughts and emotions, individuals seem better equipped to find their inner balance.

**Benevolent and Life-Affirming vs. Non-Benevolent and Life-Limiting**

Orienting systems that are more whole are also benevolent and life-affirming. Many religious traditions describe a loving, caring God or benevolent force at play in the universe. A number of empirical studies have found clear connections between these divine beliefs and feelings, greater well-being, and lower distress (Hall & Fujikawa, 2013; Krause, Emmons, & Ironson, 2015). Conversely, negative beliefs and emotions related to God have been consistently linked with anxiety, depression, and poorer health. For instance, belief in a cruel God is predictive of greater anger at God (Exline, Grubbs, & Homolka, 2015), and people who experience more anger at God tend to be more prone to physical symptomatology and emotional distress (Exline, Park, Smyth & Carey, 2011).

Another outgrowth of the benevolent worldviews of major religious traditions is the virtue of having compassion for oneself and others. The world’s religions directly promote the virtue of benevolence in their teachings. The word *mudita*, from Buddhist philosophy, refers to the unselfish joy that arises from others’ happiness. Similarly, the *Rig Veda*, an ancient Hindu text, says “The person who is always involved in good deeds experiences incessant divine happiness.” Benevolence thrives within the large and growing number of faith-based charities around the world. Spirituality may also indirectly encourage goodwill. In an experiment that involved anonymously leaving money for a stranger, theists acted less selfishly when primed with spiritual words, such as “divine,” “sacred,” or “God” (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007). In other words, theists who are exposed to religious content tend to act in ways that benefit others rather than themselves (Shariff, Willard, Andersen, & Norenzayan, 2015).

Individuals are rewarded for the good behavior that may have been prompted in part by their spirituality. This affirmation is often experienced as “warm fuzzies,” or feelings of positivity and warmth from helping others. For example, spending money on others rather than oneself tends to make the spender happier (Dunn, Gilbert, & Wilson, 2011). Volunteer work is also associated with health and well-being, particularly among older adults (Kumar, Calvo, Avendano, Sivaramakrishnan, & Berkman, 2012; Jenkinson et al., 2013). In addition, compassion for oneself is associated with well-being and better interpersonal relationships (Neff, 2009). The spirit of benevolence is captured by the 14th Dalai Lama (1998): “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”

On the other hand, non-benevolent and life-limiting systems seem to cripple the spirit, particularly when intense feelings of guilt and shame are directed inward. Marya Hornbacher (1999) writes poignantly about how these moral emotions fueled her eating disorders:

I wanted to kill the me underneath. That fact haunted my days and nights. When you realize you hate yourself so much, when you realize that you cannot stand who you are, and this deep spite has been the motivation behind your behavior for many years, your brain can’t quite deal with it.

Such feelings, left unresolved, have strong linkages with depression (Kim, Sangmoon, Thibodeau, & Jorgensen, 2011; Zahn et al., 2015) and spiritual struggles of a moral nature (Exline et al., 2014; Murray & Ciarrocchi, 2007). More specifically, religious guilt and shame due to perceived wrongdoing are tied to suicidality (Exline, Yali, & Sanderson, 2000). Similarly, Worthington and Langberg (2012) have proposed that guilt, shame, and perceived moral failure give rise to self-condemnation. They highlight self-forgiveness as a pathway to greater wholeness, a process that involves an appeal to God, grounded in the Christian notions of boundless mercy and the inevitability of human failings. In this sense, spirituality can act as a benevolent and life-affirming force in the lives of those who bear the weight of traumatic experiences.

**Re-Orientation and the Cultivation of Wholeness through Struggles**

Our description of the elements that distinguish greater wholeness from greater brokenness may leave the impression that wholeness and the orienting system are static and unchanging. That is not the case. The movement toward wholeness is an ongoing process. And this process of change is not necessarily pain or stress-free. Stimulated in part by internal developmental transitions and by external events, major and minor, people experience times of tension, conflict, and struggle which may serve as precursors to changes in the orienting system and wholeness. Of particular importance here are spiritual struggles, defined as tensions and conflicts around sacred matters with respect to the supernatural, other people and institutions, and within oneself (Exline, 2013; Pargament, Murray-Swank, Magyar, & Ano, 2005). Spiritual struggles have to do with the most fundamental issues of life – questions of ultimate meaning, good and evil, religious doubts, intimacy, the divine and one’s relationship with a higher power (Exline et al., 2014). These struggles are fundamentally dis-orienting; they shake people to their very core. A number of studies have linked struggles in the spiritual domain to psychological, social and physical signs of distress (Exline, 2013). But distress and dis-orientation are not the end of the story.

As people struggle, they try to re-orient themselves to the challenges posed by internal transitions and external events. Although popular culture has sentimentalized the value of difficult life experiences, as we hear in statements such as “no pain, no gain” and “suffering builds character,” it must be stressed that efforts to re-orient following difficult life experiences are not necessarily successful. Some people experience only pain, suffering, and brokenness through their struggles. In this regard, higher levels of spiritual struggles have been associated with decline in immune functioning (Trevino, Pargament, Cotton, Leonard, Hahn, Caprini-Faigin, & Tsevat, 2010), increases in depression (e.g., Pirutinsky, Rosmarin, Pargament, & Midlarsky, 2011), and even greater risk of dying (Pargament, Koenig, Tarakeshwar, & Hahn, 2001).

It is true, however, that spiritual struggles can be a source of growth and greater wholeness. Fowler (1981) speaks to this point in his theory of faith development, “Growth and development in faith also result from life crises, challenges, and the kinds of disruptions theologians call revelation. Each of these brings disequilibrium and requires changes in our ways of seeing and being in faith” (pp. 100-101). Empirical studies have shown some ties between spiritual struggles and reports of growth following trauma and major life events (e.g., Gall et al., 2011; Magyar-Russell et al., 2013; Trevino et al., 2012). We suspect this growth is manifested by shifts in orienting systems that become more whole; that is, more deeply purposive, broader and deeper, more flexible, more coherent and discerning, and more benevolent and life-affirming. In support of this notion, Desai and Pargament (2015) compared college students following a period of spiritual struggle who experienced growth or decline. Those who reported greater growth were able to find greater meaning from their struggle, were able to draw on more positive religious coping resources, had a more secure relationship with God, and had integrated religion more fully into their lives.

It is important to add that the relationship between brokenness and wholeness is neither simple nor straightforward. As we noted earlier, according to most religious traditions, brokenness is part of the human condition. And there is a fluid relationship between wholeness and brokenness, as Frankel (2005) has described: “Just when things seem to be falling apart or ending, new life is often generated, and just when we think we have it all together, things often fall apart” (p. 16). Brokenness, in particular, creates opportunities for greater wholeness. Writing to this point from a spiritual perspective, Harvey (1991) said: “The heart must break to become large. . . when the heart is broken, then God can put the whole universe in it” (p. 54). The condition of brokenness then offers the potential for re-orientation, fundamental shifts in one’s approach to life that can lead even the most shattered individual toward greater wholeness.

# Applications

Translating research into practice, policy-makers and administrators can facilitate a culture of wholeness by supporting the design of programs that promote the various elements of a whole orienting system. We believe that society at large can benefit from integrating the spiritual domain more fully into helping programs. In this section, we focus on three emerging applications: psychospiritual interventions, interfaith initiatives, and holistic healthcare.

Evaluative studies indicate that interventions that address spirituality within the context of psychological interventions (i.e., spiritually integrated interventions) are at least as effective as other types of treatment (Hook et al., 2010; Pargament, 2011). These types of interventions often address various aspects of brokenness and help individuals move toward greater personal wholeness. For example, Murray-Swank’s (2003) intervention, *Solace for the Soul: A Journey Towards Wholeness*, was designed to help women who were sexually abused recover from such traumatic experiences and re-orient themselves in the search for significance. Because the trauma of abuse impacted the women spiritually as well as psychologically, socially, and physically, Solace for the Soul attended to the spiritual domain. One particular theme involved broadening clients’ images of God to include more balanced and benevolent views, such as images of a comforting, maternal God. The following meditation was incorporated into a therapy session and introduced the women to the notion of God as *The Weaver* (Foote, 1994):

*Out of the torn places, I reclaim wholeness.*

*Out of the broken places, I reclaim strength.*

*Out of the shatteredness, I reclaim power.*

*Out of the horror and the shame and the pain, I reclaim*

*Openness, innocence, courage.*

*The Weaver will not be discouraged or deterred.*

*We weave a fabric which no one’s violence will destroy,*

*And I discover the beauty of me.*

Qualitative and quantitative findings from this particular intervention suggest that participants benefitted from exploring spirituality as a coping resource (Murray-Swank & Pargament, 2005). Participants in other psychospiritual interventions have generally reported improvements in overall well-being, spiritual well-being, psychological functioning, and the use spiritual coping resources, and declines in spiritual struggles, depression, and distress (Ano, 2005; Oemig Dworsky et al., 2013; Tarakeshwar, Pearce, & Sikkema, 2005).

Interfaith initiatives represent another pathway for cultivating wholeness. As emerging adulthood is marked by an increase in spiritual questing, higher education provides an ideal platform for such endeavors (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2010). From their national study of college students’ spirituality, Astin and his colleagues in educational research have documented a wide range of positive correlates of spirituality such as higher academic performance, satisfaction with college, empathy, racial and ethnic tolerance, personal empowerment, and overall self-esteem (Astin et al., 2010; Astin et al., 2005). Furthermore, many others have advocated for the incorporation of the topic of spirituality into the classroom and student affairs work as part of holistic student development (Kiessling, 2010; Rockenbach & Mayhew, 2012). The *Interfaith Youth Core* represents one such outgrowth of this movement, providing students with leadership opportunities in building interfaith relationships on campus. Patel and Meyer (2011), leaders behind the initiative, assert that religious pluralism and interfaith cooperation are essential to counter religious intolerance and prejudice. Interfaith involvement is a promising way of broadening and deepening the orienting system to foster spiritual wholeness in the college environment.

Holistic medicine offers yet another pathway to wholeness, one which integrates the spiritual dimension into healthcare. Many patients themselves express a need for this kind of care. For example, in one study, many advanced cancer patients voiced a desire for more spiritually integrated care, with the majority reporting that that their spiritual needs were left unfulfilled (Balboni et al., 2007). Increased spiritual support at the end of life, in particular, tends to help reduce costs and increases patients’ quality of life (Balboni et al., 2007; Balboni et al., 2011). On the other hand, the lack of spiritual support is associated with increased mortality. The research by Balboni and her colleagues underscores the value of attending to the spiritual domain in the shift toward a more holistic approach to healthcare. Helping professionals in other contexts could also gain by developing spiritual competencies in their work. Psychologists, educators, social workers, and individuals involved in other caring roles would be better equipped to serve clients by attending to their spirituality. With more training and comfort in this domain, virtually any human interaction could hold the potential to facilitate an individual’s progression towards wholeness.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have focused on one critical aspect of eudaimonia, wholeness, and its relationship to holiness. As seen in the lives of Robert Oxnam, Anne Frank, Gandhi, and the Dalai Lama, there are many pathways towards wholeness, and each person’s journey is different. Wholeness does not translate into blandness or uniformity across personalities. Rather, people move toward wholeness in ways which incorporate their particular quirks, idiosyncrasies, and frailties into their orienting systems. Orienting systems of greater wholeness are deeply purposive, broad and deep, flexible and enduring, balanced, cohesive, and discerning, and benevolent and life-affirming. More broken, dis-oriented systems, in contrast, are aimless, narrow and shallow, rigid and unstable, imbalanced, incohesive, and non-reflective, and non-benevolent and life-limiting. We have also focused our attention particularly on ways that spirituality can facilitate both wholeness and brokenness. When the power of spirituality is harnessed for good, it promotes the ingredients of wholeness and well-being. Yet spirituality can also be expressed in ways that lead to greater brokenness. Even so, brokenness is not necessarily the last chapter of the story. Spiritual struggles and the problems that ensue can lead to fundamental re-orientation and subsequent transformation and growth toward greater wholeness over time. Finally, we highlighted some ways spirituality can facilitate greater wholeness through various applications in the areas of psychospiritual interventions, interfaith initiatives in higher education, and holistic healthcare.

Thinking of wholeness as a key dimension of well-being does add some complexity to our jobs as researchers and practitioners. As we have described it here, wholeness is a dynamic, multi-dimensional, and multi-layered construct. But the concept of wholeness is also one that resonates with efforts to understand and improve people’s lives in all of their richness and fullness. Furthermore, it is difficult to speak of wholeness without attending to spirituality; wholeness and holiness are intimately related. Thus, any attempt to cultivate wholeness that overlooks the spiritual dimension, we believe, is likely to be incomplete. Our take-home point is this: wholeness and holiness are important elements of eudaimonia and deserve further attention from researchers and practitioners.

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