

DISCUSSION ONE

Prior to beginning work on this discussion, review the [Cover Letters PDF](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. provided by the Ashford University Office of Career Services and the [What Is a Cover Letter?](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. and [Writing the Dreaded Cover Letter](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. online resources. It is recommended that you also review the e-book by Noble (2004) and the [How to write cover letters \(examples\)](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. video which include more information and a number of sample cover letters to assist you.

For this discussion post, you will use the knowledge you have gained about personality, the career specific reports you have created in the previous weeks' discussions, and assessments associated with various fields of psychology you have studied to help you to choose and develop a cover letter for a job in the human services sector. To begin, determine what type of job within the human services sector related to personality psychology is of interest to you. Using career websites, including those listed on the [Ashford Career Services Job Search](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. website, and/or other third-party search engines such as the American Psychological Association's [PsycCareers](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. website, [Monster.com](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site., [Indeed.com](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site., and [SimplyHired.com](#) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.. Once you have found a suitable job posting, carefully review the requirements and note these for inclusion in your cover letter. Before you begin designing your cover letter, review the required readings, videos, and websites to help you determine how best to formulate it. Within the letter, you will address the person or title of the person that is listed as the contact for the job in the job posting. As you draft your cover letter, consider the elements within the job post and use your knowledge of personality theory to make yourself appear to be the best candidate for the job. Assess the various types of personality measurements that might be most effective in the position listed and mention how you might use these on the job. Once you have developed your letter, save it as a document and attach it to your discussion post. In the discussion post itself, copy and paste the link to the job posting for which you wrote your cover letter. Describe your experience(s) writing the cover letter including the ways in which you may have attempted to manipulate the reader to get the best response. Analyze and describe any ethical issues that could be associated with this process.



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Cover Letters

The purpose of a cover letter is to communicate to a potential employer why you are the best Candidate for the position based on your skills, education, and experience. Cover letters are generally three to four paragraphs long and should be tailored to the position you are seeking. Some employers use cover letters to determine your ability to write.

Please follow the steps below to prepare for writing your cover letter:

Step 1

Review the job description and highlight important skills and qualifications the employers are seeking.

Step 3

Pick 3 to 4 skills you possess that the employer is seeking and emphasize them in the cover letter.

Step 2

Write down the skills you possess that match the skills they are seeking.

Step 4

Give an example of where you used or obtained your three skills from your resume.

Sample Cover Letter

1. List your contact information.

Your name
Address

Today's Date

2. List the information for the employer you are contacting.

Company Name
Address

3. Address a person by name whenever possible.

Dear (Name of Recruiter/ Hiring Manager),

4. Tell them why you are writing and demonstrate some knowledge of their company.

I am excited to apply to the Association Membership Administration position with XYZ company, which was located on Indeed.com. It would be an honor to work for an organization that is so dedicated to improving health care and staying abreast to the latest research. Given my health care education and background, I feel I can make a positive contribution to XYZ organization.

5. Using your three skills and examples, tell them why you are qualified for the position.

In 2010, I completed my Bachelor of Arts degree in Health Care Studies from Ashford University. Through my undergraduate experience, I was able to obtain a tremendous amount of knowledge regarding the US health care system and current obstacles and challenges the Health care industry is facing.

6. Thank them for their time and tell them what you want to happen next.

As the Program Coordinator at Memorial Hospital, I regularly built relationships with both internal and external customers. In addition to relationship building, I honed my database management skills while serving as an Administrative Assistant at GE. In this role, I utilized PeopleSoft to manage clients' information.

I would like the opportunity to discuss this position and my qualifications in further detail. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Jane M. Doe



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Spotlight Resource

Jun. 17, 2019: School may be out for summer, but OWL developers are still hard at work! Enjoy **our now-completed World Englishes subsection** ([/entity/open.act?type=page&id=4b2eda25ac1e8ce111b5199c5e8d354a&confId=7d51ec6bac1e8cdd70e85885556c15d1](#)) (care of grad student Shyam Panday). These pages provide theoretical foundations, real-world examples, and practical classroom applications of World Englishes concepts, making them a great read for teachers.

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Katharine Brooks Ed.D.
Career Transitions

Writing the Dreaded Cover Letter

Even confident job seekers find cover letters daunting.

Posted Apr 06, 2011

I've written other posts about writing challenges connected to the job search: how [writing anxiety can affect the job search](#) and how [writing samples](#) add another layer of challenge to the job seeker. But of all the writing-related activities of the job search, the one task most universally hated is the cover letter. It seems to cause [anxiety](#) for many otherwise well-qualified job seekers. And there's a reason for that: it's not an easy document to write. You have to find a way to appeal to the employer, summarize your key strengths relevant to the position, convey your [personality](#), express your interest, and differentiate yourself from every other candidate- and all in one page. Oh, that's all? It's no wonder that many put it off.

Part of the problem seems to be that many people do not view themselves as writers. Or at least good writers. They didn't like writing essays in school, and now that they are confronted with a writing assignment that won't result in a grade but rather a job, their anxiety level increases dramatically. And cover letter writing, like resume writing, is a unique form of writing. It is essentially a [marketing](#) piece or a sales pitch-- not the type of writing even most professional writers do with ease. It requires a lot of thought.

I've helped thousands of individuals write cover letters, and I find that they struggle with virtually all elements of it: whether it's the opening sentence, targeting it to the position, or finding a way to convey personality without appearing forced. Many people just freeze at the first sentence. Writing blocks and writing anxiety kick in.

So I'm going to spend the next two blog posts on crafting the cover letter. This post presents 10 guidelines for writing cover letters. The second post deals with the [value of a SWOT analysis to construct your letter](#).

So what's the point of a cover letter? The cover letter, done right, is actually a valuable opportunity for the job seeker to convey information and start a relationship with the employer. The cover letter is less restrictive than a resume (you can use the word "I", for instance), and it gives you the opportunity to highlight your most important features to an employer. You can explain aspects of your background that might raise questions (such as gaps in employment or lack of a specific degree), you can convey personality traits (resumes are notoriously dry and fact-filled), and you can entice the employer to want to meet you.

As we shift increasingly to social media, email, and other technical approaches to the job search, some experts have questioned [whether a cover letter is even needed](#) anymore. While its use or format may be morphing, it's still an important document in the process. There will always be some employers who say they don't need to see a cover letter-but in general you should assume that you will need to write one. And, as hard as this may be to digest, consider finding a way to welcome this opportunity to display your talents.

So... here are 10 basic guidelines for a cover letter. Violate them at your own risk.

1. Use proper business letter format. Make sure you include the date, the name and address of the person/organization you're sending it to, etc. Use a colon after "Dear Mr. _____:" (commas are for personal correspondence). Here is a great site for proper business correspondence style from [Purdue's Online Writing Lab](#).

remind you-- I'm in higher education. In the business world, keep it to one page. And particularly when your cover letter is written as an email to accompany your attached resume, keep it short and simple. (But not just "Here's my attached resume. I look forward to hearing from you." You don't get off that easy even in an email. Sorry.)

3. Write unique content. The cover letter is a chance to tell your story, to demonstrate some personality, display your communication skills, and highlight your strengths. It is not the place to simply repeat everything that is in your resume.

4. Remember how your English teacher always said to "show, don't tell"? What she meant was: don't just say "I'm a hard worker" (that's telling); show the reader you're a hard worker, as in "Last summer, while working at a full-time job, I successfully completed 6 hours of graduate coursework in accounting, and developed a prospectus for a new business." See, now you've shown me you're a hard worker.

5. Establish a relationship with your reader. To whom are you writing? As I like to say to students: if you're writing a report on dogs, it's helpful to know if your reader is a veterinarian or in the 3rd grade. Big difference in how you approach the subject. So, who will be reading your cover letter? Someone in the human resources office? (Likely.) Your future boss? (Also likely.) Someone with no understanding of your field? (Possibly.) For this reason, you need to be careful about using jargon or acronyms from your previous or current employer.

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6. Write a targeted letter to each position. The failure to personalize it to the job and/or the employer is by far the most common complaint I hear from employers. Employers resent it when they receive what is obviously a generic cover letter where the candidate hasn't taken the time to personalize it to them (as in, "Dear Sir or Madam:"). Almost as bad is the letter which starts out personally addressed to the employer but quickly digresses into an obviously generic letter.

I once posted a position for a career counselor in my office. I received many applications ranging from a former military officer who spent a paragraph describing his sharpshooting skills (I'm very glad he served in our military, but generally I don't need sharpshooting skills in my office), a person who spent a paragraph describing her religious beliefs and how much she enjoys teaching Sunday School classes (again, I'm glad she enjoys what she does-- but not an issue for my office either), and a high school counselor who described in great detail her client load of pregnant teenagers.

Here's the mistake they all made: they didn't make the connections for me. They wasted valuable space on their letters describing details that were irrelevant to the position. And they made no effort to connect their experience to my position or organization. For instance: What if the sharpshooter had written something like "In the military, I honed skills which required great patience, accuracy, and focus"; or had the Sunday school teacher written, "I developed lesson plans targeted to the age of my students, and designed to increase knowledge and encourage discussion"; or the high school counselor written "I work with students who are under pressure, and have to make challenging life decisions every day"? Those kinds of statements would show to me that they understand that they are not going to be doing what they've done before in this new job, that they have more

ARTICLE CONTINUES AFTER ADVERTISEMENT

7. Plan to create a letter with three-to-five paragraphs (two-to-four if it's an email). The first paragraph should explain what you're applying for, how you heard about the opportunity, and why you are particularly qualified. Try to be subtle about this-- a letter that opens with "I am the most qualified candidate you will find..." usually ends up in the trash. The employer will judge whether you're the most qualified: you need to convey what talents or experience you have that connect to the position. The middle paragraphs expand on your connection to the position as well as highlight any research you've done about the opportunities the position and the employer represent to you. The last paragraph closes with the next action step that will be taken and how you can connect in the future.

8. Try to avoid trite phrases. I always advise my students NOT to start with the traditional opening, "I am a student at _____ and I am applying for a position as _____." Rather, start with something that connects you right away to the position, as in "My three years experience as a bank teller, combined with my economics coursework, have taught me the importance of _____, a trait needed in your _____ position."

9. Use an active voice, with action verbs. Avoid phrases like "was responsible for", or "reports that were written by me..."

10. Edit. Proofread. Ruthlessly.

For more help with your cover letter, check out my blog post on [Cover Letter Writing Strategy](#).

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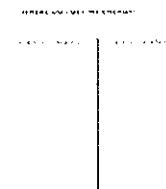
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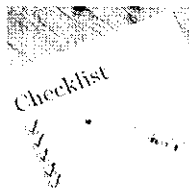
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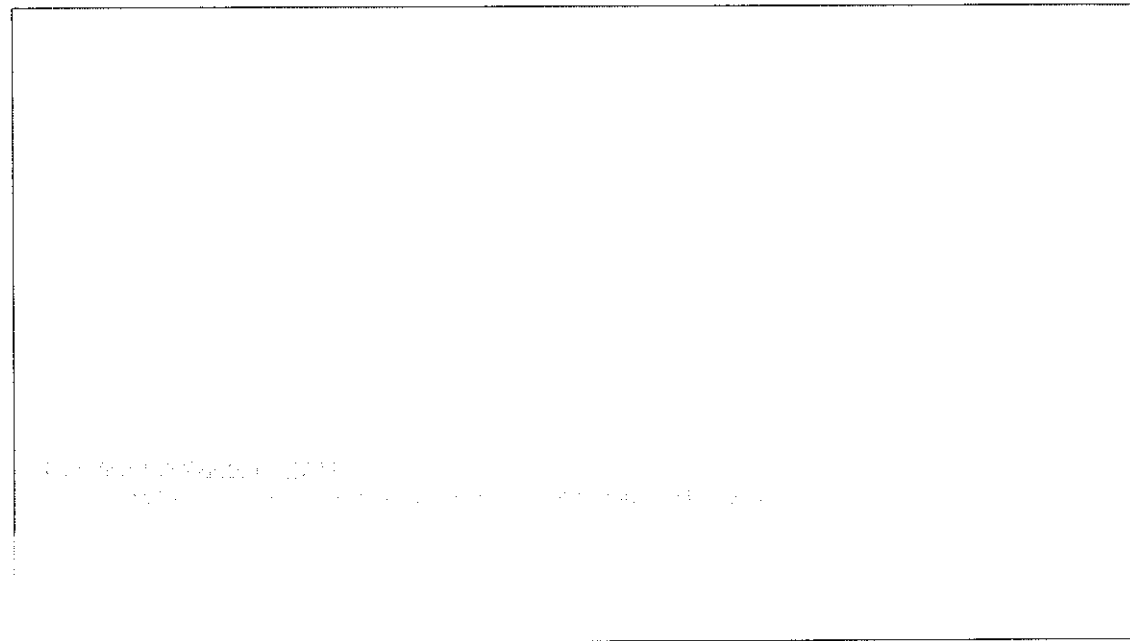
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DISCUSSION TWO

Prior to beginning work on this discussion, please read the required Churchill and Mruk (2014), Hayes (2012), and Waterman (2013) articles, and review the APA's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. and Chapters 14 through 17 in your textbook.

For this discussion, you will choose a person who has an important presence in popular media today. This person might be a political, business, human rights, education, or entertainment figure. Examine the major theoretical approaches studied in the class so far (psychodynamic, behavioral, learning, trait and type, and humanistic). Briefly describe your chosen figure's personality from the point of view of each of these five approaches. Evaluate and describe any cultural considerations which may affect the personality assessment within each of the given approaches. Analyze the ethical implications of basing your personality assessment on the information available through the popular media. Select the theoretical approach you think best describes the person and elaborate on his or her personality using this approach.

psychologists but seem not to trouble positive psychologists. He similarly argued that they differ in their epistemology because their adherents read separate literatures. Last, Waterman argued that their approaches to practical applications differ in that humanistic psychotherapies typically emphasize the value of working in the present, while positive psychotherapies typically emphasize using specific intervention techniques. Even if any of these generalizations might be true or somewhat true, how would they demonstrate irreconcilable differences rather than, more simply, just differences?

In fact, his last argument of irreconcilable differences pertaining to practical applications is especially curious, as Waterman (2013) illustrated his point with a specific intervention favored by positive psychology, namely, promoting mindfulness. However, focusing on experience in the present, which he attributed to humanistic psychology, is essentially the same as using mindfulness techniques (Friedman, 2010). There are other contradictions mentioned by Waterman, such as his linking the notion of a "true self" with positive psychology—and arguing that humanistic psychologists would reject this construct. In fact, the conjecture of a true self is central to many humanistic psychology theories (e.g., Friedman, 1983) and something I think most positive psychologists would, instead of accepting, soundly reject. In his discussion of the true self, Waterman argued that integrating the humanistic and positive psychology perspectives would require reconciling in ways seldom attempted, as if rarity supports the contention that these are irreconcilable. Likewise, Waterman dismissed reconciling qualitative and quantitative research, despite admitting that they are complementary, by arguing that few psychology research efforts employ mixed methods, which again does not support that humanistic and positive psychology are incommensurate. Perhaps Waterman's clinching argument is that an integration of the two would require a desire on the part of humanistic and positive psychology researchers to address issues relevant to both sides of their divide. Once more, this surely does not support his central contention of an incommensurable divide, and, as a counterexample, I might mention that much of my recent research (e.g., Needham-Penrose & Friedman, 2012) has specifically been oriented to bridging this rift.

In conclusion, Waterman (2013) has provided some broad-brush generalizations about differences between humanistic psychology and positive psychology, many of which do not hold in all cases, and he has pointed out some difficulties that would be involved in reconciling them. However, he has not presented any convincing argument that the two are irreconcilable. Essentially,

Waterman has confounded difficulties with impossibilities by concluding these are incommensurate. Worse, the founding of positive psychology involved a political agenda in attacking its own precursor, and this article subtly continues that founding tradition. In contrast, humanistic psychology has tried to be conciliatory in the face of the lambasting given it by positive psychology, as exemplified by the plea of a prominent humanistic psychologist in an article aptly subtitled "Why Can't We Just Get Along?" (Schneider, 2011). Although Waterman proclaimed that humanistic and positive psychology should abandon hope for any reconciliation and, instead, should operate as independent silos, he offered only evidence that bringing them together would have some difficulties. I have argued elsewhere in great detail how these difficulties could be surmounted (e.g., Friedman, 2008, 2013), and in examining many of the same concerns as Waterman did, I drew the opposite conclusion, namely, that humanistic and positive psychology are commensurate and, for a variety of reasons, should be reconciled.

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DOI: 10.1037/a0034868

Practicing What We Preach in Humanistic and Positive Psychology

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After presenting his assessment and some evidence concerning what may be understood as an insurmountable divide between them, Alan Waterman (April 2013) concluded that it is best for humanistic and positive psychologists to "look for those occasions on which mutual benefit is possible, and get on with respective projects, with as few recriminations as possible coming from either side" (p. 131). Although such a recommendation may be preferable to some alternatives, there are at least two problems with this position. One is that there is more evidence for an optimistic conclusion than meets the eye in the Waterman article, and the other is that such a decidedly pessimistic position runs the risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It is true that the logical positivism underlying positive psychology is clearly and irrevocably at odds with the existential-phenomenological foundations of the humanistic position in their most radical or pure forms. However, it can also be argued that such differences largely occur at the theoretical level rather than at applied levels. Although the early founders of positive psychology took an unfortunately dismissive stance toward their humanistic forebears (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), what can be called "second-generation" positive psychologists are much more open to genuine dialogue with humanistic psychology (Mruk, 2013). For example, positive psychologists Linley and Joseph (2004) reached a conclusion very different from Waterman's when they wrote,

Humanistic psychology is a broad church, and there are parts of it we would not recognize as positive psychology; but in our view, the ideas of the main humanistic psychology writers . . . deserve to be set center stage within positive psychology. Theirs was an empirical stance, explicitly research based. . . . We ought to respect this lineage, and we encourage those who are not familiar with this earlier work to visit it. (p. 365)

Similarly, although there certainly are humanistic and existential psychologists who sharply distinguish their work from the log-

ical positivism that underlies positive psychology (Taylor, 2001), there are a good number of us who actively welcome integrations of qualitative and quantitative methods in our work in order to better achieve our knowledge aims.

Contemporary humanistic psychologists have made a sincere effort to enter into dialogue with positive psychologists, not only in our division programming, but also in the content of our publications. For example, since 2007 the American Psychological Association's Division 32 journal *The Humanistic Psychologist* has published 12 articles devoted to a dialogue with positive psychology, which represents a respectable 10% of its article content. Two special issues devoted entirely to the interface between humanistic and positive psychologists have appeared (Vol. 36, No. 2, and Vol. 37, No. 1), in which one of the guest editors explicitly invited an open, friendly exchange, acknowledging that the editor-in-chief of the journal had "expressed . . . our great obligation to set the right tone to genuinely foster the possibility of more conversation among humanistic and positive psychologists" (Robbins, 2008, p. 108). Waterman's (2013) cautionary note that there is little evidence of interest on either side "to expand common ground" may therefore be more a reflection of personal opinion than a "philosophic divide" (p. 131).

There has been a noticeable increase in research and work on research methodology in contemporary humanistic psychology; thus Waterman's (2013) assertion that "the five [sic] decades of work on humanistic psychology" has now "waned" (p. 131) is more than questionable. The American humanistic movement began in the late 1930s; and, even if we have often been presumed by others to be "holders-on" to the legacy of our founding fathers, it has been our work in recent decades to forge ahead with an expanding philosophical foundation (which currently includes hermeneutics, social constructionism, and feminist orientations in addition to classical humanism and phenomenology), with implications for becoming better service providers to those in need (see, e.g., Sass, Parnas, & Zahavi, 2011). In a review conducted of the past seven years of published articles in *The Humanistic Psychologist*, there were 49 articles (42%) reporting research and another 18 (or 15%) on research methodology, with several special "Methods" issues that have been devoted exclusively to research and methodology. Waterman (2013) was correct in observing that humanistic psychologists "are associated with the extensive and rigorous use of qualitative methodologies" (p. 128). However, research methods in humanistic psy-

chology are now, as they always have been, pluralistic. In the aforementioned sample, 69.3% of the research articles were qualitative, 16.3% were quantitative, and 14.3% used mixed methods. Thus, with over 30% of our research articles utilizing quantitative methods, it is not reasonable to view humanistic psychologists as being too tied to our philosophical foundations to show interest in the "nomological" objectives of positive psychology.

With regard to philosophical foundations, Waterman's (2013) presentation significantly misrepresented both the current and past ontological and epistemological foundations of humanistic psychology. Two very important issues require clarification: the characterization of the ontological foundation as irremediably individualistic, and the implication drawn from this that it is not possible to know (or even communicate effectively with) other people from the existential epistemological standpoint, which presumably would limit us to "individual isolation and aloneness" (p. 127). With regard to the first point, Waterman exaggerated the relationship of humanistic psychology to the French existential writers Sartre and Camus. More troubling, he mischaracterized phenomenological philosophy (he named Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty—to which we would add Levinas) as hopelessly individualistic because of a presumed inherent solipsism built into its ontological foundation. On the contrary, we refer the reader here to the *Handbook of Humanistic Psychology* (soon to appear in a revised 2014 edition) for ample references to the consistent emphasis on human sociality and therapeutic communion that would disavow such views.

A hallmark of phenomenology is its fundamental emphasis on *relationality*, beginning with Heidegger's early lectures on Aristotle, in which he argued vehemently against the Cartesian starting point taken by other philosophers (including positivists) and in favor of a "relational" philosophy that would direct us toward those aspects of human existence that are always already grounded in "caring" and "encounter" (Heidegger, 1921–1922/2001, pp. 61–97). Husserl himself wrote thousands of pages on intersubjectivity, portions of which were published in the three volumes known as his "Intersubjectivity Papers" (Husserl, 1973). The works of Husserl and Heidegger on the fundamentally relational, intersubjective dimension of human experience have informed the later phenomenological ethics of Levinas, which emphasize human responsibility and accountability to others. Finally, Merleau-Ponty's ontological reflections on "expression," "institu-

tion," and "history" would preclude any slippage into isolationism, and his concept of "the body as speech" further recognizes that communication between persons happens quite spontaneously and is not hampered by existential isolation.

In closing, it is possible to make two points worth consideration within the constraints of this comment. One is that shared interests, a growing dialogue, and cooperative attitudes between the two approaches will allow for a more fruitful future than the one that results from a distorting lens focused on philosophical, paradigmatic, and historical commitments. Second, being convinced that there is little likelihood of success in reaching across such borders is far more likely to create a self-defeating cycle—in contrast to the more virtuous process associated with a genuinely positive stance. Waterman's (2013) conclusion would keep humanistic psychologists locked in their past, as if their contributions were forever limited to those of the first generation of humanistic luminaries. On the contrary, the humanistic psychology movement continues to grow by enlarging its dialogue not only with the phenomenological and hermeneutic philosophies but also with the ongoing developments in transpersonal, feminist, constructivist, and mainstream psychological thought.

With a largely backward glance cast toward humanistic psychology's early successes, Waterman's (2013) article concluded by turning toward positive psychology's "vibrant" future and pointed to irreconcilable differences that would limit further dialogue between the two fields. From our perspective, such an assessment results in premature closure on the relationship between the two subdisciplines, as we in the humanistic tradition continue to appreciate and place our trust in the power of dialogue. Psychologists on both sides of this epistemological boundary might therefore benefit from focusing on the possibilities offered by an interface between the two approaches rather than on a divide that is far more likely to push us apart.

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DOI: 10.1037/a0034852

Humanistic and Positive Psychology Need Each Other, and to Advance, Our Field Needs Both

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Alan Waterman's (April 2013) article on "The Humanistic Psychology–Positive Psychology Divide" is an illuminating contribution that will be reviewed and debated for years to come. I am appreciative of Waterman for raising key questions about the respective worldviews of humanistic and positive psychology and their potential for rapprochement.

That said, I think Waterman's (2013) conclusion that both perspectives are better off pursuing their own independent agendas is a short-sighted one that is likely to have debilitating, if not dire, effects on the future of our profession. As I have proposed in a series of books and articles on this topic (Schneider, 1998,

2008, 2011a, 2011b), contemporary existential-humanistic psychology is a "broad band" purview that draws from and is informed by many "narrower band" methods, theories, and aspirations. These latter tend to focus on human beings' relationships with their physiology, behavior, and cognition but rarely on their fuller experience of living. While no one of course has a "lock" on the constituents of this fuller experience of living, it can be said with confidence that through its methods, theories, and practices, existential-humanistic psychology aspires to apprehend not just our relationship to our physical bodies, outward behaviors, and intellectual operations but our relationship to existence as a whole, which includes much more than overt and mathematically measurable "variables."

In this light, I'm gravely concerned that too many in our field are equating the quantitative-experimental findings of positive psychology with the qualitative-experiential realities of living and that broader and deeper elements are not being taken into account (Robbins & Friedman, 2008; Schneider, 2011b). For example, we know from the findings of posttraumatic growth and depressive realism research that trial and despair appear to be as integral to well-being as optimism and positive self-appraisals (e.g., see Alloy & Abramson, 1979; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). We also know that trial and despair are central to existential-humanistic and qualitative depictions of the vital life. Yet when one scans the positive psychology literature on trial and despair, one finds a strongly contrasting bias—and hence the basis for the term "positive" psychology. Doesn't it follow then that we should reassess the value of segregating existential-humanistic from positive psychology? Doesn't it follow that we should look as closely as possible at converging lines of qualitative and quantitative data—particularly when it comes to a topic as vast and complex as "well-being"?

I believe so and that there are many ways for existential-humanistic and positive psychology researchers to collaborate. Just as qualitative and quantitative researchers have collaborated in the past (e.g., see Wertz, 2001), existential-humanistic and positive psychology researchers can coalesce to delineate the optimal portraits of human flourishing—contingent on questions asked and aspirations sought.

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DOI: 10.1037/a0034966

Further Reflections on the Humanistic Psychology–Positive Psychology Divide

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The article I wrote (Waterman, April 2013) contrasting humanistic psychology and positive psychology with respect to their ontological, epistemological, and practical philosophical foundations has generated commentaries from leading proponents of varying perspectives within humanistic psychology. There is a great deal of material within those commentaries with which I am in full accord. It is worth noting at the outset that no one appears to be challenging my observations (a) that published exchanges between proponents of humanistic and positive psychology have been marked by tension and

Humanistic Psychology and Contextual Behavioral Perspectives

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Humanistic psychology historically defined itself in part by its opposition to behavioral psychology, but the conditions now exist for a fundamental reconsideration of the relationship between these two traditions. Behavioral psychology includes contextualistic variants and is no longer limited to principles drawn from animal learning. Behavioral and cognitive therapies commonly address humanistic topics and have developed process accounts that cast new light on them. In that context, a reconsideration of this relationship could prove to be beneficial for both traditions.

Keywords: humanistic psychology, behavioral psychology, contextualism, acceptance and commitment therapy, contextual CBT, common factors

On the surface, the historical division between humanistic approaches and the behavioral and cognitive therapies is substantial. Humanistic psychology originally *defined* itself to a degree by its opposition to behavioral psychology and psychoanalysis (thus the term “third force”). To this day, entities such as the Association for Humanistic Psychology explain humanism in this way (e.g., <http://www.ahpweb.org/aboutahp>).

Humanistic psychologists thought the behavioral wing was uniformly mechanistic, while humanism was holistic and contextualistic: “mechanistic science (which in psychology takes the form of behaviorism) [is] too narrow and limited to serve as a general or comprehensive philosophy” (Maslow, 1966, p. 3). Behaviorism supposedly focused entirely on a passive organism responding to external contingencies, or input-output explanations drawn entirely from animal learning, while humanism dealt with an active organism that was different in many ways from nonhuman animals, particularly, in the area of cognition (Maslow, 1966). Humanistic psychology emphasized existential and interpersonal themes such as meaning, purpose, values, choice, spirituality, self-acceptance, and self-actualization—all of which were thought to be beyond the reach of behavioral psychology.

From the beginning, there were functional and contextual strands of behavioral thinking that understood the importance of these topics and sought greater integration, but opportunities were missed, and the ones that occurred were unappreciated. The founder of the journal *Behaviorism*, Willard Day, overtly sought reconciliation between radical behaviorism and phenomenology (Day, 1969). Most present day Gestalt therapists would find it incomprehensible that the coauthor who contributed the extensive personal and applied exercises (see Perls introduction, p. viii) to the original book on *Gestalt Therapy* (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951) was Ralph Hefferline, an experimental psychology faculty member at Columbia and a rat running radical behaviorist in the Skinnerian tradition (Knapp, 1986). For reasons that are easy to understand today, Hefferline objected to the label “Gestalt,”

preferring the term “Integrative Therapy” (Shepard, 1975, p. 63), but integration was not the order of the day and the two traditions stood far apart for decades.

Today, a fundamental realignment is underway between the behavioral tradition and humanistic psychology. Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) researchers now routinely test and develop methods that are explicitly based on humanistic psychology (e.g., Motivational Interviewing, Miller & Rollnick, 2002). However, the realignment goes deeper than that. A large set of acceptance, mindfulness, and values-based methods have emerged from within CBT that deal extensively with topics classically embraced by humanistic psychology (ironically this set of methods are often called “third wave” CBT, Hayes, 2004, but we will use the less confusing term “contextual CBT,” Hayes, Villatte, Levin, & Hildebrandt, 2011). These include Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT: Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (Linehan, 1993), and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002), among many other methods (Hayes, Villatte et al., 2011). Some parts of this change are linked to developments in behavioral thinking itself that hold out hope for a more transformational dialogue between humanism and behaviorism. That seems most surprisingly true of the ACT tradition (surprising because it emerged from behavior analysis), which is why I will emphasize that corner of CBT in my comments.

Philosophical Similarities Between Humanism and the Contextual Behavioral Perspectives

Humanistic psychology views itself as holistic and contextualistic, but there are strong holistic and contextualistic perspectives within behavioral thinking as well. This was always true (Day and Hefferline are examples) but it was invisible to those outside of the behavioral tradition, and historically it was controversial to those within it. As the contextualistic qualities of some behavioral perspectives have become clearer and that wing has become more ascendant, a reconsideration of the relationship with humanism is a natural next step.

The core analytic unit of all forms of contextualism is the ongoing act-in-context: the situated action of the whole person

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(Pepper, 1942). It is doing as it is being done, in both a historical and situational context, such as going to the store, or trying to be understood. Actions of that kind are inherently holistic and purposive—actions are defined by their purpose and meaning—which provides the philosophical background for the importance of topics such as meaning, purpose, needs, goals, and values to humanistic psychology.

The landscape changes once it is realized that this holds true for scientists themselves (see Skinner, 1945 for a classic example). Scientists too have a history, they too act in a context, and they too have goals and values for their scientific work. For that reason, there are varieties of scientific contextualism, organized and defined by their goals and purposes (Hayes, Hayes, Reese, & Sarbin, 1993).

The most common forms of contextualism are all *descriptive*—they seek an appreciation of the participants in a meaningful whole (Hayes, 1993). Choice, goals, meaning, narrative, and purpose are common themes to humanistic psychologists in part because these are features that define and help form the wholeness of human action. This yearning for appreciation of key participants in the whole is reflected in the way that existentialists seek to understand how a whole human being faces a meaningless world and by choice creates meaning amid despair, anxiety, and nothingness; or in the way that Rogerians explore the client's capacity for self-direction and integration.

However, if goals are a choice, contextualists can choose other goals, and what emerges from a scientific analysis may differ among contextualists if their goals are different. There is a functional contextual wing of behavioral thinking that reveals this possibility (Hayes, Hayes, & Reese, 1988). Functional contextualism has as its goal the prediction-and-influence of psychological events with precision, scope, and depth (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011). Skinner claimed that the purposes of science were prediction and control as if this is an objective fact (1953, p. 14 and p. 35) but that way of speaking is dogmatic. His purposes were to predict and influence psychological events. Once that is put right, the natural alliance of functional and descriptive contextualism can better be explored (see Hayes et al., 1993 for a book length exercise of that kind). The possibility of different purposes is built into contextual thinking. What is key to successful communication among contextualistic psychologists is that truth be seen as matter of the accomplishment of purpose rather than a matter of ontology, and that differing goals be made clear.

Clinically, all forms of contextualism focus on local meaning and purpose. This posture helps the clinician let go of grand ontological claims more generally and thus any need to force clients into a particular world view. The client's purposes and values are the metric for clinical work. There is no need to struggle over who is "right"—the point is to empower clients to pursue their deepest needs and values by bringing curiosity and creativity to how they deal with their own history and circumstance. The client's natural analytic agenda (understanding for an active purpose) can become the clinician's—a process that fosters alliance building and the centrality of the therapeutic relationship. This paragraph applies with equal force to functional contextualists, such as those in the ACT tradition and some other wings of contextual CBT, as it does to descriptive contextualists such as those in the humanistic tradition and for a simple reason: there is a large philosophical overlap between the two. As it applies to

clients, there is no a priori reason to think that functional contextualists are disadvantaged as compared to descriptive forms: after all, clients themselves generally want to influence behavior.

Human Language and Cognition

If that is correct, then why has it taken so long for a natural alliance to be explored? Part of it was that humanists mistook *some* of the behavioral tradition to be *all* of the behavioral tradition. There is a wing of behavioral psychology that is indeed mechanistic, but that is not universally true and only those within the tradition would be likely know the difference due to overlap in technical terminology.

The larger part, however, was a problem with behavioral psychology itself: even the more contextualistic wings could not meaningfully address language and cognition at the time when humanistic psychology was being formed. Without a way of addressing human cognition, core concerns of humanistic psychology are simply incomprehensible. Behavioral principles derived from nonhuman animals are not alone an adequate basis to explore meaning, purpose, values, choice, spirituality, self-acceptance, and self-actualization. In the 1960s, even that statement would be controversial within behavioral psychology, but for most behavioral psychologists today, it would not.

Within mainstream CBT, it certainly would not, as traditional CBT has embraced a variety of cognitive perspectives. In the main, these have *not* been drawn from informational processing or cognitive science (much of which is mechanistic), but rather from clinical theories of cognition. The specific theories vary but few have any principled reluctance to deal with meaning and purpose or similar topics.

Perhaps, the more interesting case is clinical behavior analysis and ACT, because it has stayed attached to the same tradition that was originally based entirely on animal learning and that was pushed against by early humanistic psychologists. Reconsidering the relationship in this case is possible because behavioral psychology did not stop developing in the 1960s. ACT is based on a behavioral theory of cognition that has become among the most commonly researched basic behavior analytic theories of human action: Relational Frame Theory (RFT; Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, & Roche, 2001).

RFT can be rather arcane, and it is impossible to address in any detail here due to the length and purpose of this piece, but clinically accessible books on it are now available for interested readers (e.g., Torneke, 2010). According to RFT, the essential core of language and higher cognition is the learned ability to derive mutual and combinatorial relations among events, and to change the functions of events on that basis. If a reader was told that X is bigger than Y and Y is bigger than Z, that would be enough to derive an entire network of relations between X, Y, and Z. If Z was now paired with shock, X would produce much *more* emotional arousal than Z itself, due to the cognitive relation between X and Z rather than direct experience (Dougher, Hamilton, Fink, & Harrington, 2007 provides an experimental demonstration). Said in another way, human language and cognition *changes* how direct learning principles operate. Several studies have shown that we learn to derive relations of this kind, but once learned human beings live in a radically different psychological world—as humanists have claimed right along.

Consider, for example, how human cognition alters the effect of the consequences of action. A person who has been criticized, attacked, or jailed because of their struggle for social justice may not react to painful consequences as a nonverbal animal might. The attacks might remind the person even more of the extent of injustice that exists; pain might create even more empathy regarding the suffering of the downtrodden; staying true to values may provide meaning and dignity to imprisonment; and so on. In other words, the effects of pain and struggle can be transformed by our psychological ability to formulate an if . . . then relation between actions and consequences, such as the possibility of a more just world.

The core ideas behind RFT have received empirical support in a rapidly growing literature encompassing well over 100 studies (for recent book length treatments see Hayes et al., 2001; McHugh & Stewart, in press; Rehfeldt & Barnes-Holmes, 2009; Torneke, 2010). Humanistic psychologists might rightly feel vindicated by such changes in the behavioral tradition but reaching this agreement through a slow step-by-step inductive research program means that behavioral allies do not come to the table empty handed. Behavioral psychology now has a greater understanding of experimentally based principles and processes that in turn can be used to examine some of the key questions of interest to humanistic psychologists.

The Contextual CBT Consensus: Open, Aware, and Engaged

In a recent review of the entire range of contextual CBT methods (Hayes, Villatte et al., 2011), we found three common threads in terms of methods and purposes. Almost all of them included methods to promote greater emotional and cognitive openness; to increase mindful awareness of the present moment; and to promote more meaningful or values-based behavioral engagement. The ACT wing has a name for this collection: psychological flexibility. Inflexibility seems to be becoming a *de facto* consensus model of psychopathology and a target for treatment in contextual CBT, while the promotion of greater flexibility is a key target of interventions.

ACT has been particularly focused on explicating this model in detail (e.g., Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011). Due to key features of human language and cognition, people easily become entangled in their own thoughts and avoidant of their own emotions, memories, and sensations. People who are struggling begin to construct their lives as if they are problems to be solved. As that occurs attention stays rigidly focused on the past (detecting sources of information about where the problems came from) and the future (examining whether the problem will go away) rather than the present moment. People begin to buy into stories about who they are or need to be and events that fail to fit the story become even more threatening. The capacity for choosing and acting on values seems distant, and a passive or reactive behavioral stance is adopted.

Therapeutically, each of these processes can be turned around to foster human growth. In the place of entanglement people can learn to view their own thoughts merely as an unfolding process of sense making that can be used or not, whether or not they are "believed." In the place of avoidance people can adopt a posture of genuine curiosity about the rise and fall of their own emotions,

memories, and sensations—learning to accept their presence almost as one accepts a gift. People can learn to bring mindfulness into the present moment and to allocate attention to events based on what is worthwhile and useful, rather than what is merely habitual. Instead of defending a conceptual story about themselves, psychological flexibility is enhanced by fostering contact with the "I/here/now"-ness of awareness—looking "from" consciousness, not at consciousness. This provides a more spiritual or transcendent sense of consciousness in which the many disparate aspects of personality and history can be integrated in consciousness itself. Values are embraced as choices regarding the consequences of importance for ongoing patterns of action, establishing positive and meaningful qualities that are intrinsic to the action itself. Finally, the ability to respond is linked to these values, and the challenge of growth is engaged as a matter of building larger and larger patterns of committed action linked to chosen values.

There is a remarkable resonance between this perspective and that of modern forms of humanistic psychology (e.g., Schneider, 2008). ACT and the rest of the contextual CBT methods did not adopt these ideas wholesale from humanistic psychology—they walked a distinct path of intellectual development. But they have arrived at a similar place in certain key areas and as a result, a deep and richly interconnected discussion about the human condition can now occur between these traditions. Being able to have a meaningful and mutually beneficial conversation of the kind represented in this article is a marker of realignment within clinical psychology itself.

Spirituality and the Therapeutic Relationship

Lofty rhetoric of that kind (although true in my opinion) risks setting the bar so high that anything said in a short piece such as this will be entirely deflating. My approach will be to give two examples, with just enough links to the literature that interested readers can see for themselves. Other topics, such as self-acceptance or values, would be equally useful but space precludes their exploration (but see Hayes et al., 2001). My theme is this: concrete clinical steps can now be taken that reflect the core beliefs of *both* humanistic and behavioral psychologists, and that are based on a solid set of experimentally derived processes that can also be used to create a more progressive empirical approach to humanistic topics.

Spirituality and Transcendence

The first article ever written on ACT and RFT was entitled "Making Sense of Spirituality" (Hayes, 1984). RFT researchers (see McHugh & Stewart, 2012, for a book length review) now understand some of the cognitive processes that distinguish "self" in the sense of a narrative conceptualization and a transcendent sense of "self." By learning deictic verbal relations such as I/you, here/now, and now/then, children acquire a sense of looking from awareness—the "I/here/now" quality of consciousness. There is a growing body of empirical work showing that deictic relations underlie perspective taking in development (e.g., McHugh, Barnes-Holmes, Barnes-Holmes, Whelan, & Stewart, 2007), and that training in deictic relations improves perspective taking and Theory of Mind performance (e.g., Weil, Hayes, & Capurro, in press). There is an ineffable quality of this aspect of self because

once established in young childhood, its edges or limits can never be consciously known, providing a sense of expansiveness or transcendence to consciousness. Rather than a thing with known characteristics, this sense of an "inner witness" or "observing self" serves as a context for verbal knowing itself.

A transcendent sense of self is critical in therapy because unlike the conceptualized self (the object-like, evaluated self), it is a sense of self that cannot be threatened by the content of experience. Humanistic psychologists have long used methods designed to foster contact with this sense of self (e.g., Assagioli, 1965) in part for that reason. In addition, this is the aspect of consciousness that helps relationships to occur because it is the scaffolding of perspective taking. Indeed, RFT researchers have found that without deictic skills, people do not enjoy being with each other (Vilardaga, Estévez, Levin, & Hayes, *in press*). The transpersonal quality of consciousness emerges because deictic cognitive relations map out the perspective taking implications of time, place, and person: "I begin to experience myself as a conscious human being at the precise point at which I begin to experience you as a conscious human being. I see from a perspective because I see you see from a perspective. Consciousness is shared Consciousness expands across time, place, and person. In a deep sense, consciousness itself contains the psychological quality that we are conscious. Timelessly. Everywhere." (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011, p. 90, *emphasis added*).

What does understanding the behavioral processes involved add to existing humanistic ideas clinically speaking? It increases the ability to assess, understand, measure, and change these processes in flight. While formal measures are available (see McHugh & Stewart, 2012) the ease with which a person can shift perspective across time, place, or person can be used as an in-session marker for this key aspect of awareness. Understanding the processes that underlie transcendence helps make sense of why integrating aspects of one's personality can be fostered by encouraging perspective-taking in therapy. It is easy to work frequent shifts of perspectives into clinical work (e.g., "what do you think I might be feeling as I hear you say that?" or "If you were your father, what would you say to yourself?"). ACT therapists do such things as have clients write themselves letters from a distant and wiser future; or visit themselves as small children in painful times and have a dialogue with themselves. In a similar way, understanding that this sense of self is harder to contact when the conceptualized self is dominant is a reason ACT therapists try to undermine the constancy of literal language through such mindfulness methods as learning to watch thoughts float by as one might watch leaves on a stream.

In other words, in principle, a process-focused understanding allows clinicians to be evidence-based in another way than merely applying manualized therapies linked to syndromes, namely detecting and changing evidence-based processes that are applicable to the case. This is possible without any sense of "painting by numbers" in therapy. The common objection to experimental science is that it ignores the spontaneous, intuitive, or ineffable elements are central to clinical work. That is much less likely when experimentally validated clinical processes can be used to support sensitivity to the client and to oneself and thus to maximizing the likelihood of experiential learning. For example, there is perhaps more evidence on the importance of experiential avoidance than any other ACT process (Chawla & Ostafin, 2007)—and yet when

clinicians learn to see experiential avoidance in flight in their clients and in themselves, they are better positioned to take clinical steps, whether they are called "techniques" or not, that will foster personal growth. The second area we will address is another example of that same approach.

The Therapeutic Relationship

There is a vast literature showing that the therapeutic relationship is related to the success of psychotherapy (e.g., Horvath, Del Re, Fluckiger, & Symonds, 2011; Wampold, 2001). However, appreciating its importance and doing something about it are two different things. Many humanistic authors, including some in the present conversation, claim that "technique" accounts for little of the outcome of psychotherapy, while the relationship and therapist variables account for much more. Some have tried to argue for a humanistic focus on that basis (Horvath et al., 2011; Wampold, 2007), essentially tying the very future of this important tradition to correlation findings about processes of change and a somewhat controversial strategy of meta-analysis. That is not wise.

The vast majority of therapists hearing about data on the importance of the therapeutic relationship secretly believe this means they themselves are effective, since they care about the therapeutic relationship and they care about their clients. Unfortunately, that is impossible. We do not live in a therapeutic Lake Woebegone. Relationship factors work in explaining outcomes only because half of the therapists are below average—presumably unwittingly. Clinicians probably also believe that these findings mean if they focus even more on the relationship they will be more effective. That is not necessarily so. Therapists could easily do things driven by that urgency or belief that could be artificial, or excessively rule based. For example, a clinician might be less directive in a moment that calls for it, on the grounds that this might harm the therapeutic relationship or might "coach to the test" by artificially encouraging client agreement with features of the alliance (e.g., learning that "I believe that ___likes me" is a client item in the Working Alliance Inventory a therapist might parrot "I like you" to clients). This is a restatement of the classic concern of humanistic psychology regarding ways in which scientific rules might overwhelm sensitivity to the person and the moment. The only way to prove it is not happening is experimental evidence, not the kind of correlational evidence classically promoted by common factor theorists.

A behavioral perspective grounded in functional contextualism provides a different and more practical starting point for this issue. What skills or processes account for such relationships and can they be trained so as to produce better outcomes?

That approach takes these important factors out of the bin of "nonspecific factors" and instead makes them a target for treatment development and evaluation. "Techniques" do not include merely procedures for clients, but also procedures for therapists and their training (cf., Hilsenroth, Cromer & Ackerman, 2012). If therapists can be shown *how* to develop powerful and effective therapeutic alliances, for example, any benefits that result are now specific effects, not effects from a "common factor."

In the ACT tradition, we have suggested that empowering relationships are psychologically flexible ones (see Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011). That is, relationships are empowering when they are accepting, when they are not about who is right and who is wrong but rather when different ideas can be explored, when

they are flexibly attentive in the now, when they have a quality of mutual consciousness and an ability to take the perspective of the other, when they are values based, and conditionally active. These are merely restatements of psychological flexibility characteristics as they apply to therapeutic relationships. Stated in simpler fashion, the therapeutic relationship is powerful if it is open, aware, and engaged. If this is correct, it provides important targets for all therapists interested in establishing empowering relationships with their clients because there are specific methods available that are known through *experimentation* (not mere correlations) to foster openness, awareness, and active values-based engagement.

A recent study (Gifford et al., 2011) found that the working alliance mediated outcomes, but when the working alliance and clients' changes in psychological flexibility were entered in a multiple mediator model, only psychological flexibility remained as a mediator—the working alliance was no longer significant. This does not mean the working alliance is not important—rather it suggests that powerful therapeutic relationships are important in part because they instigate, model, and support greater psychological flexibility. That would be important to the field and to humanistic psychology if true, and would provide a model for a more empirically responsible and perhaps more effective way to work through the implications of the therapeutic relationship for clinical intervention.

Humanism and Traditional Experimental Science

The rise of interest in humanistic approaches and the embrace of humanistic topics by the behavioral and cognitive therapies challenge humanistic psychology to make a very difficult choice. Historically, there was no way to keep a firm grasp on humanistic issues without backing away to a degree from traditional experimental psychological science, even the more contextualistic varieties. A vast set of explanations arose within the humanistic tradition over this skepticism: Human science is different than physical science; Qualitative research is just as important as quantitative research; Experiments analyzed collectively override the personal history of individuals; and so on through a long list. Many of these issues are important outside of humanism per se (the behavioral tradition even agrees with some of them) and by no means do I want merely to brush them all aside. But taken as a whole they have backed humanistic psychology into a bit of a disciplinary cul de sac and a needlessly distant relationship with traditional experimental psychological science.

The cost has been high, from the limited participation of humanistic psychology in the evidence-based practice movement, to the absence of grant funds to foster treatment development, to the resistance in hiring humanistic faculty in high quality research-oriented Universities. But, perhaps, the highest cost is to progressivity. Systematic experimental evidence allows mistaken ideas to be abandoned and new ideas to take hold for reasons other than mere persuasion or the charisma of advocates. Humanistic psychology has had a hard time abandoning ideas, or providing evidence that current ideas are any better than older ones. When I've asked my humanistic colleagues to give several examples of once strongly believed and now abandoned ideas within their tradition, they cannot. Conversely, in the history of science, virtually all theories are ultimately shown to be wrong at least to a

degree, given only enough time and evidence. That is why science is progressive in a way that art can never be.

Although I understand that it will be easy to dismiss or deny these points, and that it would be painful to back away from long standing objections, growth itself suggests a different stance. Just as a vital life means letting go of past conceptions when they are no longer useful and taking advantage of new opportunities and new relationships, in the same way, the vitality of humanistic ideas can be advanced by actively exploring the realignment with the behavioral and cognitive therapies that is already occurring, and learning to use the basic and applied experimental methods they have championed. It seems increasingly possible to use experimental psychological science to explore the processes that underlie humanistic topics, and perhaps without distorting fundamental humanistic sensitivities. For the good of those we serve, it would be a shame not to do so.

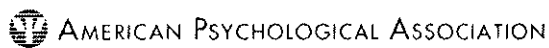
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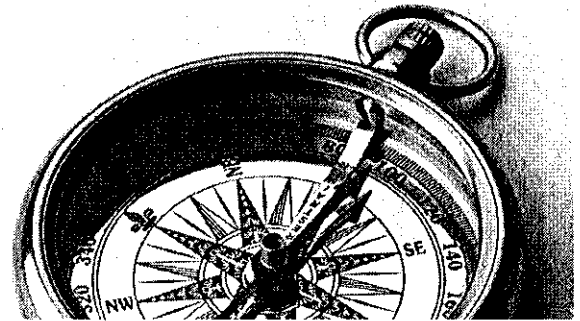
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Received December 20, 2011

Accepted December 21, 2011 ■



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Including 2010 and 2016 Amendments

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Introduction and Applicability

Preamble

General Principles

Section 1: Resolving Ethical Issues

Section 2: Competence

Section 3: Human Relations

Section 4: Privacy and Confidentiality

Section 5: Advertising and Other Public Statements

Section 6: Record Keeping and Fees

Section 7: Education and Training

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Section 9: Assessment

Section 10: Therapy

History and Effective Date

Amendments to the 2002 "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" in 2010 and 2016

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Additional Resources

2018 APA Ethics Committee Rules and Procedures (PDF, 197KB)

Revision of Ethics Code Standard 3.04 (Avoiding Harm)

APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2017) (PDF, 272KB)

2016 APA Ethics Committee Rules and Procedures

Revision of Ethical Standard 3.04 of the "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" (2002, as Amended 2010) (PDF, 26KB)

2010 Amendments to the 2002 "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" (PDF, 39KB)

Compare the 1992 and 2002 Ethics Codes

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