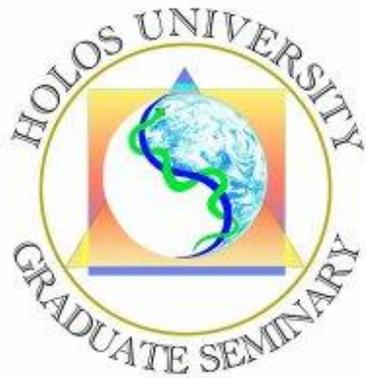


THE EFFECTS OF EMOTIVE WRITING ON ANXIETY AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

Marsha A. M. Moldenhauer



Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of
Holos University Graduate Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

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The work reported in this thesis is original and carried out by me solely, except for the acknowledged direction and assistance gratefully received from colleagues and mentors.

Marsha A. M. Moldenhauer

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, my family, and friends for their love, faith, encouragement, support and Infinite Patience throughout my pilgrimage:

My mother and my father

Anita Reppard Motsenbocker Mott and James Joshua Mott

Who instilled the love and wonder of learning;

My husband, Charles Alan Moldenhauer,

Who encouraged, supported and continued to love me throughout this journey;

Our daughter, Nicole Alayne Moldenhauer,

Who cheered and coached me onward with humor,

while teaching me the mysteries of Word;

Our son, Russel Alan Moldenhauer,

Who quietly and continually believed in me;

And to the Intrepid Eleven People who elected to take my class in May 2010,

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ABSTRACT

A RESEARCH STUDY USING EMOTIVE WRITING FOCUSED ON SPECIFIC EMOTION-RELATED WORDS TO REDUCE ANXIETY AND ENHANCE SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of Emotive Writing on anxiety and spiritual well-being using specific emotion-related words. Words hold memories and memories hold emotion. Negative emotion, when based on subconscious content, can contribute to feelings of fear, unease, and worry, producing anxiety and interfering with well-being. This study focused on writing within the framework of an emotion first, leading the participant to the memory of the event/situation. This study was conducted over the internet, as a pretest/posttest two-tailed study, using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) as a measure of state and trait anxiety, and the Spiritual Index of Well-Being (SIWB) as a measure of well-being relating to self-efficacy and life scheme. These tests were administered prior to and after the completion of four written assignments consisting of four sets of paired emotion-related words. Twenty participants were recruited from the Springfield, Missouri, area and the Holos University Graduate Seminary community; fifteen ($n=15$) completed the four assignments and the pre/post-test measurements. All volunteers were given identical assignments of paired emotion-related words and asked to write for at least thirty minutes per emotion-related word. Although the writings remained private and were not submitted for examination, compliance was assumed by the completion and submission of a question summary after each assignment. Participants did not receive feedback from the writing assignments, assessment measures or completed summaries. All participants were assigned random numbers and as such, remained anonymous to the Primary Investigator.

Quantitative measures did not produce statistically significant results in the SIWB. Overall results for the STAI were statistically significant at $p \leq .01$. The results for State-Anxiety were significant at $p \leq .03$ and for Trait-Anxiety at $p \leq .01$. This study suggests that cognitive processing through Emotive Writing can have beneficial effects on both state and trait anxiety and that Emotive Writing, targeting emotion-related words, can be beneficial in an “every day” environment.

Key words: Emotive Writing, anxiety, spiritual well-being, State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Spiritual Index of Well-Being, cognitive processing

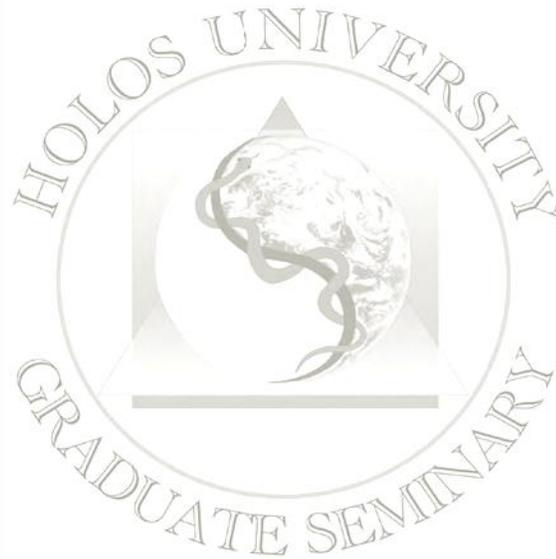
And if people began to learn the meaning of life, and the meaning even of the pain, and the meaning even of the tragedies, and the incredible miracle of human life, then they would bless it every day, not only the joys and the heights but, especially, perhaps the difficult periods of time.

~ Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

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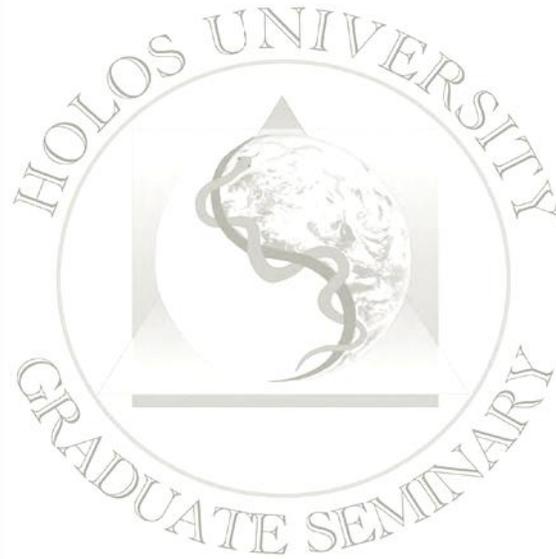
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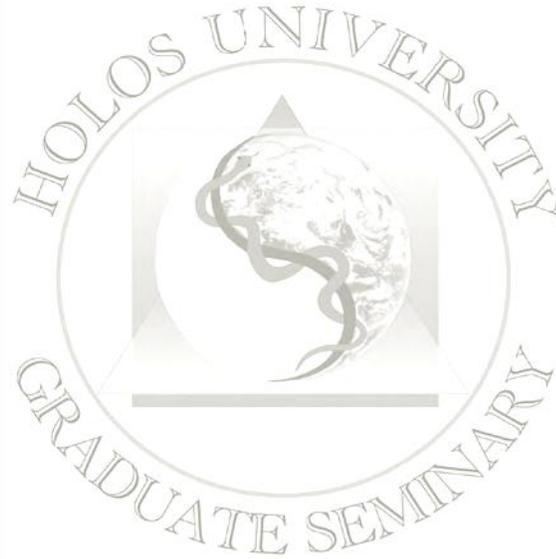
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Memory and consciousness are among the most fascinating and controversial topics for scientific inquiry and somatic exploration. ~ James Oschman

Chapter One consists of six subsections that form the foundation for subsequent chapters.

1. Statement of the Problem
2. Pilot Project for the Study
3. Significance of the Study: Importance and Purpose
4. Research Questions
5. Definition of Terms
6. Chapter Summary

Statement of the Problem

In this time of advanced technology and instant global information, we are bombarded with decisions and lifestyle choices that impact our mental and psychological well-being, often contributing to feelings of helplessness. It is easy to become overwhelmed with the onslaught of messages that confront us every day; not only do we have the internet and expanded avenues for communication, but we have the increased pressure to try to keep pace with the advances. This is just some of the external stimuli that promote stress and anxiety outside of our personal lives at work, in the home and in our community. Is it any wonder that there are more ads on the internet, television, radio, and in print which advocate some over-the-counter medication to deal with the effects of stress and anxiety in everyday life? Frequently mentioned are medications for coronary heart disease, hypertension and depression. Rather than succumbing to self-medication through drugs, legal or illegal, or alcohol, we would be better nourished by being proactive and pro-creative in our own well-being and self-care.

Is there a simple therapy that can be adapted to many situations and populations without undue expense and inconvenience to the patient/client? Is there a means to help individuals ameliorate anxiety and increase general and spiritual well-being, helping them to gain a new perspective of distressing events or situations in their lives? What activity can be self-administered or self-induced which would decrease anxiety and encourage an improved sense of well-being? What activities can assist in increasing spiritual well-being, as defined in terms of self-efficacy and life schema?

Modern psychological therapy uses many forms and modalities, many of which are costly and require extensive time. Early therapy was predominantly based on analysis and was exemplified by an authoritative approach, such as that of Sigmund Freud. With the advent of Maslow's theories of self-actualization, Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology, the "positive psychology" of Martin Seligman, and biofeedback research by Elmer Green indicating the power of the mind over the body, psychologists have expanded their approaches and have begun to re-discover the efficacy of therapies of ancient times. Among the "new" therapies, such as somatic therapies, art, dance, music, and aromatherapy, one has shown promise in the treatment of physical and psychological distress. This more current approach involves an exploration of personal issues and problems and their related perceptions and beliefs that cause stress-related anxiety by becoming subconscious stumbling blocks to self-awareness, self-development and self-fulfillment. These same perceptions and beliefs not only influence the physical, psychological and physiological well-being of an individual, but influence a person's spiritual well-being as well.¹

In terms of cost, this method can be self-administered or self-activated, as well as, facilitated by a Spiritual Director, Coach or therapist. It is known by many names: expressive disclosure therapy, expressive writing, emotive writing therapy, narrative therapy and writing with feeling. This approach has been incorporated in therapeutic letter writing for school teachers, students and parents,² and for medical staff, for family therapy³ and in journal writing for learning emergency psychiatry.⁴ This research project and thesis focus on the method of Emotive Writing, defined as “writing with the full expression of feelings.” This method explores the power of the written word to unlock emotions, often trapped in the subconscious perceptions of events or situations. Most research using expressive writing has focused on traumatic events and/or stressful situations as a starting point.⁵ Words hold memories and memories hold embedded emotions. Emotions embedded in both conscious and unconscious memories can contribute to anxiety.⁶ It has been suggested that cognitive appraisal of these embedded emotions can lead to new perceptions of events and situations, allowing change to occur in both thinking and behavior.⁷

Pilot Project for the Study

Become the change you desire. ~ Gandhi

You cannot fix what you cannot face. ~ James Baldwin

A pilot project for this study took the form of a course offered in a May 2010 Spiritual Journalism class held at Unity of the Hills Church in Branson, Missouri. This Spiritual Journalism class was designed and presented by the Principle Investigator (PI), for four weeks in a classroom setting. It was conceived as a writing class, using Emotive Writing with paired emotion-related words, and it provided both the inspiration and the

model for the research behind this described thesis. What was learned in presenting this class encouraged the PI to experiment with Emotive Writing in the research for this Thesis.

When the PI did extensive research in Emotive Writing studies and approaches the PI noticed that these approaches began with a traumatic event, illness or stress-related situation.⁸ Based on this research and the work of positive psychologists and researchers, the Principal Investigator was inspired to use Emotive Writing based on emotion-related words, with an emphasis on *positive* words.⁹ The PI presented a brief description of this writing class to the spiritual director of her church and asked the spiritual director if the church would be interested in a writing class that incorporated Unity's positive spiritual principles. The class was intuitively inspired and designed to use music, readings, prayer and meditation along with written assignments.¹⁰ Having received approval for the class from the spiritual director, the PI requested that she be able to use three quantitative measures as pretest and posttest assessments if students wanted to participate in the class as a research project.¹¹ The PI was presenting the class with the aid of two assistants to facilitate confidentiality of answers to both pre- and posttests.

Eleven people elected to take the class without having any knowledge of the 4-week class other than the title Spiritual Journalism. Of these eleven people, ten were members of the Unity of the Hills congregation and one was a relative of one of the participants. There were ten women and one man, ranging in ages from twenty-five to mid-seventies in age. One participant did not specify her age, other than mid-seventies. The average age of those beginning the class, from the ages known, was 51.6 years; there were two in their 40's, five in their 50's, and two in their 60's. They were given the

option to participate as a member in a research writing study, employing prayer, readings, meditation, and music. They were asked to sign a consent form if they wished to be considered as part of the research study and all agreed and signed. Each participant was given a copy of this form.¹²

Participants were encouraged to ask for assistance from either the Spiritual Director at the church or make contact with either the Principal Investigator or the faculty advisor if they experienced any emotional distress. A system was designed for each student/participant to have a number unknown to the PI and to other students. This number was a random number based on the random number generator website, <http://stattrek.com/Tables/Random.aspx>.¹³ Random numbers from the website were written on poker chips that were placed in an opaque bag, unseen and unknown to everyone. Each person selected a chip and then sealed it in an envelope with their name on it, provided by one of the assistants to the PI. The participants wrote their number on each of their questionnaires for both the pretests and posttests. The PI left the room as one of the technical assistants facilitated the hidden number selection by the students and administered the assessment tools which were named “questionnaires.”¹⁴ Three quantitative measures were used as pre- and posttest assessments for the class: the Zung Depression Assessment, the Human Potential Attitude Inventory and the Personal Stress Assessment.¹⁵

Of the eleven original students, nine completed the essay assignments and the course. One student, the relative of one of the congregants, missed Class 2 due to illness and failed to return due to family complications. Two other students missed a class due to either illness or work and one student missed two classes due to illness and a work

conflict. Those students who missed only one class completed their writing assignments. Missing a class did not constitute failure to complete the course if the assignments were completed. The facilitator called any missing student to provide homework assignment topics and relied on the word of the students for verification of assignment completion. There was no verification of compliance for the completion of the written assignments. Of the eleven participants beginning the class ($n = 11$), only 8 students completed all the assignments and completed both the pre-and posttest assessments. Incomplete “questionnaires” resulted in invalid data so it was not possible to arrive at final statistics for the study.

For an accurate account of this pilot study, I will quote from “Spiritual Journalism” in the “Special Topics in Spirituality” paper:

The questionnaires as measures of assessment, on the whole, were inadequate and incomplete for the purposes of this study. The Human Potential Attitude Inventory (Appendix IV), Questionnaire Three, was useful only in a personal comparative way, not for purposes of this research. The Zung Depression Scale (Appendix II), Questionnaire One, was valid for depression assessment. Considering the Zung Depression Scale, ($n = 8$) students completed both sets of tests. Six scored better (less stress); one of the six scored significantly better the first time, one scored equal to the first test, and one scored significantly worse for stress. The Personal Stress Assessment: Total Life Stress Test (Appendix III), Questionnaire Two, was a more comprehensive tool for the assessment of stress. This questionnaire addressed dietary, environmental, chemical, physical and emotional areas for stress, and, life changes. For this assessment, in any section, any score over twenty-five (25) indicated a need to address the stress factors itemized. Eight students ($n = 8$) completed both sets of this test, one male and seven females. All seven females scored in excess of 25 in the “Physical Stress” category, which focused on weight and exercise. The Holmes-Rahe Social Readjustment Rating, a part of the Personal Stress Assessment, itemized life changes. In this section of the PSA, four females scored in excess of 25. One female scored over 25 in four of the six categories, excessively over 25 in two categories. Because students were scoring this questionnaire during their first class, it was reformatted before Class IV to remove the scoring chart. The results of the assessment reflect the current trend in society: overweight, too little exercise and significant life changes, such as death of a loved one, divorce, loss/change of job, “empty nest” syndrome, or serious illness.¹⁶

No other statistical data were generated from the above class. A class evaluation form, completed anonymously, was given to each of the nine students attending Class 4, the final class.¹⁷ The evaluation forms were encouraging, suggesting additional topics, but the *discussions* following each class and at the end of the final class were incentives for further research. All nine students wanted a lengthier course, making a 6-week class a consideration. The students comprised a homogeneous group; all were Unity congregants and included two ministers, a social worker, a receptionist, a minister's assistant, an international motivational speaker, a professional writer, and a bank manager.

The PI used the experience of this pilot study to design the study for this Thesis. Considerations learned in that experience were:

1. **Not all positive changes can be measured in quantitative assessments.** The following are examples: one of the participants was a poet but due to some trauma and a dysfunctional home life, she had not written a poem in nearly thirty years; she wrote a poem and shared it with the class. Another “was able to dialogue *for and give* ‘voice’ to a difficult family situation.”¹⁸ [Author’s italics.] One of the students had been in tears for fear of the writing assignments due to a dyslexic diagnosis in elementary school which had plagued her all her writing life. She shared her essays proudly in both Class 2 and Class 3. She appeared noticeably more comfortable with each successive class. Several students reported clarity in their current decision-making as they contemplated career and life changes.
2. **The selection of assessment measures for this study indicated that too many tests and too long a measure are deterrents to participants in this environment.** One participant had difficulty answering the pretest questions and

another left some pretest questions unanswered. Financially or otherwise compensating participants may make a difference. Due to the results of these assessments, the PI knew to investigate other measures for future and similar research studies with emphasis placed on answering *every question*.

3. **Word selection for assignments and word order are important.** Based on the class discussions following assignments, word selection for each assignment was important, as well as the word order. Some words served as greater “triggers” for Emotive Writing.
4. **The limitations to this study included:** a small number of participants, with similar belief systems. The nine people present during the last class all stated that they gained personally from the class. Because everyone knew the Primary Investigator there could have been bias. The assessment measures were inadequate for measuring the self-confidence and the joy experienced by some and witnessed by all of the participants.
5. **Qualitative data provided by the evaluation forms provided incentive for further research and study in using Emotive Writing with emotion-related words.** Comments on the 4-week class provided by the participants anonymously on the evaluation forms the final evening provided positive feedback and a consensual request for additional classes.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it combines both the application of a specific Emotive Writing approach with a research component in order to assess how this approach may be used as a self-help method with persons in a non-clinical setting.

Although participants were solicited from several very homogeneous groups, this project used the internet in order to offer a wide area of participation that allows the method to be used at any time, in any place, and in future studies with a less homogeneous population.

The terms “stress” and “anxiety” are often used interchangeably, because they are closely interrelated. The New York Times Health Guide defines these two aspects in this way: “*Stress can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous. Anxiety is a feeling of fear, unease, and worry. The source of these symptoms is not always known.*”¹⁹ This study measures *anxiety* using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI); however, many of the events or thoughts that cause stress also create anxious feelings of fear, unease and worry. For instance, fear is often the base of anger, and frustration is a type of unease, and worry is directly related to nervousness. So, although this thesis uses the STAI as a measure of anxiety, it often uses these two terms in combination, “stress and anxiety.”

Importance of the Study

Until now, research in Emotive Writing has concentrated on those individuals who were targeted with some aspect of pathology, such as diagnosed with asthma,²⁰ rheumatoid arthritis,²¹ or cancer²², or, are categorized as being in a stress-inducing situation, such as a recent job loss,²³ or having been victimized by domestic violence,²⁴ or suffering from gay-related stress.²⁵ If it can be shown that a simple self-help approach such as Emotive Writing is effective with non-targeted subjects, outside of a clinical setting, then this approach could provide a wide range of people with a creative self-help tool for addressing aspects of stress and anxiety and for enhancing spiritual well-being. In addition, because this is a “self help” approach that does not rely on others for counseling

or extensive medical treatment, it is personally empowering. Empowering one to be self-reliant builds self-esteem, resilience, and confidence to face future adversities. To apply the Emotive Writing method to a variety of emotion-related words in the privacy of one's own home and at one's leisure would surely be a savings in time and effort, as well as, provide a sense of gratification for having "done it myself!"²⁶ Finding one's own solution to one's own difficulties by looking at a recurring emotional pattern in one's life, which is a stumbling block to personal well-being, would be of great value. It focuses the participant inward for solutions to anxiety, rather than focusing outward in a "blame game" that may provide temporary relief, but keeps one in a victim role and seldom provides permanent solutions. The researcher proposes that this method might be used along with other self-help modalities to reduce the need for interventions such as anti-anxiety medication and extensive counseling therapy.

Purpose of the Study

Resolve to be thyself; and know that he who finds himself, loses his misery.

~ Matthew Arnold

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of Emotive Writing as a self-administered and self-activated means of self-help therapy in examining perceptions, beliefs, personal problems and issues in order to relieve the effects of stress and anxiety, and improve one's sense of spiritual well-being in an "everyday" context. This study specifically examines whether writing about feelings and emotions is helpful in relieving the effects of stress and anxiety and whether spiritual well-being is also affected. This study was based on Emotive Writing or disclosure writing, using eight emotion-related words.

Research Questions

1. Can written expression be beneficial to those in “everyday” life?
2. Can people effectively and beneficially use a method such as Emotive Writing as a self-help tool?
3. Would this approach encourage a reduction in state or trait anxiety as measured by the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)?
4. Would this approach affect spiritual well-being, qualified as self-efficacy and life scheme, as measured by the Spiritual Index of Well-Being (SIWB)?
5. Are there also qualitative ways to ascertain the effects?
6. Is there a possible down side to approaching subconscious emotions in this way?

The researcher specifically sought the answers to these questions in this study by:

- Measuring statistically significant differences in state anxiety resulting from using Emotive Writing with emotion-related words using the State-Anxiety questions of the STAI questionnaire.
- Measuring statistically significant differences in trait anxiety using Emotive Writing with emotion-related words using the Trait-Anxiety questions of the STAI questionnaire.

In relation to spiritual well-being,

- Measuring statistically significant differences in self-efficacy resulting from Emotive Writing with emotion-related words using the SIWB questionnaire.
- Measuring statistically significant differences in life scheme using Emotive Writing with emotion-related words using the SIWB questionnaire.

Definition of Terms

Emotive Writing: is a term used for a method of writing therapy, corresponding to experimental disclosure, emotional disclosure intervention, personal written disclosure, expressive writing and written emotional expression which refers to writing usually about a traumatic event or situation without regard for sentence structure, grammar, punctuation or syntax, with as much feeling and emotion as the writer can give.²⁷ In this thesis, the emotive writing begins with an emotion-related word rather than a traumatic event or situation.

Emotion: “is a complex psychophysiological experience of an individual's state of mind as interacting with biochemical (internal) and environmental (external) influences. In humans, emotion fundamentally involves ‘physiological arousal, expressive behaviors, and conscious experience.’ Emotion is associated with mood, temperament, personality, disposition, and motivation. Motivations direct and energize behavior, while emotions provide the affective component to motivation, positive or negative. No definitive taxonomy of emotions exists, though numerous taxonomies have been proposed. Some categorizations include:

- ‘Cognitive’ versus ‘non-cognitive’ emotions
- Instinctual emotions (from the amygdala), versus cognitive emotions (from the prefrontal cortex).
- Categorization based on duration: Some emotions occur over a period of seconds (for example, surprise), whereas others can last years (for example, love).

A related distinction is between the emotion and the results of the emotion, principally behaviors and emotional expressions. People often behave in certain ways as a direct result of their emotional state, such as crying, fighting or fleeing. If one can have the emotion without a corresponding behavior, then we may consider the behavior not to be essential to the emotion.”²⁸

Coach/Life Coach: The International Coach Federation defines coaching as: "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.

Coaching involves dialogue between a coach and a client with the aim of helping the client obtain a fulfilling life. This is achieved by helping the client establish what is important to them and by clarifying their values. With the client's input the coach co-creates value based goals and a plan to achieve them. Through collaboration, the coach supports the client to achieve these goals.”²⁹ International Coach Academy

Cognitive process: is defined in “(psychology) the performance of some composite cognitive activity; an operation that affects mental contents; ‘the process of thinking’; ‘the cognitive operation of remembering.’”³⁰

Anxiety: “(also called **angst** or **worry**) is a psychological and physiological state characterized by somatic, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. The root meaning of the word anxiety is 'to vex or trouble'; in either presence or absence of psychological stress, anxiety can create feelings of fear, worry, uneasiness, and dread. Anxiety is considered to be a normal reaction to a stressor. It may help an individual to deal with a demanding situation by prompting them to cope with it. When anxiety becomes excessive, it may fall under the classification of an anxiety disorder.”³¹ As defined by Alex J. Zautra, **anxiety** is the response to a future event;³² to “dwell longer on threatening information”;³³ “worry or concern”;³⁴ “feelings of apprehension, tension, nervousness, and worry.”³⁵

Depression: “is a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's thoughts, behaviour, feelings and physical well-being. Depressed people may feel sad, anxious, empty, hopeless, helpless, [worthless](#), guilty, irritable, or restless. They may lose interest in activities that once were pleasurable, experience loss of appetite or overeating, or problems concentrating, remembering details or making decisions; and may contemplate or attempt suicide. [Insomnia](#), excessive sleeping, fatigue, loss of energy, or aches, pains or digestive problems that are resistant to treatment may be present. Depressed mood is a normal reaction to certain life events, a symptom of some medical conditions (e.g., [Addison's disease](#), [hypothyroidism](#)) and treatments (e.g., [hepatitis C](#) drug therapy), and a feature of certain psychiatric syndromes”;³⁶ is a state of ruminative elaboration or prolonged rumination.³⁷ [Author’s note: usually accompanied by sadness. **Anxiety** and **depression** are sometimes confused but are related to **stress**.]

Stress: “is a term in psychology and biology, borrowed from physics and engineering and first used in the biological context in the 1930s, which has in more recent decades become commonly used in popular parlance. It refers to the consequence of the failure of an organism — human or other animal — to respond adequately to mental, emotional, or physical demands, whether actual or imagined. When the person perceives a threat, their nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones rouse the body for emergency action. The stress response is the body’s way of protecting the person. When working properly, it helps in staying focused, energetic, and alert”;³⁸ “is the degree of uncertainty and magnitude of disruption to one aspect of life”;³⁹ is the “nonspecific response of the body to any demand, whether it is caused by, or results in, pleasant or unpleasant conditions.”⁴⁰

Spirituality: is a multidimensional construct, often confused with religiosity, but in the context of this thesis, refers to the personal and subjective search for the sacred, incorporating personal practices, such as prayer, but not necessarily religious acts or rituals.⁴¹

Spiritual well-being: is defined in terms of the Spiritual Index of Well-Being, self-efficacy and life scheme. Self-efficacy is “considered as activities that a person initiates to address threatened or actual changes to functioning to overcome obstacles and reach a goal. Life scheme is considered as a sense of coherence and is described as the ability to view oneself in the world in a positive way.”⁴²

Self-efficacy: “depicts an individual’s belief in the capacity to organize and perform activities required for a prescribed goal ... A belief in overcoming real or apparent threats to individual problems and difficulties --- regardless of perceived resources or individual capacities”;⁴³ is the “positive beliefs concerning one’s own capabilities to cope with disease, disability, or physical limitations”;⁴⁴ the “belief that one has mastery over the events in one’s life and can meet challenges as they come up” which promotes risk-taking and is enhanced by the development of any competency;⁴⁵ is the belief in the capability “of performing the behavior or behaviors that will produce the outcome.”⁴⁶

Life scheme: is a “cognitive representation of one’s life that provides a sense of order and purpose,” associated with “meaning making,” a “positive, pervasive way of viewing the world and one’s life in it, lending elements of comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness.”⁴⁷

Quality of life: A broad construct, “a relative concept, to be interpreted from the subjective perspective,” not based on any one condition, such as family, social support, income, social role, or health; related to a “good balance at the personal and interpersonal levels.”⁴⁸ “The term *quality of life* is used to evaluate the general well-being of individuals and societies. The term is used in a wide range of contexts, including the fields of [international development](#), healthcare, and politics. Quality of life should not be confused with the concept of [standard of living](#), which is based primarily on income. Instead, standard indicators of the quality of life include not only wealth and employment, but also the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social belonging... Also frequently related are concepts such as freedom, [human rights](#), and [happiness](#). However, since happiness is subjective and hard to measure, other measures are generally given priority. It has also been shown that happiness, as much as it can be measured, does not necessarily increase correspondingly with the comfort that results from increasing income. As a result, standard of living should not be taken to be a measure of happiness.”⁴⁹

Well-being: is the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy: “an improvement in the patient's well-being”;⁵⁰ the condition of being contented, healthy, or successful; welfare;⁵¹ the state of being happy, healthy or prosperous.⁵² Ed Diener defines subjective well-being (SWB) as an “area of positive psychology” having to do with “people's cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives. Progress has been made in understanding the components of SWB, the importance of adaptation and goals to feelings of well-being, the temperament underpinnings of SWB, and the cultural influences on well-being. Representative selection of respondents, naturalistic experience sampling measures, and other methodological refinements are now used to study SWB and could be used to produce national indicators of happiness.”⁵³

Chapter Summary

...when I took the first step toward changing my life, I actively monitored where I was expending my brain's energy. I had to examine the consequences of energy invested in my thoughts as closely as I examined the expenditures of energy I used to power my physical body.

~ Bruce Lipton

In this chapter the statement of the problem includes a description of the anxiety and stress prevalent in our culture at this time, and explores the self-help method of Emotive Writing as a way of helping to ameliorate anxiety and stress without the use of drugs or counseling. A pilot study completed by the PI is described, since it was that project that inspired the PI to design and carry out the present study. In this Pilot Study much was learned in terms of method and assessment, and this guided the design of the current project. Also included in Chapter One are the research questions addressed in this study and a definition of terms. Chapter Two details the methodology used in the current study.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Why we feel the way we feel is the result of the symphony and harmony of our own molecules of emotion that effect every aspect of our physiology, producing blissful good health or miserable disease. ~ Candice Pert

Description of the Intervention

The intervention for this study is based on the work of James W. Pennebaker⁵⁴ and other researchers⁵⁵ who explored Emotive Writing as a therapeutic process for emotional experiences. Scientific studies indicate that writing can affect physical symptoms, and possibly provide psychological and physiological health benefits.⁵⁶ Research has explored the use of expressive writing in cancer studies,⁵⁷ with those suffering from arthritis and asthma,⁵⁸ college students and graduate entrance exam performance,⁵⁹ drug dependent patients,⁶⁰ those with symptoms of bulimia nervosa,⁶¹ and those suffering from irritable bowel syndrome,⁶² to name a few of the target studies. The common factor in all this research is trauma or a stress-related event or situation. The pilot project for this study initiated the Emotive Writing study with emotion-related words as an avenue of exploration for change in thoughts, feelings, perceptions and beliefs. This research study used Emotive Writing as an intervention to create significant statistical changes in both anxiety and well-being. Beginning with the emotion-related word, the Primary Investigator sought to explore the effects of certain paired words on state and trait anxiety and self-efficacy and life scheme.

Participants were given a total of four writing assignments consisting of a pair of emotion-related words for each assignment. The participants were asked to write for a minimum of one hour a week on each assignment, half an hour for each emotion-related word; they would write for one hour a week over the course of four weeks. The thirty

minutes per word as a minimum writing time was based on the meta-analyses of Emotive Writing done by Joshua M. Smyth and Joanne Frattaroli.⁶³ Participants were advised to write, reflecting on events, persons or situations which evoked emotions and feelings, without concern for spelling, grammar, punctuation or syntax. Each assignment consisted of a pair of emotion-related words designed to trigger memory. Participants' writings on the emotion-related word pairs were neither seen nor submitted to either the Principal Investigator or to the Technical Staff. Only the question summary at the end of each assignment (Appendices G, H, I, and J) was submitted to the Technical Staff before a new assignment was given. The question summary was used as a compliance check or verification for the completion of each assignment.

Duration of the Study

Each one of us creates our experiences by our thoughts and our feelings. The thoughts we think and the words we speak create our experiences. ~ Louise Hay

Because recruitment of the volunteers took place over a period of three weeks, time fluctuated with each participant depending on their response for the completion and return of the Consent Form and Intake Form (Appendices C and D), the time to receive and return the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Appendix L), Spiritual Index of Well-Being (Appendix M), and the time they took to complete and return their assignment summaries. All participants received the same assignments and summary questions (Appendices G, H, I and J) and in the same order. Participants who finished their writing assignment and submitted their summary questions had to wait for a period of five days before receiving the next

assignment. This was done to insure spacing between writing assignments and to allow for cognitive processing.

This project was expected to take approximately six weeks and be completed by the participants at the end of January 2011. Late starting participants, holiday delays and illness extended the study until mid-February 2011. Of the twenty people who signed and returned the Consent Form, fifteen ($n = 15$), completed all the assignments, summaries and the pretest/posttest assessments.

Participants: Location and Description

We do have the will power, consciousness, and emotions, and combined with a sense of purpose and meaning, we can effect change. ~ Mario Beauregard

Recruitment began the first of December, at the start of the holiday season --- a time known for producing anxiety and tension. Not only were volunteers subject to holiday plans, more exposure and likelihood of illness, but unexpected delays, due to technical computer problems, and, computer “working knowledge,” compounded the challenges of the research project.

Volunteers were recruited from three Unity churches within a 65 mile radius of Springfield, Missouri; the Holos University Graduate Seminary community, a yoga studio, a metaphysical book store, and a local chiropractor’s office were areas of recruitment where the research description flyer was posted (Appendix A). The flyer was circulated via the Holos University internet address to all students, faculty, and interested parties. Describing the study as a research project to explore the effects of written expression on anxiety and spiritual well-being, the Primary Investigator (PI) called the church offices of each of the three churches to ask for permission to recruit volunteers.

The principal investigator received permission from the church offices to speak publicly at each of the three churches and to leave the research description flyer; the PI personally visited two of the churches during services to outline the study, recruit participants, answer questions, and post a flyer. A member of the technical staff was designated to speak at the principal investigator's church, leave a flyer, and direct questions to the PI at the telephone number and personal email address listed on the flyer.

Twenty-nine people expressed an interest in the project by contacting the PI and were sent the Letter of Introduction (Appendix B). Several people contacted the PI by telephone or email to ask questions about the study. Seven people decided not to participate; three or more people said they were unable to take part due to the time required and the timing of the project study. Twenty-two people were sent the Consent Form (Appendix C) and the Intake Form (Appendix D) by the Technical Staff. Twenty people returned the signed Consent Form and completed the Intake Form. Signing and completing both forms and returning them to the Technical Staff signified actual participation in the study. Once the Consent and Intake forms were signed and returned to the Technical Staff, measures were taken to insure participant confidentiality. After returning the two completed forms, participants were sent two self-evaluation questionnaires that served as the baseline. These questionnaires were the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory and the Spiritual Index of Well-Being. Of the twenty-two people who were sent the Consent and Intake forms, twenty people completed and returned the forms; eighteen completed the two pretests and the first assignment. Two people dropped out of the study before completing the second assignment and one person completed all four assignments but dropped out of the study before completing the two posttests. Fifteen

people, ($n = 15$), completed the study, taking the pretest/posttest assessments, completing the assignments, and returning the summaries. Measures were taken to ensure and to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of each of the participants.

Criteria

Inclusion

All participants had to be eighteen years or older and able to read and understand English. It was imperative for each person to have access to both a computer and the internet. A working knowledge of basic computer skills, such as “cut and paste,” was expected by the primary investigator.

Exclusion

The only exclusion criteria were that students from the Spiritual Journalism class given in May 2010 at Unity of the Hills, Branson, Missouri, were exempt from volunteering.

Principal Investigator

But it is the subliminal sensations created by the antenna system within our brain and, yes, our hearts, that is constantly feeding us the information of Truth. To find Truth we must look, not just outside of ourselves, but more concentratedly within. ~ Ernest F. Pecci

The PI designed the experiment to be conducted over the internet. The PI gave an outline of the project and answered initial inquiries, sending a Letter of Introduction and a Consent Form to each person interested in joining the study (Appendix B and C). Some of the first participants received the Intake Form (Appendix D) for demographic information from the PI but this was later sent by the Technical Staff upon receipt of the Consent Form (Appendix C). The PI did not accept or receive any Consent or Intake

forms. The PI directed all interested persons to respond to a separate and secure website, designed to receive all forms and answer all technical questions. This website was operated by two technical assistants. Throughout the project, the Principal Investigator was unaware of the names of the participants.

Technical Staff

The technical staff consisted of two technical assistants who established a separate and secure website, inaccessible to the PI. They sent and received the Consent and Intake forms, all pre- and posttests, writing assignments and summary evaluation forms. One member of the technical staff sent and received forms and the other assistant assigned a random number to each participant. This member processed the data received.

A system was devised with which a member of the Technical Staff could assign each participant a random number based on the random generator website, <http://stattrek.com/Tables/Random.apx>. At no time was the PI made aware of who was actually participating in the study or their answers to any of the tests or their answers to the summary questions.

Assignment Word Selection

I have written of these things out of gratitude so that others might know, as I have come to know, that pain summons its own healer. You do not have to seek outside yourself for deliverance. If shame is all you have, embrace what you have, honor it, and care for it with all your attention and kindness. In your own grief you will find the power to convert shame to compassion. ~ Lin Jensen

Writing about trauma or an upsetting event can trigger the memories of emotion, but the question asked in this study is what memories are triggered when starting with an emotion? Are we in “a rut” when we think of *anger*, thinking of the same situation, event, or person over and over again? Ruminating on what we should have said or done? Do we

ruminate over the same events with the same emotions? When threats to the well-being of the self arise, personality traits of defensive action or reaction which served in the past come to the forefront. It is the same with thoughts --- habits of thinking, of doing --- reflect “a rut,” an automatic response. These actions or reactions and thoughts become ingrained and unconscious responses to life’s opportunities and challenges. Barbara Fredrickson, a researcher well known among the positive psychologists, believes that cultivating our positive emotions is healthy, fostering psychological growth and well-being, both psychologically and physically.⁶⁴ She calls this the “broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions because positive emotions appear to broaden people’s momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources.”⁶⁵ Not only is the nurturing of positive emotions good for us and good for those around us but positive emotions can “undo” negative emotions.⁶⁶ Martin Seligman wrote in 1990 that “one of the most significant findings in psychology in the last twenty years is that individuals can choose the way they think,” that our “[h]abits of thinking need not be forever.”⁶⁷ Choosing positive emotions is a coping strategy that builds resilience in the face of adversity⁶⁸ and enhances our well-being. Felicia Huppert states that although “life events can change our level of subjective well-being ... the changes are usually short-lived ... actions that are under our control ... can have profound and long-lasting effects on our enjoyment of life and effective functioning.”⁶⁹

What if we can examine this situation, event or person from a new perspective? What other emotions might emerge? What other situations, events or people might come to mind? Self-efficacy can be defined as belief in self and the ability to meet challenges, take risks and be resilient in the face of struggle and adversity, confident of the ability of

self to “weather the storm.” Viktor Frankl illustrated the importance of finding meaning in the most adverse circumstances when he wrote his book.⁷⁰ The participants in the May 2010 class demonstrated, based on class discussion, cognitive processing of current and past issues affecting their self-efficacy and life scheme when writing about certain emotions.

With these ideas of coping, resilience, self-reliance, building positive “thought-action repertoires,” the following topics were chosen as writing assignments for the participants: Assignment #1, *Forgiveness*, first as the one being forgiven, as the *Forgivee*, and then as the one doing the forgiving, the *Forgiver*; Assignment #2, *Anger* and *Joy*; Assignment #3, *Shame* and *Confidence*, and lastly, Assignment #4, *Judgment* and *Gratitude*. The order of the topics was important to the Principal Investigator.

An example of the Emotive Writing protocol follows.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1

//// Each writing assignment has two sections; Sections A and B. Only Section B is emailed to expressivewriting@gmail.com. \\\

SECTION A: Expressive Writing. Please make yourself comfortable and write on the following two topics, in order, with as much expressive feeling as you possibly can. For each topic, write for a minimum of thirty minutes (30 min). You may write on the topics at separate sittings, for example, Topic One on Monday and Topic Two on Tuesday, whatever is most comfortable for you. **Remember: Your writing is not submitted.**

*Please write on the following topics: **FORGIVENESS / FORGIVENESS***

*You are asked to write on **Forgiveness** from the perspective of the forgivee, the one who is forgiven. With as much feeling and emotion as possible, write what it feels like, real or imagined, to be forgiven of some action, word or situation. How does it feel? What emotions come to mind? If you cannot relate to this point of view, imagine you have erred in some great way and how it would feel to be forgiven of your words and/or actions. Be sure to note the body sensations and feelings. Write for at least thirty minutes (30 min) on this topic.*

*Now, you are asked to write on **Forgiveness** as the person doing the forgiving. With as much feeling and emotion as possible, visualize a situation, person, place or event in your life in which you practiced forgiveness. How does it feel? What emotions come to mind? If you cannot relate to a real life situation, or you are unable to place yourself in that position, imagine how your life would be if you were able to forgive. How does that feel? Note the body sensations and feelings you have. Write for at least thirty minutes (30 min) on this topic.*

SECTION B: Summary. This is the only part of the assignment submitted. Type as much as you like for each question, space is not limited. When you have completed SECTION A, please answer the following questions:

Figure 1: Example of Emotive Writing Assignment Protocol

An example of the Summary questions for Assignment #1 is provided in the “Qualitative Measures” section below. Summary questions are attached to each of the assignments (Appendices G, H, I, and J).

The topics for the assignments are key principles in C. R. Snyder and Shane Lopez’s *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Mihalyi and Isabella Csikszentmihalyi’s *A Life Worth Living*, *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, 2nd Ed., *The Oxford*

Handbook of Stress, Health, and Coping, and in *The Science of Well-Being*. Based on the premise that the positive thoughts would linger, participants were asked to write their assignments in the order specified. The two aspects of *Forgiveness, Anger, and Joy* were topics selected for this study based on the student responses and class discussions in the Pilot Project of May 2010.

Participants did not submit their assignment topics and received no feedback on their summary questions or on either their pre- or posttests.

Instruments of Assessment

... we know instinctively that every internal change we make, every shift in perspective or belief, automatically activated an external shift in our lives. ~ Caroline Myss

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Form Y (STAI),⁷¹ and the Spiritual Index of Well-Being (SIWB),⁷² were the instruments of assessment chosen for this research experiment. These assessment instruments were selected for their adaptability, familiarity and/or ease. They are both self-report measures which are easy to administer and have been proven reliable assessment measures in research.

State-Trait Anxiety Inventory

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) has been widely used and is well-regarded as an effective self-report measurement in both clinical studies and non-clinical studies. A wide variety of anxiety studies have used the STAI, such as testing the anxiety of physicians in Morocco,⁷³ a mindfulness stress reduction study for organ transplant recipients,⁷⁴ studying job burnout with Italian health care professionals in Brescia, Italy,⁷⁵ and with postnatal depression among high risk women.⁷⁶ The STAI for Adults was designed in 1983 by Charles D. Spielberger, R. L. Gorsuch, R. Lushene, P. R. Vagg, and

G. A. Jacobs, and with the 1989, 2nd Edition, of the *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory: the Comprehensive Bibliography*, more than 3200 studies and reviews were cited.⁷⁷

The STAI consists of forty questions, two twenty item scales, at a sixth grade reading level, taking approximately 15 minutes to complete.⁷⁸ The STAI asks twenty questions, based on how the person feels right now, indicating a *state* or temporary condition of anxiety, or angst, and then asks twenty questions on how the person generally feels, indicating a trait or tendency toward how the person is likely to feel in the future. The state anxiety statements are rated on a 4-point scale, ranging from “not at all” (1), “somewhat” (2), “moderately so” (3), to “very much so” (4), with statements such as, “I feel secure,” and “I feel nervous.” Trait anxiety statements are assessed on a 4-point scale, ranging from “almost never” (1), “sometimes” (2), “often” (3), to “almost always” (4), with statements such as “I feel satisfied with myself” and “I feel inadequate.”⁷⁹ Questions are weighted for the *anxiety-present* questions and scores for S-Anxiety and T-Anxiety scores can each range from 20 to 80. Total scores for the STAI can range from 40 to 160. The higher score indicates a greater degree of anxiety.

Spiritual Index of Well-Being

Spirituality is acknowledged as an effective coping strategy in health care. Gail Ironson and Heidenmarie Kremer list spirituality with “cognitive coping strategies such as positive reappraisal, finding meaning, and optimism”⁸⁰ in their research with HIV patients. Lawler-Row and Elliot found spirituality and prayer instrumental in the “prediction of psychological well-being, subjective well-being, physical symptoms, and depression...” in the health and well-being of older adults⁸¹ which supports the study of the effects of spirituality in stress management with older adults done by Tuck, Alleyne

and Thinganjana.⁸² Holistic nursing has recognized the importance of spirituality in health care and has taken steps to lead in research and publishing the latest studies. Colleen Delaney cited the importance of spirituality, not only as “an integral aspect of nursing care ... but supported in nursing history and theory and validated in research and practice.”⁸³ She further states that: “Mounting evidence of the relationship between spirituality and positive health outcomes has brought spirituality to the borders of mainstream health care and indicates its reunion with science.”⁸⁴

The Spiritual Index of Well-Being was selected as a measure of health-related quality of life, reflecting sense of self, as measured in self-efficacy and life scheme. Daniel Goleman, who has achieved recognition for his Emotional Intelligence theory, defines self-efficacy as “the belief that one has mastery over the events of one’s life and can meet the challenges as they come up.”⁸⁵ Researchers David Vance, Thomas Struzick and James Raper consider spirituality an informal belief system “whereby one derives meaning or purpose, feels connected with a higher power and something larger than self ... rallying internal and external resources to cope with stressful events, achieving goals, and maintaining a good quality of life.”⁸⁶ Daaleman and Frey define life scheme as existential well-being.⁸⁷ The SIWB depicted spirituality “as a cognitive process consistent with both the ‘sense of meaning, purpose, and power’ approach to defining spirituality and the educating of the *whole person*.”⁸⁸ [Author’s italics]. Unlike other assessment measures pertaining to spirituality, the SIWB interprets spirituality in a broader context, open to the interpretation of the individual and not defined in terms of the religious traditions of ritual, practice or attendance.⁸⁹ This allows the instrument to be

used with a broader audience un-restricted by religious terminology or specific interpretation, freeing individuals to apply their own belief system.

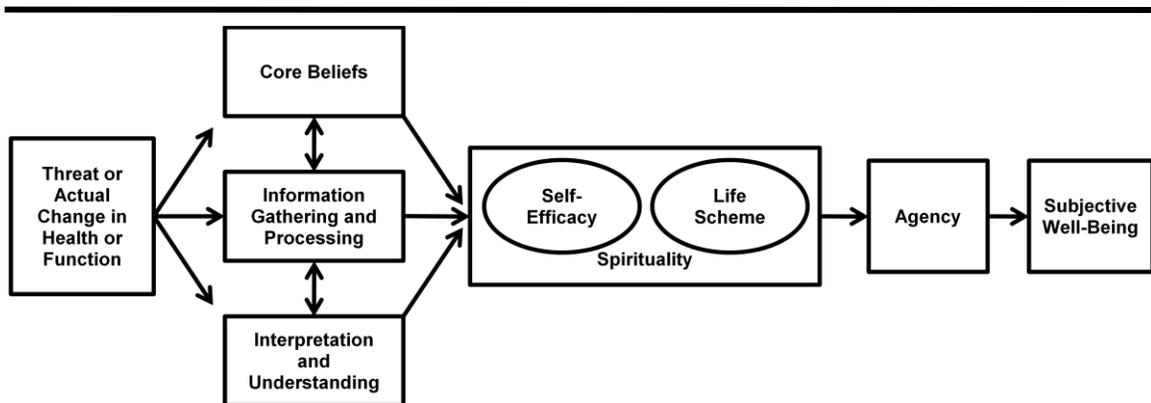


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for Spirituality
Frey, Daaleman, and Peyton, 2005⁹⁰

The concept of spirituality depicted in Frey, Daaleman and Peyton’s figure above shows the two domains: one, the Life Scheme, refers to one’s purpose in life and how a person fits into the world and their subjective view of the world, incorporating threats or change, core beliefs, information gathering, interpretation and processing; the other, Self-Efficacy, “depicts the individual’s belief in the capacity to organize and perform...”⁹¹ and overcome whatever challenges appear, by relying on their own resources, strengths and skills. Both domains of Spirituality are personalized, controlled, and up to the responsibility of the individual, thus illustrating versatility and flexibility.

The SIWB consists of twelve questions divided into two subscales; the first six questions refer to self-efficacy and the last six questions refer to life scheme. Adding the two subscales gives a spirituality scale. The questions are rated on a 5-point, one directional, Likert scale, with (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neither Agree or Disagree, (4) Disagree, and (5) Strongly Disagree, with statements such as, “I don’t know how to begin to solve my problems,” and “I have a lack of purpose in my life.”⁹² Scores

can range from 6 to 30 for each of the subscales, and the total score ranging from 12 to 60. The higher the score, the greater is the indication of spiritual well-being.

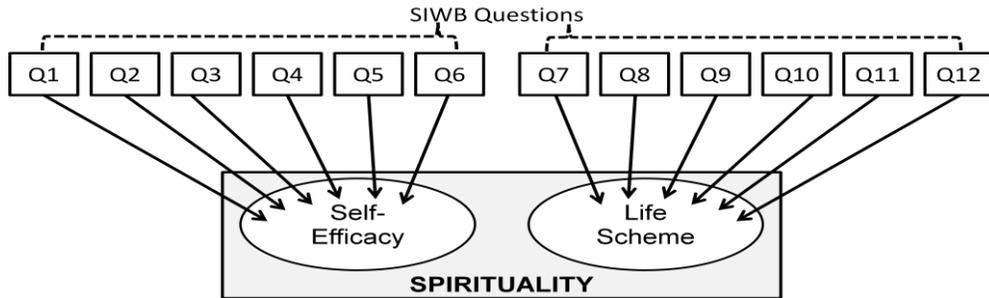


Figure 3: SIWB Assessment Logic Tree
Frey, Daaleman, and Peyton, 2005, Modified, Moldenhauer 2012

Ethical Considerations

Experiences and expressions of gratitude thus shape identity. ~ Robert A. Emmons

Participants were assured that they could leave the project at any time. If they felt uncomfortable, experienced any unusual upset or any form of dis-ease with the study, or had any questions pertaining to these issues, they were given the names and telephone numbers of the Chair of the Study, Dr. Ann Nunley and the Primary Investigator's advisor, Dr. Bob Nunley, as contact personnel. This information was provided in the Consent Form (Appendix C) which they signed and returned to the Technical Team.

Confidentiality of the participants was preserved through several measures. Participants were assigned a random number (see Technical Staff section above), and all data pertaining to the individual participants was identified to the Primary Investigator by this number. A separate website, for the exclusive use of the Technical Team and the participants, was used for sending and returning all self-evaluation questionnaires,

assignment summaries, and any/all comments regarding personal opinions of the study. At no time did the Primary Investigator have access to the names of the participants.

Qualitative Measures

The summary questions following each assignment served two important functions: one, as a compliance check on completing each assignment and two, as a means of rating the relative ease or difficulty of writing on each emotion-related word. Summary questions were returned to the Technical Staff at the secure website.

An example of the summary questions following each assignment follows:

SECTION B: SUMMARY. *This is the only part of the assignment submitted. Type as much as you like for each question, space is not limited.*

When you have completed SECTION A, please answer the following questions:

(Of the two topics)

- *Which one was easier?*
 - *WHY?*
- *Which one was harder?*
 - *WHY?*
- *Did you notice a difference?*
 - *IF SO, WHAT?*
 - *IF SO, HOW?*

Other Comments:

Figure 4: Example of Summary Questions

A synopsis of the selections made by the participants relative to ease in writing topic and their comments will be given in the following chapter with the research study results.

Chapter Summary

Although the task of assessing an individual's relationship and pattern of dealing with the world is far from easy, without an attempt we miss the richness of such a complex system and its subsequent health benefits, and do not give appropriate primacy to the psychological skills of the individual mind. ~ Kenneth R. Pelletier

Chapter Two has described the Emotive Writing research study, the duration of the project, how the participants were recruited and where, the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the roles of the Primary Investigator and the Technical Staff, the written assignments and how they were sent and received, the qualitative instruments used as assessment measures in the pre-and posttests, ethical considerations and confidentiality, and qualitative measures used. Chapter Three presents the results of the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Whereas inhibition is potentially harmful, confronting our deepest thoughts and feelings can have remarkable short- and long-term health benefits. ~ James W. Pennebaker

Quantitative

The study in Emotive Writing using emotion-related words to relieve anxiety and enhance spiritual well-being was conducted with a convenience sample of fifteen participants ($n = 15$). Twenty participants completed both the Consent Form and the Intake Form and fifteen ($n = 15$) or 75% fulfilled the requirements for the study. The participants recruited for this Emotive Writing study were all females, ranging in ages 34 to 66 ($M = 52.26$, $SD = 10.97$). Seven people, (47%), were ages 50 to 59. Fourteen were Caucasian, non-Hispanic, and one marked **Other**, meaning not African-American, not Asian-Pacific, not Native American. One participant did not mark **Health** status, **Marital Status**, or **Education Level**.

Please refer to the Demographic Table which follows for further information.

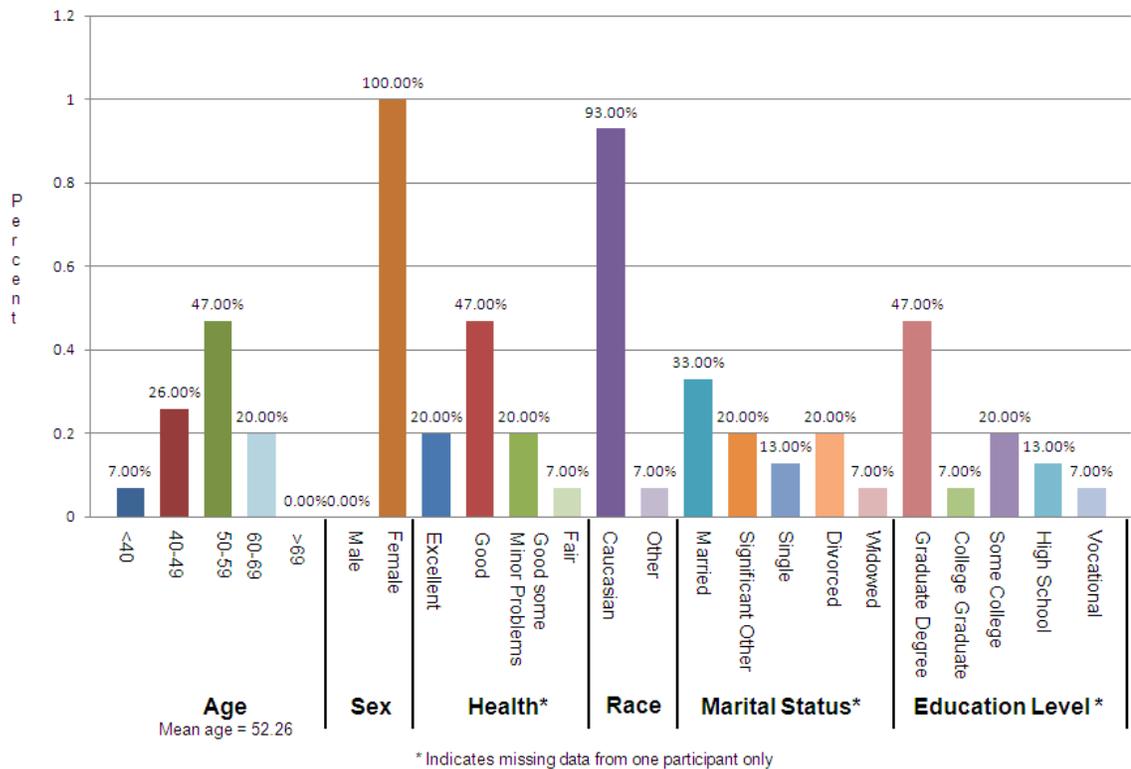


Table 1: Demographics

Looking at the Demographics Table, most participants were healthy and educated, and mostly middle-aged, when “finding one self” is not a primary concern. These factors influence subjective well-being. Most participants, (67%), reported being in Good to Excellent health and 53% reported being in a committed relationship, either Married or had a Significant Other. Even with the one participant not reporting, 74% of the participants had some college, 47% with Graduate Degrees. The recruitment sources produced a homogeneous group with similar belief systems. All participants were female, all but one was Caucasian, and fourteen of the fifteen participants had a high school or higher education.

Spiritual Index of Well-Being (SIWB)

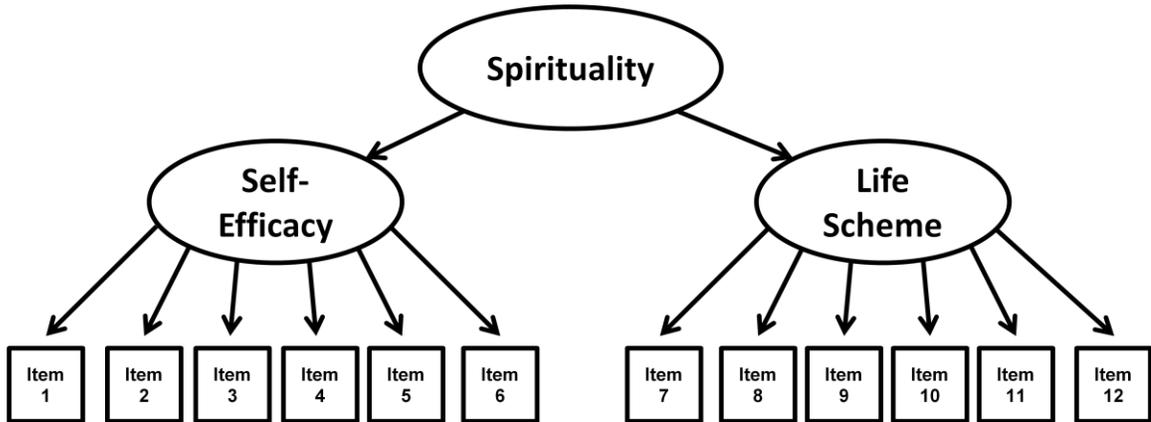


Figure 5: Two Factor Model of Spirituality

Frey, Daaleman, and Peyton, 2005⁹³

Although there was no statistical significance in the results of the SIWB, 8 people (53.33%) scored higher on the posttest in Self-Efficacy; 7 people (46.66%) scored higher on the posttest in Life Scheme. Posttest results also revealed that three people (20%) scored lower on Self-Efficacy and three people (20%) scored lower on the Life Scheme. Two of the three people who scored lower in each category were the same.

Table 2: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory and Spiritual Index of Well Being

	Pre Mean (SD)	Post Mean (SD)	T	Sig
SWIB Self Eval 1: 1-6	25.53 (4.63)	26.27 (4.37)	-1.02	.33
SWIB Self Eval 1: 7-12	23.53 (5.74)	25.13 (5.08)	-1.99	.07
SWIB Self Eval 1: Total	49.07 (9.98)	52.40 (8.85)	-1.80	.09
STAI-STATE Self Eval 2: 1-20	34.07 (9.35)	29.73 (10.06)	2.35	.03*
STAI-TRAIT Self Eval 2: 21-40	35.33 (10.77)	31.53 (10.65)	3.15	.01**
STAI-TOTAL Self Eval 2: total	69.40 (19.48)	61.27 (20.13)	2.94	.01**

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$

Table 2 above illustrates that quantitative measures did not produce statistically significant results in the SIWB. Overall results from the STAI were statistically significant at $p \leq .01$. The results for State-Anxiety were significant at $p \leq .03$ and for

Trait-Anxiety at $p \leq .01$. This study suggests that cognitive processing through Emotive Writing can have beneficial effects on both state and trait anxiety and that Emotive Writing, targeting emotion-related words, can be beneficial in an “every day” environment.

Research Questions

Did the research study answer the questions posed by the Primary Investigator?

Comments from the participants will be used to help answer some of these questions.

1. Can written expression be beneficial to those in “everyday” life?

Based on the results of the STAI for both State-Anxiety and Trait-Anxiety, and the qualitative data from the Assignment Summaries, Emotive Writing can be beneficial.

“... it was nice to have a designated time to sit and write about [gratitude] instead of my normal randomness.”

“... Joy, I was able to take myself to that good feeling place. I remembered how very uplifted I feel and that it always seems to give me goose bumps. It made me want to be in that place more often.”

“... When I think about feeling confident I feel strong and able. I feel able to handle everything, no matter what. I feel assured and peaceful, in control and what I have will be enough ... whatever that might be. My body does not feel stress or pain; in fact, I am not too focused on how I feel physically. I feel calm and complete.”

2. Can people effectively and beneficially use a method such as Emotive Writing as a self-help tool?

This study indicates that Emotive Writing can be effectively and beneficially used as a self-help tool.

[I learned that...] *“... Joy is something we should dwell on more, but the anger is so frustrating that we tend to dwell on it longer. The ‘gotta make it better, fix it’ mentality. Just another way I want to control my world but can’t.”*

“... Thank you for this opportunity to participate ...”

“... it inspired positive instead of painful thoughts.”

3. Would this approach encourage a reduction in state or trait anxiety as measured by the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)?

The STAI produced statistically significant results overall with significant results produced in the State-Anxiety and statistically significant results for the Trait-Anxiety measures.

“... it’s actually pretty easy to get to a positive, joyful place via writing, and it’s something I intend to make a practice of when I feel stuck in negative mind states.”

“... What I learned was fear and sadness was fueling the anger. Clarity of the intertwining emotions gave me new perspective and the ability to accept and forgive.”

“... writing about joy took away the stress in my body.”

4. Would this approach affect spiritual well-being, qualified as self-efficacy and life scheme, as measured by the Spiritual Index of Well-Being (SIWB)?

Assignment Summaries answered this question best.

[In writing about Gratitude... I learned that] *“... It will help get one out of a foul mood.”*

“... I don’t need to waste so much energy being ashamed.”

“... once I overcame the resistance to writing about anger, I began to explore it ... how anger happens, emotionally where is it coming from ... how I have been afraid of anger most of my life and, therefore, sometimes suppress it ... and I found out a lot of myself and what I feel anger really is ... what the message it is sending me.”

“Confidence ... I oozed with enthusiasm, eagerly searching for words that colorfully explained how good I felt ... I felt inspired, happy and proud. My back was straight, shoulders back. I could feel love for myself ... just the thought of being confident made me feel and look confident and I could feel that way for no other reason than I just believed in myself ... ”

5. Are there also qualitative ways to ascertain the effects?

Ascertaining qualitatively the effects of Emotive Writing, focusing on emotion-related words, was accomplished by assessing the personal

comments made in the Summary questions. There may be other ways to measure these effects.

“... i found judgement the easier because i learned something about myself and my tendencies, since I tend to judge a lot. in writing about gratitude i found it fun to just be thankful and write stream of consciousness of all that i am grateful for. i learned that i judge because i feel separate from the cosmos. in doing some personal work this week i have found my place in the world and find it pointless to judge, as all ant and seagull and person have their roles to play.”

*“... I am really grateful for this exercise as in just writing about these two words -- [**Judgment and Gratitude**] has cleared up the confusion I have been experiencing right now. How I have been judging myself negatively in place of being Grateful.”*

“... I opened this assignment hours after talking to a [family member] about someone I cannot forgive --- yet. So writing the first bit, about being forgiven, I was happy to have the opportunity to remember how good it is when someone finally does forgive. That was good. Without the assignment I would not have switched my perspective.”

6. Is there a possible down side to approaching subconscious emotions in this way?

Emotive Writing focusing on emotion-related words may trigger painful memories or long-forgotten events that may not be resolved or processed without the help of a professional counselor, Spiritual Director or medical help.

[**I learned that**] *“... judgment makes me feel uncomfortable. Especially if I think it is toward me or something I have done or said. I learned that I do not like to do harm to others and try to think about my actions and words before I act or speak.”*

[**I learned that**] *“... Shame was integrated into the fabric of my childhood, my parents and religion were shame based, values and beliefs taught with the idea that shame would teach humility ... A big part of my life continues to be shaped by and affected by early childhood beliefs about myself ... It is good to go back and rediscover the lingering effects of childhood. It is the only way to change them and grow confident in myself.”*

The researcher specifically sought the answers to these questions in this study by:

- Measuring statistically significant differences in state anxiety resulting from Emotive Writing with emotion-related words using the State-Anxiety questions of the STAI questionnaire.

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory measured statistically significant differences overall at $p \leq .01$ and measured a significant difference in the State-Anxiety at $p \leq .03$.

- Measuring statistically significant differences in trait anxiety resulting from Emotive Writing with emotion-related words using the Trait-Anxiety questions of the STAI questionnaire. The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory measured statistically significant differences in Trait-Anxiety at $p \leq .01$.

In relation to spiritual well-being,

- Measuring statistically significant differences in self-efficacy resulting from Emotive Writing with emotion-related words using the SIWB questionnaire. The SIWB did not produce statistically significant differences in self-efficacy scores.
- Measuring statistically significant differences in life scheme resulting from Emotive Writing with emotion-related words using the SIWB questionnaire. The SIWB did not produce statistically significant differences in life scheme scores.

Qualitative

Qualitative results were achieved from the compilation of the Assignment

Summaries.

FORGIVENESS: FORGIVEE/FORGIVER			ANGER/JOY		SHAME/CONFIDENCE		JUDGMENT/GRATITUDE		
Writing Assignment #1 (FORGIVENESS as the one FORGIVEN // FORGIVENESS, as the one doing the FORGIVING)			Writing Assignment #2 (Anger - Joy)		Writing Assignment #3 (Shame - Confidence)		Writing Assignment #4 (Judgment - Gratitude)		
Easier			Easier		Easier		Easier		
Forgivee	Forgiver	Neither	Anger	Joy	Shame	Confidence	Judgment	Gratitude	both
5	7	3	5	10	6	9	3	11	1

Table 3: Summary of Paired-Word Writing Assignment Topics

Participants indicated a topic preference for ease of Emotive Writing for each paired-word assignment. The table above illustrates participants’ selected topic in relation to ease or difficulty in writing. Five participants thought writing as the Forgivee was

easier and seven participants found writing as the Forgiver; however, three participants rated both topics with equal ease of writing. Ten participants found Joy easier to write emotively while five people found Anger the easier of the two topics; nine participants found Emotive Writing easier for Confidence yet six found Shame easier. It is interesting to note that one person found both Judgment and Gratitude equal in ease of Emotive Writing when eleven participants wrote easily on Gratitude and three wrote with ease on Judgment. Personal statements quoted above under “Results: Research Questions” indicate that many times, the topic most difficult to write about was also the topic that produced the most unexpected emotional and cognitive insights. For example, one participant wrote about Anger and Joy. **[I found:]** “Joy **[Was easier to write about because:]** *It felt better. Joy flowed out of me unlike Anger. I really had a hard time getting going with Anger. When I did get going with anger it flowed and I could hardly stop. Joy was light and easy, it was fun. I wrote just as fast as I did with Anger yet it was easy. Anger was just so heavy and hard.* **[In writing about:]** *Joy ... I learned that they both can be addictive. I had not really realized in my everyday life how addictive both attitudes are. After writing about Anger I did a meditation on gratitude to get out of that frame of mind. I did not want to stay there. I notice in my everyday life when I am feeling anger it is hard to get out of that state. I feel funky for a while even after I express myself. With Joy I wanted to stay in that state! I loved it and really found myself even getting up and doing the happy dance and jumping around the room after I finished writing. With the anger I knew I could stay there if I wanted to but I really did not want to perpetuate the anger. I had never really been able to put my finger on why I needed to stay in anger*

for awhile but after my experience writing about Joy it dawned on me that this is addictive.”

The deepest insights, which would apply to self-efficacy, may come from writing about topics that are difficult to face, topics one avoids within oneself. An example of this can be found in the following: “*Joy [Was easier to write about because:] joy is happy making. Feeling joy is experiencing: delight; feeling blissful, fun ... I felt totally filled up and satisfied.*” [In writing about:] “*Anger, [I learned that:] I felt boxed in, in a narrow emotional tunnel that was dark and dangerous. I felt that I could be dark and dangerous if I let those feelings take over and become uncontrolled, without thought or reason. I have learned that there is a huge amount of destructive energy released when I am pushed to the depths of my anger. Anger can make me sick. Thus, I choose not to go there. Most of the time that is possible.*”

Because it is these kinds of insights that often indicate real shifts and changes in emotional processing, these insights may have been at the root of the changes noted in the STAI. Qualitative measures may not serve well to assess quantitative outcomes, but they extend our understanding of the real outcomes of studies such as this one. Quoting from Chapter One, “Considerations derived from the Pilot Project,” *Not all positive changes can be measured in quantitative assessments.*

Summary

If we imagine human experience as following along a bell curve with illness and despair at the left tail of the slope, joy and creativity at the other end, and the great majority of experiences around the middle neutral point, one could say that for the past half century or so psychology in the United States has been focusing almost exclusively on the left-hand tail of the curve.

~ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

The results of the study revealed few differences in the participants. This created a homogeneous group, averaging 52.26 years, all female, having similar belief systems and most having at least some college. Results of the Spiritual Index of Well-Being did not reveal extreme differences among scores nor were there statistically significant results. The STAI produced statistically significant results at $p \leq .01$ overall. The State-Anxiety results were significant at $p \leq .03$ and Trait-Anxiety produced statistically significant results at $p \leq .01$. Qualitative results were not statistically calculated but provided a deeper understanding of how participants responded to the experience. The final chapter gives a discussion of the results, conclusions and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 4: SUMMATION

As people experience sincere positive feelings, the more ordered information flowing from the heart to the brain acts to facilitate cortical function and improve cognitive performance. These findings may help explain the significant shifts in perception, increased mental clarity, and heightened intuitive awareness many individuals report when practicing heart-centered, positive emotion-refocusing and restructuring techniques. ~ Rollin McCraty and Robert A. Rees

The purpose of this study was to study the effects of Emotive Writing focusing on specific emotion-related words to reduce anxiety and enhance spiritual well-being, in the context of self-efficacy and life scheme. This research study was conducted with a small sample population, consisting of fifteen women, ($n = 15$), ranging in ages 34 to 66 years old, ($M = 52.26$, $SD = 10.97$). Participants were recruited from areas that shared similar belief systems, with 67% of the participants reporting Good to Excellent Health, 74% reporting some college, 47% with graduate degrees, and 53% of the participants married or having a Significant Other. There were insufficient data regarding yearly income.

This study was conducted over the internet to facilitate as many as people as possible as a pretest/posttest, two-tailed study. Two assessment instruments were used, the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) to measure State-Anxiety and Trait-Anxiety and the Spiritual Index of Well-Being (SIWB) to measure spirituality in terms of self-efficacy and life scheme.

A 4-week Emotive Writing class conducted by the PI in May 2010, at an area Unity Church, served as the Pilot Project and inspiration for this research study in Emotive Writing. Both the Pilot Project and this study used paired emotion-related words as the basis for the writing protocol designed by the PI. Four Emotive Writing assignments, consisting of paired emotion-related words were given with instructions to “write for a minimum of thirty minutes (30)” on each topic, for a total writing time of 1

hour a week per assignment for four weeks. Participants were instructed to write “with as much expressive feeling as you possibly can.” Topic selection was based on four of the six topics used in the Pilot. Assignments were not submitted for review; however, completion and submission of questionnaires based on the Assignment topics insured compliance with the assignment writing. The completed questionnaire for each assignment was submitted prior to receiving the next assignment. The confidentiality of the participants was assured with both assignment of a random number for each person and a secure website for the exclusive use of the participants and the Technical Staff. At no time was the PI aware of who was in the research study or their answers to pre-and posttests and summaries.

Due to the timing of the research study, fluctuating enrollment in the study, illness, computer challenges, and miscellaneous delays, the study lasted from December 2010 to February 2011.

Discussion

The mind is a marvelous instrument when compared to any form of technology... A fact of the human condition is that belief has led to virtually every advancement of humankind, including biological progress. ~ Eldon Taylor

Few differences were seen in the population sample due to the homogeneity of the group. The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, one of the assessment instruments selected for this study, proved to be effective in measuring State-Anxiety and Trait-Anxiety; however, the Spiritual Index of Well-Being was not the most effective tool to assess the potential for changes in spiritual well-being resulting from the intervention because this group of participants was drawn from spiritually-based areas or holistically minded businesses; they were Unity churches, Holos University Graduate Seminary, a

metaphysical bookstore, a yoga studio and a chiropractic office. These like-minded settings are composed of people who share many of the following beliefs: finding the sacred in the everyday, having some belief beyond what they can see and hear, feeling a connectedness to all life, seeing themselves as an active part of the whole world, not only responsible for their own health but creatively contributing to the betterment of all. Assignment word topics, such as Forgiveness and Gratitude, reflect the influence of spirituality in terms of self-efficacy and life scheme. In a broader, less homogenous population sample, the SIWB might be more indicative of change. A spirituality inventory was selected to acknowledge the importance of recognizing spirituality in health care. Although qualitative data was not significant, State-Anxiety and Trait-Anxiety may have been influenced by the personal explorations and cognitive processing of the participants.

There was no feedback or discussion for the participants during this entire study and the PI examined the qualitative data from the Assignment Summaries after the Technical Staff had edited the material. Unlike the class discussions in the Pilot Project, this research study was an internal one. How much more cognitive processing occurs with verbal disclosure or simply discussion of the topic?

This study took longer than anticipated by the PI but several factors influenced the time delays: the study was initiated immediately following Thanksgiving and continued past the New Year. Although distance was not a factor because participants interfaced with the internet, holiday time is a time of social commitments, travel and susceptibility to illness, holiday mood swings, and expectations on the part of the PI regarding a “working knowledge” of the computer. A simple “cut and paste” instruction

was not understood by all participants. Considering all the challenges, it is commendable that fifteen out of the twenty who signed and returned the Consent and Intake forms completed the study.

Further examination is needed to find the most appropriate assessment tools for this kind of research study. The possibility that the PI has to design her own measure belies the value of the older, proven measurements such as the STAI. Perhaps new methods of research require new testing methods.

As an independent tool, Emotive Writing offers some advantages to other self-help methods by allowing the individual to be in control of the time and place of writing and does not require a facilitator. For individuals with busy schedules, this flexibility is valuable. There are differences of opinion as to whether physically writing is more effective than the use of electronic devices; with the advances in technology, that option may be more of a personal preference than a therapeutic consideration of taking pen/pencil to paper. The personal preference for the PI is the physical act of writing because it symbolizes the actual movement and transfer of energy from heart to head to hand to paper. The time allotted for writing, needs to be long enough to overcome resistance to writing about certain emotions and relax into the process. As the comments written by participants illustrate, writing about positive emotions can affect the whole body-mind-spirit. As Barbara Fredrickson, Robert Emmons, Michael McCullough and others have shown, these positive emotions are the reserves for coping in times of stress and anxiety, yet there was merit in writing about the so called “negative emotions.” One participant wrote, *“I discovered, for me, anger is a psychic protection of my being...deflecting the full force of what I perceive as a devastating violation of who I am.*

And so, anger is a force I step into ... a power I step into to let someone know I will not be treated in any way that would harm me. Anger says, 'I matter and I am valuable.'
Anger gives me a feeling of self-control of the situation ...”

Conclusions

In spite of all the enforced physical and mental primitiveness of the life in a concentration camp, it was possible for spiritual life to deepen. ~ Viktor E. Frankl

Emotive Writing has shown to be an effective tool for many in studies where participants began with a trauma or an anxiety-producing situation/event. The questions the PI asked herself were, “Can Emotive Writing be an effective tool when the writing is initiated by emotion and feeling, rather than a dis-ease of mind or body? Is there an exercise that promotes proactive mental health care?” These questions align themselves with the holistic approach to health care which acknowledges the individual’s responsibility for taking care of body, mind and spirit. The PI believes that there is value in this research which can be applied “anywhere,” by “anyone,” but, in this study, was not reflected by one of the chosen quantitative measures, the SIWB. The PI believes there are longer lasting effects to this writing process, as one participant wrote, “*I find it interesting how easy it is to write about the negative emotions but how much better I actually feel during and after writing about the positive emotions.*”

Suggestions for Future Research

Results of this research study suggest Emotive Writing to be an effective self-help tool in a non-clinical setting due to its flexibility and portability. Quantitative data from both the Pilot Project and this study indicate the benefit of future studies in wider sample groups. Participants for this study were spiritually-based, having strong personal beliefs

which reflected spiritual aspects of prayer, meditation, yoga, and mindfulness, which accounted for little variation in scores in the SIWB; a more divergent group is recommended for future research. The inclusion on the Intake form of a question regarding a personal spiritual belief may provide helpful data in future studies. The results of this study suggest greater differences in larger groups but still with population samples that are not identified by some dis-ease or trauma and independent of any recognized physical and/or psychological condition. Clinical settings have an advantage for research projects using Emotive Writing, to ensure compliance with the writing protocol, as do studies requiring submission of writing assignments to a “neutral party” for a word count assessment; however, the ability to “do it yourself” has an attractiveness all its own.

Emotive Writing has been used therapeutically in several ways: journaling, narrative writing, autobiographies, and poetry, to name a few. In closing, the Primary Investigator would like to end with a poem, written by a friend, a Vietnam veteran nurse, who suffered for many years with post-traumatic stress disorder and found relief, healing, and release in a form of Emotive Writing. She chose poetry.

For T. R. On His Wedding Day

*“My heart came home today and found a place to rest at last.
The journey has been hard and haunted by the past.
A past whose relentless cost and toll
Was paid by the loss of heart and soul.*

*It was long ago I lost my heart.
It was ripped from me and torn apart.
It was in a land so far away
I knew I could never find my way.*

*A land of faces, noise and smells.
A land of many different hells.*

*A past whose path was long and rough
I despaired. I could never do enough.*

*I lost my faith when I lost my heart.
I've lived my life as one apart.
So much pain. So many tears.
So much anger for so many years.*

*I searched for a place to be safe and whole.
A place of peace for heart and soul.
A place to rest --- a place to breathe
A place to learn to love and believe.*

*I've found that place I could never find.
A place of joy and peace of mind.
I didn't believe it would ever come true.
My heart came home today. It found its home with you!"*

Ann Lee, USANC, CPT (Ret) ⁹⁴

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**APPENDIX A:
REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS**

VOLUNTEERS WANTED!

**GRADUATE STUDENT DOING RESEARCH ON THE
EFFECTS OF EXPRESSIVE WRITING ON STRESS,
ANXIETY AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING!**

**PRIVACY ASSURED
CONTRIBUTE TO EXISTING DATA**

**MUST BE 18 YRS OF AGE
MUST BE ABLE TO READ AND UNDERSTAND ENGLISH
TELEPHONE AND COMPUTER ACCESS NECESSARY**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:
CALL: MARSHA A. MOLDENHAUER
417.343.6095/417.889.8051
EMAIL: marshahugs@yahoo.com**

THANK YOU

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Letter of Introduction

Greetings!

Thank you for your participation in this project! We appreciate your willingness to volunteer your time and effort to make this project a success; however, you are free to leave the project at any time. If you should feel any discomfort at any time, please call me, Marsha Moldenhauer, Dr. Ann Nunley or Dr. Bob Nunley.

You will receive two new topics each week and you are asked to write on each topic for at least thirty minutes (30 min) at a time. It is important that you write on the topics in order --- in other words, the first topic first and the second topic second. You do not have to write on both topics at the same sitting; however, it is helpful to set aside the same time every week in which to write. **You have 7 DAYS** to complete your writing assignments. You may finish early and send in your summary but your next assignment will not be available until the following week. We encourage you to be comfortable and to allow your emotions free rein as you write, be as expressive as you can be. Before receiving your next set of topics, please answer four brief questions regarding your topics. The summary questions will be provided along with your weekly topics. Your comments may be used to help evaluate the research.

You are *receiving* this information from marshahugs@yahoo.com, however, you *will send* **ALL your forms, completed questionnaires, and summary questions** to expressivewriting@gmail.com. When you have any questions regarding the research project, please address them to marshahugs@yahoo.com or either of the faculty supervising this study; all other questions please address to the researchers as expressivewriting@gmail.com.

Again, we appreciate your full cooperation in filling out the questionnaires completely and your prompt response. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email me at marshahugs@yahoo.com.

Thank You for your participation!

Marsha A. Moldenhauer, Rev., LMT
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APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

Holos University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time

We are interested in studying the effects of expressive writing on stress, anxiety and spiritual well-being. You will be participating in a four week writing project, which will involve completing brief questionnaires at the beginning and at the end of the four weeks. You will be asked to write on two topics a week, for a minimum of thirty minutes (30 min) per topic, and submit a few brief statements regarding your writing experience before receiving your next writing topics. Although your writings are not submitted, your comments are.

The content of the questionnaires concerns your beliefs and personal assessment of your life, so there may be a chance of feeling slightly uncomfortable with some of the topics discussed in the research. Although participation does not guarantee direct benefits to you, we believe that the information could be useful in evaluating the effects of stress, anxiety and spiritual well-being.

Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. We assure you that your name will not be associated in any way with the research findings. The information will be identified only by a code number. Your anonymous comments and evaluation at the end of the four weeks may be used in the research paper.

If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, please feel free to contact me by phone, mail or email. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact Dr. Ann Nunley, Professor and Dean of Academics, Holos University Graduate Seminary, www.holosuniversity.org, 888-272-6109; Dr. Ann Nunley at 785-863-2176, or Dr. Bob Nunley, at 785.331.7731.

Sincerely,

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Signature of volunteer participant

Date

With my signature, I affirm that I am at least 18 years of age.

Printed name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

**APPENDIX D:
INTAKE FORM**

INTAKE FORM

Name: _____ **Age:** _____

Gender: ___F ___M

Health: In what state of health would you consider yourself?

___ Poor ___ Fair ___ Good, some minor problems ___ Good ___ Excellent

Race: ___ African-American ___ Asian-Pacific

___ Caucasian, Non-Hispanic ___ Hispanic ___ Native American ___ Other

Status: ___ Single ___ Significant Other ___ Married ___ Divorced

___ Widowed

Education: ___ Elementary School ___ Completed High School ___

Some College ___ A.A. Degree ___ Vocational Training/Certification

___ Graduated from College ___ Graduate Degree ___ Other, explain

*Yearly Income: ___ Less than \$15,000 ___ \$15-25,000 ___ \$25-35,000

___ \$35-45,000 ___ \$45-55,000 ___ \$55-65,000 ___ \$65-75,000

___ \$75-85,000 ___ \$85-100,000 ___ \$100,000 plus

**APPENDIX E:
INITIAL RESPONSE LETTER (ORIGINAL)**

Initial Response Letter (Original)

Thank you for your interest!

The study is a four week study involving expressive writing, which you do privately in your own space. It is not shared. The writing consists of four assignments, one a week, of two topics a week. You are asked to write for 30 min on each topic, but you are not expected to write on both topics at one sitting. You can split it up into two days or more, whatever fits your schedule. After your writing is completed, you submit answers to 3-4 brief questions (to show that you did the assignment.) Then you get your next assignment. Before the first assignment is given, the 2 short self-evaluation forms have to be completed and submitted. When the fourth assignment is completed, along with the summary questions, you will be given the same questionnaires you had at the beginning of the study.

I am sending you some information and just let me know if you are interested so we can expect to see your completed forms. I am sending you the Introductory Letter, the Consent Form and the Intake Form in two formats. If you decide to participate, please "sign" the Consent Form (any "signature" font will do) and complete the data Intake Form. You may have to copy to a Word format, save and send. Please return all forms to expressivewriting@gmail.com. This is a double blind study. You keep all the writing that you do other than the Consent Form, Intake Form, self-evaluation questionnaires and the assignment summaries. It is explained in the Introduction Letter.

Please feel free to call me or email if you have any questions regarding the study. My cell phone number is 417.343.6095 and home phone number is 417.889.8051.

I look forward to hearing from you, _____!

Rev. Marsha A. Moldenhauer, LMT
Holos Graduate Student
4249 E. Kingsbury Street
Springfield, MO 65809
417.889.8051

**APPENDIX F:
ORIGINAL RESPONSE LETTER (REVISED)**

Original Response Letter (Revised)

Thank you for your interest!

The study is a four week study involving expressive writing, which you do privately in your own space. It is not shared. The writing consists of four assignments, one a week, of two topics a week. You are asked to write for 30 min on each topic, but you are not expected to write on both topics at one sitting. You can split it up into two days or more, whatever fits your schedule. After your writing is completed, you submit answers to 3-4 brief questions (to show that you did the assignment.) Then you get your next assignment. Before the first assignment is given, the 2 short self-evaluation forms have to be completed and submitted. When the fourth assignment is completed, along with the summary questions, you will be given the same questionnaires you had at the beginning of the study.

I am sending you some information and just let me know if you are interested so we can expect to see your completed forms. I am sending you the Introductory Letter, the Consent Form and the Intake Form in two formats. If you decide to participate, please "sign" the Consent Form (any cursive font will do) and complete the data Intake Form. You may have to copy to a Word format, save and send. Please return all forms to expressivewriting@gmail.com. This is a double blind study. You keep all the writing that you do other than the Consent Form, Intake Form, self-evaluation questionnaires and the assignment summaries. It is explained in the Introduction Letter. *Your part in the study is confirmed with the completion and return of the Consent and Intake Forms and the self-evaluation questionnaires.*

Please feel free to call me or email if you have any questions regarding the study. My cell phone number is 417.343.6095 and home phone number is 417.889.8051. I look forward to hearing from you, _____!

Rev. Marsha A. Moldenhauer, LMT
Holos Graduate Student
4249 E. Kingsbury Street
Springfield, MO 65809
417.889.8051

**APPENDIX G:
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 AND SUMMARY QUESTIONS**

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1

//// Each writing assignment has two sections; Sections A and B. Only Section B is emailed to expressivewriting@gmail.com. \\\

SECTION A: Expressive Writing. Please make yourself comfortable and write on the following two topics, in order, with as much expressive feeling as you possibly can. For each topic, write for a minimum of thirty minutes (30 min). You may write on the topics at separate sittings, for example, Topic One on Monday and Topic Two on Tuesday, whatever is most comfortable for you. **Remember: Your writing is not submitted.**

*Please write on the following topics: **FORGIVENESS / FORGIVENESS***

*You are asked to write on **Forgiveness** from the perspective of the forgivee, the one who is forgiven. With as much feeling and emotion as possible, write what it feels like, real or imagined, to be forgiven of some action, word or situation. How does it feel? What emotions come to mind? If you cannot relate to this point of view, imagine you have erred in some great way and how it would feel to be forgiven of your words and/or actions. Be sure to note the body sensations and feelings. Write for at least thirty minutes (30 min) on this topic.*

*Now, you are asked to write on **Forgiveness** as the person doing the forgiving. With as much feeling and emotion as possible, visualize a situation, person, place or event in your life in which you practiced forgiveness. How does it feel? What emotions come to mind? If you cannot relate to a real life situation, or you are unable to place yourself in that position, imagine how your life would be if you were able to forgive. How does that feel? Note the body sensations and feelings you have. Write for at least thirty minutes (30 min) on this topic.*

SECTION B: Summary. This is the only part of the assignment submitted. Type as much as you like for each question, space is not limited. When you have completed SECTION A, please answer the following questions:

Of the two topics, Forgiveness, as the one Forgiven, **and** Forgiveness, as the one doing the Forgiving,

which one was easier?: --()--**WHY?**: __

which one was harder?: --()--**WHY?**: --

did you notice a difference?: --

IF SO, WHAT?: --

IF SO, HOW?: --

Other Comments: --

PLEASE EMAIL THIS COMPLETED SUMMARY PAGE TO expressivewriting@gmail.com WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED ASSIGNMENT #1.

**APPENDIX H:
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 AND SUMMARY QUESTIONS**

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2

//// Each writing assignment has two sections; Sections A and B. Only Section B is emailed to expressivewriting@gmail.com. \\\

SECTION A: Expressive Writing. Please make yourself comfortable and write on the following two topics, in order, with as much expressive feeling as you possibly can. For each topic, write for a minimum of thirty minutes (30 min). You may write on the topics at separate sittings, for example, Topic One on Monday and Topic Two on Tuesday, whatever is most comfortable for you. **Remember: Your writing is not submitted.**

*Please write on the following topics: **ANGER / JOY***

*With as much feeling and emotion as possible, write what it feels like, real or imagined to be **Angry** with some person, place, thing or event. How does it feel? What other emotions come to mind? If you cannot relate to this point of view, imagine being furious, and describe the body sensations and feelings you have in this frame of mind. Note the body sensations and feelings you have. Write for at least thirty minutes (30 min) on this topic.*

*Now, you are asked to write on **JOY**. With as much feeling and emotion as possible, visualize a situation, person, place or event in your life in which you experienced great joy! How does it feel? What emotions come to mind? If you cannot relate to a real life situation, or you are unable to place yourself in that position, imagine a situation that would bring you great joy. How does that feel? Note the body sensations and feelings you have. Write for at least thirty minutes (30 min) on this topic.*

SECTION B: Summary. This is the only part of the assignment submitted. Type as much as you like for each question, space is not limited. When you have completed SECTION A, please answer the following questions:

Of the two topics, --Angry *and* Joy,

I found: --()--Was easier to write about because:--

In writing about: --(.....)--I learned that: --

Other Comments: --

PLEASE EMAIL THIS COMPLETED SUMMARY PAGE TO expressivewriting@gmail.com WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED ASSIGNMENT #2.

**APPENDIX I:
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #3 AND SUMMARY QUESTIONS**

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #3

//// Each writing assignment has two sections; Sections A and B. Only Section B is emailed to expressivewriting@gmail.com. \\\

SECTION A: Expressive Writing. Please make yourself comfortable and write on the following two topics, in order, with as much expressive feeling as you possibly can. For each topic, write for a minimum of thirty minutes (30 min). You may write on the topics at separate sittings, for example, Topic One on Monday and Topic Two on Tuesday, whatever is most comfortable for you. **Remember: Your writing is not submitted.**

*Please write on the following topics: **SHAME / CONFIDENCE***

*With as much feeling and emotion as possible, write what **Shame** feels like, real or imagined. Visualize some person, place, thing or event which has provoked **shameful** feelings. How does it feel? What other emotions come to mind? If you cannot relate to this point of view, imagine being publicly humiliated, and describe the body sensations and feelings you have in this frame of mind. Note the body sensations and feelings you have. Write for at least thirty minutes (30 min) on this topic.*

*Now, write on **Confidence**. With as much feeling and emotion as possible, visualize a situation, person, place or event in your life in which you experienced great **confidence**! How does it feel? What emotions come to mind? If you cannot relate to a real life situation, or you are unable to place yourself in that position, imagine a situation or accomplishment or talent/gift that you possess that gives you **confidence**. How does that feel? Note the body sensations and feelings you have. Write for at least thirty minutes (30 min) on this topic.*

SECTION B: Summary. This is the only part of the assignment submitted. Type as much as you like for each question, space is not limited. When you have completed SECTION A, please answer the following questions:

Of the two topics, --Shame **and** Confidence,

I found: -- ()--**Was easier to write about because:** --

In writing about: --()--**I learned that:** --

Other Comments:

PLEASE EMAIL THIS COMPLETED SUMMARY PAGE TO
expressivewriting@gmail.com **WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED ASSIGNMENT #3.**

APPENDIX J:
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #4 AND SUMMARY QUESTIONS

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #4

//// Each writing assignment has two sections; Sections A and B. Only Section B is emailed to expressivewriting@gmail.com. \\\

SECTION A: Expressive Writing. Please make yourself comfortable and write on the following two topics, in order, with as much expressive feeling as you possibly can. For each topic, write for a minimum of thirty minutes (30 min). You may write on the topics at separate sittings, for example, Topic One on Monday and Topic Two on Tuesday, whatever is most comfortable for you. **Remember: Your writing is not submitted.**

*Please write on the following topics: **JUDGMENT / GRATITUDE***

*With as much feeling and emotion as possible, write what **Judgment** feels like, real or imagined. Visualize some person, place, thing or event which has provoked feelings of **judgment of you**. How does it feel? What other emotions come to mind? If you cannot relate to this point of view, imagine judging someone falsely and note the body sensations and feelings you have in this frame of mind. Describe the body sensations and feelings you have. Write for at least thirty minutes (30 min) on this topic.*

*Now, write on **Gratitude**. With as much feeling and emotion as possible, visualize a situation, person, place or event in your life in which you experienced great **Gratitude!** How does it feel? What emotions come to mind? If you cannot relate to a real life situation, or you are unable to place yourself in that position, imagine a situation or accomplishment or talent/gift that you possess that gives you that **Gratitude**. How does that feel? Note the body sensations and feelings you have. Write for at least thirty minutes (30 min) on this topic.*

SECTION B: Summary. This is the only part of the assignment submitted. Type as much as you like for each question, space is not limited. When you have completed SECTION A, please answer the following questions:

Of the two topics, -- Judgement **and** Gratitude,

I found: --()--**Was easier to write about because:** --

In writing about: -- ()--**I learned that:** --

Other Comments: --

PLEASE EMAIL THIS COMPLETED SUMMARY PAGE TO
expressivewriting@gmail.com **WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED ASSIGNMENT #4.**

APPENDIX K: STATE-TRAIT ANXIETY INVENTORY (STAI)

(STATE)

For use by Marsha A Moldenhauer only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on October 1, 2010

SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE STAI Form Y-1

Please provide the following information:

Name _____ Date _____ S _____
 Age _____ Gender (Circle) M F T _____

DIRECTIONS:

A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then blacken the appropriate circle to the right of the statement to indicate how you feel *right now*, that is, *at this moment*. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe your present feelings best.

MODERATELY SO
 VERY MUCH SO
 SOMEWHAT
 NOT AT ALL

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I feel calm..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I feel secure..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I am tense..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I feel strained..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I feel at ease..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. I feel upset..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I am presently worrying over possible misfortunes..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. I feel satisfied..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. I feel frightened..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. I feel comfortable..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. I feel self-confident..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. I feel nervous..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. I am jittery..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. I feel indecisive..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. I am relaxed..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. I feel content..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. I am worried..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. I feel confused..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. I feel steady..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. I feel pleasant..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Sample

APPENDIX K: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)

(TRAIT)

For use by Marsha A Moldenhauer only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on October 1, 2010

SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

STAI Form Y-2

Name _____ Date _____

DIRECTIONS

A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then blacken in the appropriate circle to the right of the statement to indicate you *generally* feel.

ALMOST NEVER
SOMETIMES
OFTEN
ALMOST ALWAYS

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 21. I feel pleasant..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. I feel nervous and restless..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. I feel satisfied with myself..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25. I feel like a failure..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26. I feel rested..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27. I am "calm, cool, and collected"..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28. I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29. I worry too much over something that really doesn't matter..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30. I am happy..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31. I have disturbing thoughts..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32. I lack self-confidence..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33. I feel secure..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34. I make decisions easily | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 35. I feel inadequate..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36. I am content..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37. Some unimportant thought runs through my mind and bothers me..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 38. I take disappointments so keenly that I can't put them out of my mind..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 39. I am a steady person..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 40. I get in a state of tension or turmoil as I think over my recent concerns and interests..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

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Published by Mind Garden, Inc., www.mindgarden.com

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**APPENDIX L:
Spiritual Index of Well-Being (SIWB)**

SPIRITUAL INDEX OF WELL-BEING

Annals of Family Medicine Vol. 2 (5), 2004

Timothy P. Daaleman & Bruce B. Frey

Which response best describes how you feel about each statement?

<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neither Agree</u> <u>nor Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strong</u> <u>Disagree</u>		
1	2	3	4	5		
1.	There is not much I can do to help myself.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Often, there is no way I can complete what I have started.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I can't begin to understand my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I am overwhelmed when I have personal difficulties and problems.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I don't know how to begin to solve my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	There is not much I can do to make a difference in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I haven't found my life's purpose yet.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I don't know who I am, where I came from, or where I am going.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I have a lack of purpose in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	In this world, I don't know where I fit in.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I am far from understanding the meaning of life.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	There is a great void in my life at this time.	1	2	3	4	5

(Points coincide with number of answer indicated)

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