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INTRODUCTION

As you work your way through the book, you will notice that some of the items on the various tests are not directly relevant to your situation. You will be asked about disciplining your children, your relationship with your family, or your feelings about colleagues at work, situations that not everyone has experienced. When you come across one of these items that does not apply to your life, try to answer it as you imagine you would feel if you had such an experience. Even though your response is only your best guess, by responding to such items your final score will be more accurate than it would be had you skipped over the item.

Please use the book as I have intended. Use it as a guide for organizing your thoughts about your life and the barriers that are preventing you from getting what you want out of life and your relationships. Use it as a starting place for making the changes that will help you accomplish your goals. You can even use it with your spouse or a close friend to help you better understand any conflicts you may be having in your relationships. We do not always see ourselves as others do. But remember, this book is only a place for you to begin to ask the relevant questions and to begin your search for the appropriate answers. I hope you enjoy the process of self-discovery and find it as useful as I wish it to be for you.

A Few Words about Scoring

After each test you will find directions for scoring your responses to the items. The instructions are straightforward, but there is one concept that can be a little confusing for those who encounter it for the first time—namely “reverse scoring.” To illustrate, you might be taking a test to measure your level of extraversion and the instructions require you to respond using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicated “not at all,” 2 indicated “some-
PERSONAL BARRIERS

52. I usually avoid getting involved in social activity.
53. My uneasy feelings flare up at any moment.
54. I usually try to avoid walking in crowded streets.
55. I always feel irritable.
56. I hardly ever tell jokes.
57. I am concerned about how others view me.
58. I sometimes have stomach problems.
59. Half of my thoughts are related to some kinds of worries.
60. I try to avoid standing up to other people even if they have taken advantage of me.


SCORING

A different method of test construction was used to develop the Four Systems Anxiety Questionnaire than the other tests in this book and consequently the scoring system is quite different. Each item has a scale value, and to find your score on the four subscales and your total score you must add together values for each item that you responded to with a “Yes.” The values for each item and the subscale it belongs to are provided below. To find your total score, simply add your four subscale scores together.
About the Four Systems Anxiety Questionnaire

Psychologists have known for several decades that anxiety is a multifaceted concept. While all of us would acknowledge having experienced anxiety, the reality is that our experience of “feeling anxious” is probably quite different from how others experience this emotion. Nearly thirty years ago, psychologist Peter Lang proposed three ways in which anxiety can be experienced. The first can be called the cognitive component—what people say to themselves or what they report to others. A man with a dog phobia, for instance, might say “I’m terrified” when he sees a Rotweiller running toward him. The second component is the physiological or somatic reaction. In our example, the dog phobic man may experience a pounding heart or a knot in his stomach when he spots the Rotweiller. The third component of anxiety is behavioral—what our man does when he spots the dog. If he turns to run away, we can be safe in concluding that he is exhibiting a behavioral sign of anxiety.

What makes this concept so interesting is that these three components of anxiety do not correspond with one another very well. In our example above, this man may report to others that he is terrified of dogs, but he may not experience very much physiological arousal when he sees one. As a second example, I know a couple where the wife reports having a mild fear of public speaking, but despite her claim that her fear is slight, she absolutely refuses all invitations to talk to a group, even though it would be good for her business. Her husband, on the other hand, reports a pounding heart and feelings of sheer terror while speaking to groups, but he forces himself to accept invitations nonetheless. We cannot use what people say about themselves to predict with any accuracy what is going on inside them or how they will behave.

Falih Koksal and Kevin Power took this conceptualization of anxiety one step further. They argued that the cognitive compo-
should consult a mental health professional. It simply is not necessary for you to suffer so. But if you have a milder case of behavioral anxiety, you may be able to treat yourself successfully using a technique called in vivo desensitization. This term describes a process of overcoming anxiety by exposing oneself gradually to the real-life situations that elicit the anxiety. I met a woman once who successfully treated herself for agoraphobia using this technique even though she had never heard about it before. It is a commonsense approach that can be quite effective.

This woman, I’ll call her Susan, developed a fear of leaving her house shortly after the birth of her first child. Within a few months, her fear was so severe that she would not venture outside her front door unless she was accompanied by her husband. After suffering from this debilitating anxiety for several more months, she decided she had to do something about it. Intuitively, she concluded that the best way to overcome her fear was to attack it in small steps. So, for the first week, her goal was simply to walk out the front door and stand on her porch for brief periods of time. The first day, she was able to do this for less than a minute, but by the end of the week, she could stand outdoors for ten minutes without feeling uncomfortable. Her next goal was to walk down to the curb to check her mailbox. This took her nearly two weeks. At first, she would take a few steps off the porch and would feel overwhelmed by the anxiety. But each day she forced herself to take an additional step, and by the end of the second week, she could stand by the mailbox and look through her mail without any sense of panic.

Each time Susan accomplished one goal, she would set a slightly more ambitious goal for her next step. Her progress was slow but steady, and by the end of a year Susan was able to go where she wanted by herself. For several more months, she always felt “on edge” during these excursions, and occasionally the anxiety would become quite intense. During these episodes, she would park her car or sit on a bench until she could feel herself relax.
3

How Depressed Are You?

THE AUTOMATIC
THOUGHTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Listed below are a variety of thoughts that pop into people's heads. Please read each thought and indicate how frequently, if at all, the thought occurred to you over the last week. Please read each item carefully and indicate the appropriate response using the scale below.

5 = All the time
4 = Often
3 = Moderately often
2 = Sometimes
1 = Not at all

____ 1. I feel like I’m up against the world.
____ 2. I’m no good.
____ 3. Why can’t I ever succeed?
____ 4. No one understands me.
____ 5. I’ve let people down.
____ 6. I don’t think I can go on.
____ 7. I wish I were a better person.
____ 8. I’m so weak.
____ 9. My life’s not going the way I want it to.
6. In class, or in a group, I am unlikely to express my opinion because I fear that others may not think well of it or of me.

7. I keep still or tell “little white lies” in the company of my friends so as not to reveal to them that I am different (or think differently) from them.

8. There are many aspects of my behavior over which I have very little control.

9. I often find that my own inclinations have little to do with what I actually do or say.

10. I have trouble taking orders because they often conflict with my own inclinations.


12. I am basically good at following through with my plans.

13. I never say anything I don’t mean.

14. I have my own code of behavior and I follow it to the letter.

15. All one’s behavior should be directed toward a certain small number of definite personal goals.

16. “Tell it like it is” is always the best policy.

17. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.

18. I would probably make a good actor because I can play any role.

19. I have very little trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.

20. In informal discussions I often speak in favor of an unpopular position in order to cause people to think more carefully about what they are saying.

21. I can only argue for ideas to which I am strongly committed.
### About the Personal Behavior Inventory

Philosophers, poets, novelists, and of course psychologists have engaged in a lively debate about the determinants of human behavior. On the one hand, there are those who argue that people are prisoners of social forces that they cannot resist. This view suggests that we all, to varying degrees, conform to the expectations that others have for us. On the other hand, there are those who believe that every person has a unique configuration that evolves from biological predispositions and early childhood experiences. This view suggests that behavior is determined by forces that lie within each individual.

Psychologist Julian Rotter entered this fray in the 1960s when he proposed a personality dimension called internal-external locus of control. Rotter argued that people varied in terms of how they perceived the world. Those who scored at the internal end of his scale believed that they were in control, that their efforts made a difference in how their lives unfolded. Those who scored at the external end of the scale believed that luck or powerful

### NORMS

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by the things they say to themselves about the things that happen to them. To illustrate this distinction, suppose you go to work one morning and your boss greets you with the news that you are fired. While it may make sense to you that your bad feelings are a result of your termination and uncertain future, Ellis’s response would be, “You’re not depressed because you lost your job, you’re depressed because of what you are saying to yourself about losing your job. You’re probably telling yourself that losing your job is a tragedy, that it proves what a loser you are, and that you will never find suitable work again.” Ellis would go on to tell you that it was too bad you lost your job, but it is not the end of the world. You should use the experience to learn something about yourself that will increase the odds of success on your next job. And it is doubtful that you were actually happy in a job from which you were fired, so this experience offers you the opportunity to find work that will be more satisfying. Ellis argues that to tell yourself that losing your job is a tragedy is irrational and that to feel better, you must adopt more rational, logical ways of viewing the world.

Ellis outlined numerous irrational beliefs that were especially prevalent among unhappy, distressed people, and the Survey of Personal Beliefs was developed by Howard Kassinove and Andrew Berger to reflect these common, irrational beliefs. As you can see from reading the items on this test, Ellis’s list of irrational beliefs reflects a handful of common themes. One of these is that to feel worthwhile, we must be loved and approved of by virtually everyone. While most of us would agree that it is impossible for everyone to like or approve of us, many people feel genuinely devastated when they learn that a colleague or acquaintance harbors negative feelings about them. Many others will make poor decisions with the hope that it will inspire liking and approval from others. (Do the names of any politicians come to mind?) Healthy people can accept that they are disliked by others, and they are able to make the right decision even when they know it will anger some people.
Ellis’s classic book, *A Guide to Rational Living*, is an excellent guide to help in your effort to think more rationally and logically, but the essence of this technique is to articulate these rational statements when you find you are feeling bad. So, if you feel depressed when you learn a coworker has said something nasty about you, tell yourself, “I can’t please everyone. I would be a rather bland person if no one disliked me.” If you feel anxious while thinking about some small problem, remind yourself that it is beyond your control and that your life is not going to be much different no matter what happens. As always, keep in mind that the key to success in making these changes is persistence and consistency.
HOW IMPULSIVE ARE YOU?

SCORING

The scores for the following items must be reversed (4 = 1, 3 = 2, 2 = 3, and 1 = 4): 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 20, 29, and 30. After reversing these items, you can find your scores on three subscales as well as a total score. The first subscale is called Nonplanning and consists of items 1, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 27, and 29. The second subscale is called Motor Impulsiveness and consists of items 2, 3, 4, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, and 30. The third subscale is called Cognitive Impulsiveness and consists of items 5, 6, 9, 11, 20, 24, 26, and 28. Add your responses for all 30 items together for your total impulsiveness score.

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About the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale

Psychologist Ernest Barratt, of the University of Texas Medical Branch, has devoted much of his career to the study of impulsiveness. Barratt became interested in this trait when he noticed that many of his clients’ problems seemed to be related to their inability to resist their impulses and to plan for the future. To
PERSONAL BARRIERS

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38. Face (facial features, complexion)
39. Hair (color, thickness, texture)
40. Lower torso (buttocks, hips, thighs, legs)
41. Midtorso (waist, stomach)
42. Upper torso (chest or breasts, shoulders, arms)
43. Muscle tone
44. Weight
45. Height
46. Overall appearance


SCORING

The first step is to reverse the score (5 = 1, 4 = 2, 3 = 3, 2 = 4, and 1 = 5) for the following items: 6, 11, 12, 15, 17, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, 31, and 32. After reversing the appropriate items, you can find your score on six subscales by finding the total for the items on that scale. The subscales are: Appearance Evaluation (AE) 5, 7, 13, 19, 25, 28, and 31; Appearance Orientation (AO) 1, 2, 8, 9, 14, 15, 20, 21, 26, 27, 32, and 33; Fitness Evaluation (FE) 16, 22, and 34; Fitness Orientation (FO) 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 23, 24, 29, 30, and 35; Subjective Weight (SW) 36 and 37; and Body Areas Satisfaction (BAS) 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, and 46.
body dysmorphic disorder. When people reach this point, they have such intense feelings of distress about their appearance that their ability to function in day-to-day life is seriously impaired. In extreme cases, people will only leave the house with most of their face covered because they are convinced they are hideously ugly.

One of Cash’s most interesting findings is that for women, body image bears no relation to objective reality. It is not uncommon to find stunningly beautiful women, who earn their living as models, who feel distressed by their appearance. One such woman said, “When I look in the mirror, all I see is the flab around my thighs. I always feel surprised when I get a call to work, since I’m so sure that I’m too fat for anyone to want to photograph me again.” This disconnect from objective reality also means that there are women whom others would not find especially attractive who feel good about their appearance. They do have a sense of how they rate; they would not think of applying for a job as a model. But these women can look in the mirror and feel comfortable, and even pleased, by what they see.

Men’s feelings about their appearance seem to be more closely tied to objective reality. There is lots of room for exceptions, but generally if a man feels good about his appearance, others are likely to see him as attractive as well.

It comes as no surprise that women have more conflicts about their looks than men. We may not like it and even try to deny its reality, but women do tend to be judged more on their appearance than do men, especially when it comes to relationships. We may be amused but never surprised when we hear that a young, beautiful woman has married a much older Supreme Court justice, or a CEO of a major corporation. We know that men can trade their status and power for youth and beauty in a partner. On the other hand, we would be surprised if a Brad Pitt announced he was in love with a Ruth Bader Gins-
23. Uncertainty makes life intolerable.
24. It’s not fair that there are no guarantees in life.
25. My mind can’t be relaxed if I don’t know what will happen tomorrow.
26. Uncertainty makes me uneasy, anxious, or stressed.
27. Unforeseen events upset me greatly.
28. It frustrates me not having all the information I need.
29. Being uncertain allows me to foresee the consequences beforehand and to prepare for them.
30. One should always look ahead so as to avoid surprises.
31. A small unforeseen event can spoil everything, even with the best of planning.
32. When it’s time to act uncertainty paralyzes me.
33. Being uncertain means that I am not first-rate.
34. When I am uncertain, I cannot go forward.
35. When I am uncertain, I can’t function very well.
36. Unlike me, others always seem to know where they are going with their lives.
37. Uncertainty makes me vulnerable, unhappy, or sad.
38. I always want to know what the future has in store for me.
39. I hate being taken by surprise.
40. The smallest doubt stops me from acting.
41. I should be able to organize everything in advance.
42. Being uncertain means that I lack confidence.
43. I think it’s unfair that other people seem sure about their future.
44. Uncertainty stops me from sleeping well.
45. I must get away from uncertain situations.
that they maintain an appropriate level of eye contact while their partner is talking, that they express their understanding through body language and facial gestures, and that they ask for clarification and elaboration when appropriate.

While such techniques can be quite useful, I suspect that most people who have difficulty achieving intimacy know what to say, but they are afraid to say it. There is a real risk that, should we bare our soul, it could come back to haunt us. Most of us have had at least one experience of telling a close friend a deep, dark secret only to learn later that it was no longer such a secret, that our friend had betrayed us. While those with a fear of intimacy may vow never to make that mistake again, a better strategy, and one that comes naturally to most people, is to build intimacy gradually, to learn from experience if you can trust this other person.

Sharing one’s innermost feelings can also be scary because it makes one vulnerable. Seinfeld, a show that captured so many relationship issues so well, devoted one show to George’s dilemma as to whether he should tell the woman he was dating that he loved her. He expressed his concerns to Jerry when he said, “But if she doesn’t say ‘I love you’ back, I’m left hanging out there.” George’s worst fears came true, but true to life, he survived. Yes, he felt humiliated, and yes, he did not know how he could continue to see the woman when she made it clear she did not feel the same about him, but he survived. As time goes on and we gain more experience, these minor humiliations do seem very minor indeed. It is far more likely for people to regret passing up an opportunity for intimacy than to dwell on any embarrassment they may have felt similar to George’s.
37. I have ideas about controlling other things with the children and other people such as how much food they should have on their plate, etc.

38. I am seen by relatives as being a dominant member of our extended family.

39. I am the one who usually decides which television channel to watch.

40. I am the one who usually controls the thermostat in the house.

41. Criticism or scolding hurts me terribly.

42. I would rather win than lose in a game.

43. I do not tire quickly.


**SCORING**

The Way of Life Scale uses a technique that, while common in test construction, is one we have not seen in the other tests in this book—it uses a number of “distractor items” to disguise the purpose of the test. So, while 43 items appear on the scale, only 21 of the items are actually relevant to the purpose of the test. To find your score, count the number of “True” responses to items 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 28, 29, 30, 32, 35, 37, 38, 39, and 40.
17. If my alarm clock was broken and I asked X to call me at a certain time, I could count on receiving the call.

18. If X couldn’t get together with me as we planned, I would believe his/her excuse that something important had come up.

19. If X promised to do me a favor, he/she would follow through.

20. If X were going to give me a ride somewhere and didn’t arrive on time, I would guess there was a good reason for the delay.

21. If we decided to meet somewhere for lunch, I would be certain he/she would be there.

**ITEMS FOR WOMEN**

1. If I were injured or hurt, I could depend on X to do what was best for me.

2. If X borrowed something of value and returned it broken, X would offer to pay for the repairs.

3. If my alarm clock was broken and I asked X to call me at a certain time, I could count on receiving the call.

4. If X agreed to feed my pet while I was away, I wouldn’t worry about the kind of care it would receive.

5. If X promised to do me a favor, he/she would follow through.

6. If X were going to give me a ride somewhere and didn’t arrive on time, I would guess there was a good reason for the delay.

7. I would be willing to lend X almost any amount of money because he/she would pay me back as soon as he/she could.
HOW TRUSTING ARE YOU?

NORMS

**Scores** | **Percentile**
---|---
**Men** | **Women**
OT | ET | Re | Re | ET | 85
77 | 63 | 57 | 41 | 61 | 53 | 70
69 | 50 | 36 | 56 | 49 | 32 | 50
61 | 43 | 31 | 51 | 41 | 32 |
54 | 37 | 26 | 46 | 21 | 15 |

About the Specific Interpersonal Trust Scale

The capacity to trust is crucial to our survival in human society. Without trust, we would not be willing to participate in even mundane interactions such as buying food at the grocery store, forming a car pool with neighbors, or visiting a physician. We have to believe that the food we buy at the store is safe, that our neighbors will pick us up on their day to drive, and that our physician will treat us in a way that will improve our health, not harm it. In even the most basic of social interactions, we are exposing our vulnerabilities, and without a willingness to trust those we interact with, we would all be living in solitary log cabins and growing our own food. Our existence would be both spartan and harsh, and our time on this earth would be much shorter than we can expect under our present way of life.

Research psychologists became interested in the capacity for trust in the 1970s, and a number of tests were developed to measure this quality. Their research showed that people with a high ability to trust seemed to have a number of other desirable qualities. They were more independent and trustworthy themselves,
pattern of results, your judgments may be an accurate reflection of the people in your life. But if you receive a low score on the same dimension of trust no matter who you use as X, it probably reflects problems you have in this area. In this case, you must ask yourself why you have so much trouble counting on others or in believing your confidences are safe with them.

If you received low scores on both dimensions of trust (for women) or all three dimensions (for men), it may indicate that you have a more general difficulty in trusting other people. Again, take the test a second time with a different X, but if you always receive very low scores, it probably does reflect your diminished capacity for trust. And your diminished capacity for trust is undoubtedly interfering with your ability to have satisfying relationships with others.

In my experience the most difficult issue for most people is regaining trust in another after we have had good reason to distrust that person. John, a navy man I knew several years ago, learned that his wife had been unfaithful to him while he was out to sea. He was both furious and crushed, but he could not bring himself to divorce her because he loved her so much. He came to see me because his distrust was making him miserable. His worry made it difficult for him to sleep on subsequent cruises, and when he would call his wife, their conversations invariably degenerated into angry inquisitions.

Trust is indeed fragile; it is difficult to regain once lost. But as John realized, learning to trust again can benefit everyone if the relationship is truly worth saving. John decided he had to leave the navy because he doubted he could ever feel comfortable being separated from his wife for months at a time. And he came to understand that asking his wife to move to a strange city where she had no family or friends made her vulnerable to the attentions of other men.

John also came to understand that his distrust would eventually destroy his marriage. His suspicions were not only making him miserable, but his wife’s stomach would also be tied in knots
7. I'd be extremely depressed for a long time if my relationship with X were to end.

8. If I couldn’t have X, I'd easily find someone to replace X.

9. My relationship with X has made my life more worthwhile.

10. I don’t really need X.

11. I want X.

12. I am very dependent upon X.

13. I feel very proud to know X.

14. I want X to confide mostly in me.

15. I spend a great deal of time thinking about X.

16. I want X to tell me “I love you.”

17. I feel very secure in my relationship with X.

18. X is a rather mysterious person.

19. I often wonder how much X really cares for me.

20. Sometimes, I wish I didn’t care so much for X.

21. I worry that X doesn’t care as much for me as I do for X.

22. I have great difficulty trying to figure out X.

23. I have imagined conversations I would have with X.

24. I try to plan out what I want to say before talking to X.

25. X pays enough attention to me.

26. I feel uneasy if X is making friends with someone of the opposite sex.

27. I need X more than X needs me.

28. X has been the cause of some of my worst depressions.

29. My relationship with X is stable and quietly satisfying.

30. There is little conflict between X and myself.

31. I worry about losing X’s affection.
HOW ROMANTIC ARE YOU?


SCORING

The first step is to reverse the score (1 = 6, 2 = 5, 3 = 4, 4 = 3, 5 = 2, and 6 = 1) for the following items: 6, 8, 10, 17, 25, 29, and 30. Next, you can find your score on two subscales. The first 16 items comprise the Romantic Dependency subscale and items 17 to 31 comprise the Romantic Insecurity subscale.

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About the Romantic Relationship Scale

Research psychologists have been trying to unlock the mysteries of romantic love for the past three decades. To facilitate their quest, they have developed dozens, perhaps hundreds of tests to measure every single aspect of romantic love you could ever
16
How Guilty Are You about Sex?

THE REVISED MOSHER
GUilt INVENTORY

This inventory consists of 50 items arranged in pairs of responses written by college students in response to sentence completion stems such as “When I have sexual dreams . . .” You are to respond to each item as honestly as you can by rating your response on a 7-point scale from 0, which means not at all true of (for) me, to 6, which means extremely true of (for) me. The items are arranged in pairs of two to allow you to compare the intensity of a trueness for you. This limited comparison is often useful, since people frequently agree with only one item in a pair. In some instances, it may be the case that both items or neither item is true for you, but you will usually be able to distinguish between items in a pair by using different ratings from the 7-point range for each item.

Rate each of the 50 items from 0 to 6 as you keep in mind the value of comparing items within pairs. Please do not omit any items.

“Dirty” jokes in mixed company . . .

1. do not bother me.
2. are something that make me very uncomfortable.

Masturbation . . .

3. is wrong and will ruin you.
4. helps one feel eased and relaxed.
When I have sexual desires . . .
____35. I attempt to repress them.
____36. they are quite strong.

Petting . . .
____37. is not a good practice until after marriage.
____38. is justified with love.

Sex relations before marriage . . .
____39. help people adjust.
____40. should not be recommended.

Masturbation . . .
____41. is wrong and a sin.
____42. is a normal outlet for sexual desire.

Masturbation . . .
____43. is all right.
____44. is a form of self-destruction.

Unusual sex practices . . .
____45. are awful and unthinkable.
____46. are all right if both partners agree.

If I had sex relations, I would feel . . .
____47. all right, I think.
____48. I was being used, not loved.

Masturbation . . .
____49. is all right.
____50. should not be practiced.
HOW GUILTY ARE YOU ABOUT SEX?


SCORING

You must reverse score the following items (0 = 6, 1 = 5, 2 = 4, 3 = 3, 4 = 2, 5 = 1, 6 = 0): 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 42, 43, 46, 47, and 49. After reversing these items add your scores together to find your total guilt score. Higher scores indicate higher levels of guilt.

NORMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About the Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory

Nothing can interfere with our ability to experience pleasure in our sexual relationships more than guilt and anxiety. Mosher’s test measuring guilt about sex is similar to one that I developed with my graduate student Kevin O’Grady to measure anxiety about sex. While guilt and anxiety may seem similar, they are theoretically different, and they have different effects on sexual behavior. By definition, guilty people worry about breaking their
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How Effective a Person Are You?

THE SELF-EFFICACY SCALE

The following statements describe people’s feelings and reactions to various situations. Please read each statement carefully and describe the extent to which you agree with each statement using a 14-point scale where 1 indicates “Strongly Disagree” and 14 indicates “Strongly Agree.”

1. When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.
2. One of my problems is that I cannot get down to work when I should.
3. If I can’t do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can.
4. When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them.
5. I give up on things before completing them.
6. I avoid facing difficulties.
7. If something looks too complicated, I will not even bother to try it.
8. When I have something unpleasant to do, I stick to it until I finish it.
9. When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it.
10. When trying to learn something new, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.
How Well Do You Cope with Traumatic Life Events?

THE THRIVING SCALE

Many times, people with a chronic illness or those who have had traumatic experiences talk not only about the negative things, but also of the positive things that have happened as a result of their illness or experience. Below is a list of some of these positive things. On a scale of 0 (did not happen to me) to 4 (I experienced a great deal of this) indicate the degree to which each occurred in your life as a result of your illness or traumatic experience.

___ 1. I learned to look at things in a more positive way.
___ 2. I learned that I am stronger than I thought I was.
___ 3. I learned to be a more optimistic person.
___ 4. I realized how much my family cares about me.
___ 5. I learned to be more confident in myself.
___ 6. I learned to approach life more calmly.
___ 7. I have more compassion for others.
___ 8. Now I know I can handle difficulties.
___ 9. My relationship with my family became more important.
___10. I learned to work through my problems and not give up.
___11. I learned to find more meaning in life.
existence. People can thrive and suffer at the same time. No matter how resilient people are, they are bound to retain many of the scars that bear witness to their trauma. Drs. Calhoun and Tedeschi, two prominent researchers in this field, described several people who experienced this duality. One, a middle-aged woman who suddenly lost her husband, talked with confidence about her growing sense of strength and her ability to live independently within a few months after her loss. Although it had no relevance to her trauma, she became actively involved with a support group for parents with gay children because she wanted to do something to help others who were in pain. On the other hand, her grief at her loss had not abated much, and she had developed doubts about her religious beliefs. Calhoun and Tedeschi wrote that while not all changes that may occur in response to a traumatic experience will be positive, the process of thriving does lead to a general increase in wisdom—an increased understanding of who we are, a sense of growth, and of our place in it.

Another issue that researchers have addressed is whether thriving is an effortless process that occurs naturally or whether it requires a sustained endeavor. The answer, according to researchers Karen Saakvitne, Howard Tennen, and Glenn Affleck, seems to be “both.” Some people experienced spontaneous positive changes. A young father, whose newborn daughter was acutely ill, reported: “Here she was, only a week old, and she was teaching us something: how to keep things in their proper perspective, how to understand what’s important and what’s not. I learned that everything is tentative, that you never learn what life is going to bring. I realized that I shouldn’t waste any more time worrying about the little things.” Other people these researchers interviewed talked about how they had to struggle to find meaning in their tragedies, about how much effort and how much time it took before they could find anything positive about their experience.

We have much to learn about the types of people who “thrive,”
Walker and Gibbins were studying the rather esoteric topic of category width (the degree of inclusiveness people use when they place things or concepts into categories) when they serendipitously discovered the role of neophilia. The details are not of importance here, but they found that people who scored high on the Neophilia Scale preferred to concentrate on the “big picture” in life. When collecting information or making judgments, high scorers were likely to make “errors of inclusion.” They would rather have too much information than not enough. Low scorers, on the other hand, prefer specific details rather than the big picture and are more likely to make “errors of exclusion.” They are motivated to avoid new information that might threaten their preconceived beliefs. Walker and Gibbins reported several more differences between high and low scorers. Compared to their low-scoring peers, high scorers were more accepting of social change, had more unorthodox tastes, were more interested in making personal changes, and were more willing to take risks in order to have new experiences.

Walker and Gibbins did not speculate about the implications of their test for a more general satisfaction with life, but as I suggested earlier, I believe that people with high scores on this scale are more likely to find their lives meaningful and satisfying. My own life experiences have convinced me that an openness to new experiences is critical to giving one’s life purpose. I feel extremely fortunate, since my job demands that I learn new things continuously. I am forced to learn the latest developments to be a competent teacher and researcher. And I have enjoyed writing books for the layperson because I never fail to learn much that is new to me in the process.

Most teachers, I suspect, would have a high score on this Neophilia Scale. And the opportunities that the profession provides for satisfying this need for the new is a large part of what makes it so satisfying. But I do know some exceptions. I have had
they were like sharks—they have to keep moving forward or they would die. I think life is like that too. We have to keep moving forward, we have to learn new things, we have to seek out new experiences. The alternative is too unpleasant to think about.
37. I have never had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, involved total listening.

38. I have never had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, gave my life new worth.

39. I have never had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, caused me to feel that the world is totally beautiful.

40. I have never had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, helped me to appreciate beauty to a greater degree than I usually do.

41. I have never had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, put me in a state of total visual concentration.

42. I have had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, produced greater integration and unity within my personality.

43. I have had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, made me very grateful for the privilege of having had it.

44. I have never had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, put me in a state of total concentration.

45. I have had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, made me feel as if I had everything. I could not think of anything else that I wanted.

46. I have had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, reduced my anxiety level greatly.

47. I have had an experience that made me extremely happy and, at least temporarily, helped me to appreciate
### About the Peak Experiences Scale

Eugene Mathes and his colleagues at Western Illinois University constructed the Peak Experiences Scale to test elements of Abraham Maslow’s theory of personality. If you have ever taken a psychology class, you have heard of Maslow, who was one of the first