

Effects of Self-Affirmation on the Personal Self and the Interpersonal Self

Chairs: Ji Kyung Park, University of Delaware, USA

Kathleen D. Vohs, University of Minnesota, USA

Paper #1: Broadening Perspective, Changing Narratives, and Improving Academic Performance: The Effects of Values Affirmation Interventions

David K. Sherman, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA

Kimberly A. Hartson, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA

Kevin R. Binning, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA

Paper #2: The Multifaceted Role of Affect in Self-Affirmation Effects

William M. P. Klein, National Cancer Institute and University of Pittsburgh, USA

Peter R. Harris, University of Sussex, UK

Rebecca Ferrer, National Cancer Institute, USA

Paper #3: Less about Me, More about You: How Self-Affirmation Changes Word-of-Mouth Intentions for the Self versus Others

Sara Kim, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

Ann L. McGill, University of Chicago, USA

Paper #4: Self-Affirmation has the Power to Offset the Harmful Effects of Money Reminders

Ji Kyung Park, University of Delaware, USA

Kathleen D. Vohs, University of Minnesota, USA

SESSION OVERVIEW

The theme of ACR 2013 is “Making a Difference.” One of the most functional approaches to making a difference in the self is to incorporate feedback from the environment in a healthy, instructive manner and modify the self accordingly. Nevertheless, all too often dismissiveness and defensiveness get in the way of such personal growth.

One process that repeatedly and robustly has been shown to open people up to unflattering feedback and turn their attention toward others’ wants and needs is self-affirmation. The papers in this session delve into the promise for self-affirmation to bring about positive self-change.

Self-affirmation refers to processes that bolster a global sense of self-integrity (Steele 1988). Self-affirmation manipulations remind people of important aspects of the self, enabling them to view events from a reasonable, considered, rational view (Sherman and Hartson 2011). By enhancing the psychological resources of self-integrity, self-affirmation reduces defensive responses to threatening information and events, leading to positive outcomes in various areas such as psychological and physical health, education, prejudice and discrimination, and social conflicts (Sherman and Cohen 2006).

Although studied extensively by social psychologists, self-affirmation has only just begun to receive attention from consumer researchers. This session provides an overview of self-affirmation theory, and discusses why self-affirmation is beneficial to consumers’ personal and interpersonal well-being. The first two papers provide new evidence and insights on underlying processes that help explain how self-affirmation benefits the self under threat. The next two papers propose that self-affirmation enables people to transcend concerns about the self in order to care about others.

First, Sherman, Hartson, and Binning report results from a longitudinal field experiment involving minority students and the experience of academic threat. The authors find that self-affirmation alters the students’ narrative explanations about events and in doing so changes their perspective about threats. Self-affirmed (vs. not affirmed) students viewed threatening events within a larger view of the self and construed events at a more abstract level, with the result being that they were less undermined by identity threat. This new model has the potential to change the way that scholars think about self-affirmation in offering new mechanisms for how it works – while elucidating one of the most powerful and straightforward ways that consumers can ‘make a difference’ in themselves.

Second, Klein, Harris, and Ferrer examine how self-affirmation influences and is moderated by negative affect. They show that self-affirmation when combined with the experience of health related threats increases the negative emotions of *worry and anxiety* (about getting breast cancer after reading an article linking alcohol consumption with breast cancer risk). These specific negative emotions consequently promote behavioral changes. Further, the authors find that affect moderates the effects of self-affirmation. Negative affect such as *anger and sadness* impairs the effectiveness of self-affirmation, whereas general positive affect enhances the effects of self-affirmation. In tying self-affirmation to specific and theoretically-derived forms of affect, this paper opens up new avenues for understanding how health-related messages should be constructed.

Third, in continuing with the theme of negative emotions and affirmation, Kim and McGill propose that self-affirmation enhances caring about others’ negative feelings. They find that self-affirmation increases people’s willingness to spread negative word of mouth (WOM) on behalf of others who are angry about product failures. Yet, affirmation decreases willingness to spread negative WOM about one’s own negative experiences. These outcomes occur because a broader view resulting from self-affirmation reinforces social connections, enhancing the importance of others’ negative feelings. However, such a broad self-view uncouples the self from threat, mitigating the importance of one’s own negative feelings.

Finally, Park and Vohs show that self-affirmation offsets the harmful effect of money priming on the interpersonal self. Money priming, which enhances the self-sufficiency orientation, has been found to reduce helpfulness toward others and requests for help, and to enhance tendencies to separate the self from others. The authors show that self-affirmation reduces such adverse money priming effects, and helps people become more sensitive to interpersonal needs. This work points to the power of self-affirmation while raising fresh and invigorating questions about the psychology of money as well.

These four presentations propose different effects of self-affirmation under various contexts such as identity threats, health threats, product failures, and money priming, which can significantly affect consumers’ well-being. By focusing on the effect of self-affirmation on the personal self (Sherman, Hartson and Binning; Klein and Harris) and the interpersonal self (Kim and McGill; Park and Vohs), the presentations proposed here paint a picture of how affirming the self impacts consumers. This presentation will be of interest to researchers studying goal-attainment, self-regulation, information processing, word of mouth, and prosocial behavior — and anyone interested in one of the most effective ways that consumers can “Make a Difference.”

Broadening Perspective, Changing Narratives, and Improving Academic Performance: The Effects of Values Affirmation Interventions

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Research on self-affirmation theory has repeatedly shown that brief interventions designed to affirm the self-concept can produce lasting benefits on a variety of behavioral outcomes, including academic performance. However, the question of what causes these effects is the topic of continued research attention. The purpose of the present talk is to summarize self-affirmation theory, to present a general model to explain the effects of values affirmations (Sherman & Hartson, 2011), and to introduce new evidence from two values affirmation intervention studies that supports this model.

Self-affirmation theory evolved from an alternative explanation for cognitive dissonance phenomena (Steele, 1988; see also Aronson, Cohen, & Nail, 2009; Stone & Cooper, 2001) to an intervention strategy employed in a wide range of settings (see Harris & Epton, 2009; Garcia & Cohen, 2012 for reviews). Its core idea is that people have a general motivation to maintain self-integrity – that is, the perception of one’s self as efficacious, consistent, and good (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988). In the face of threats to one’s self-integrity, people behave in ways that serve to protect the self-concept. For example, when faced with the threat of confirming negative stereotypes about one’s group (i.e., stereotype threat), people may defensively disengage from the domain rather than risk confirming the stereotype. However, when global perceptions of self-integrity are affirmed, for example, via a writing task that reminds people of an important personal value, otherwise threatening information may lose its capacity to threaten the self. After completing values affirmations, individuals feel, both to themselves and to others, as though the task of maintaining self-integrity is settled. Consequently, they can focus on other demands in the situation beyond ego protection—for example—the academic tasks at hand in a school environment.

Sherman and Hartson (2011) proposed a model that seeks to explain the cognitive processes by which affirmation exercises may exert their influence. Specifically, affirming important values is proposed to augment the psychological resources available to an individual to confront a threat. That is, self-affirmation allows people to experience threatening events and information within a broader, larger view of the self. Self-threats, when viewed in the context of this enhanced perception of self-resources, can be seen from a broader perspective. This broader perspective changes people’s narrative of their ongoing experience, such that the threat does not affect, to the same extent, their overall evaluations of themselves. In the context of a focal threat, the general attenuation of concern about self-evaluation can lead to attenuated stress responses, and improved performance. And to the extent that these effects shape enduring narratives of experience and initiate (or interrupt) recursive processes, they can lead to long-term psychological changes.

Evidence supporting this model comes from recent investigations in other laboratories (e.g., Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009; Wakslak & Trope, 2009; Logel & Cohen, 2011) and two recent studies we have conducted, each featuring a longitudinal field experiment in a mixed-ethnicity middle school. These studies examined the achievement gap between Latino American and European American students and whether a values affirmation writing exercise could attenuate this gap, and the processes by which this attenuation occurs.

In Study 1, students completed multiple self-affirmation (or control) activities as part of their regular class assignments (in procedures modified from Cohen et al., 2006; 2009). The manipulation did not affect the grades of White students, but Latino American stu-

dents, the identity threatened group, had higher grades in the affirmation than control condition as assessed by core course GPA over the academic year. Examination of quarter by quarter performance indicates that the affirmation elevated Latino American students’ trajectory. The results persisted for three years, the period of examination, and persisted despite approximately 2/3 of the sample moving on to high school. The long-term effects of Study 1 suggest that students’ narratives of their ongoing experiences changed, and that they took this new “story” with them into the new environment (cf. Wilson, 2011).

To provide more direct evidence as to how affirmation shaped students’ narratives of their ongoing academic experience, Study 2 featured daily diaries where participants reported their daily adversity, perceptions of identity threat, and feelings of academic fit. In addition, Study 2 included multiple assessments of construal level (the Behavioral Identification Form; Vallacher & Wegner, 1989) to examine participants’ perspective. We predicted that affirmation would broaden construals and prevent daily adversity from being experienced as identity threat. We also predicted that affirmation would insulate academic motivation from identity threat.

Study 2 replicated the effects of values affirmation on academic performance, as affirmed Latino American students earned higher grades in their core courses than non-affirmed Latino American students. Evidence supporting the general model of affirmation effects (Sherman & Hartson, 2011) was also obtained, as the affirmed Latino American students also construed events at a more abstract (broader) rather than concrete level and were less likely to have their daily feelings of academic fit and motivation undermined by identity threat. More specifically, affirmed Latino American participants saw events and situations at a broader level of construal than Latino American students in the control condition. The measures of construal focused on general topics, and not just academics, and were separated from the affirmation manipulation by weeks to months, and thus, the effects seemed quite general. Being under identity threat may lead individuals to experience a narrowing of perspective. Providing value affirming experiences and thereby reminding them of their important self-resources may broaden this perspective.

The diary findings also suggest that when affirmed, and with self-worth perhaps more secure, identity-threatened students did not experience daily adversity as indicative of identity threat. Further, to the extent that they perceived threat in their environment, these negative experiences did not spread into and affect academic motivation. Rather, the Latino American students sustained motivation independently of the perceived threat in the environment. Together, these findings suggest that affirmation can change psychological experience and instigate lasting changes in how people create narrative experiences over time.

In sum, these two experiments provide evidence to support the general model of affirmation effects—that values affirmations exert their effects, in part, by bolstering resources, broadening perspective, and changing the narrative of ongoing experience under threat.

The Multifaceted Role of Affect in Self-Affirmation Effects

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Self-affirmation theory holds that threats to the self can be reduced by focusing on cherished values unrelated to the content of the threat (Steele, 1988). Because threat often leads to defensiveness (Lieberman & Chaikin, 1992), self-affirmation can be a useful technique to promote even-handed, non-defensive responding. Indeed, several studies show that people are more accepting of a threatening

health message – and more likely to change behavior in accordance with the message – if given the opportunity to focus on personal values prior to reading it (for review, see Harris & Epton, 2009). Self-affirmation can also alleviate the negative effects of threat on task performance and academic achievement, ostensibly because it uncouples performance success from the self-concept (Sherman & Hartson, 2011).

Although the body of evidence illustrating beneficial effects of self-affirmation continues to grow, little is known about how self-affirmation opportunities influence affective processes or how the effects of self-affirmation might vary with affective state. Early research found that there was little or no effect of self-affirmation on general mood, reducing the likelihood that self-affirmation effects were a proxy for the effects of positive affect or that positive affect mediated those effects. Instead, we propose that the relationship between self-affirmation and affect is much more nuanced. In particular, we contend that (1) self-affirmation influences more specific affective experiences such as worry and feelings of vulnerability (in contrast to more general affect), (2) rather than being a direct consequence of self-affirmation, general incidental emotions – that is, discrete emotions (e.g., sadness, anger) minimally related to the self-affirmation experience – will moderate effects of self-affirmation, and (3) self-affirmation can alleviate the impairment of performance elicited by negative affective states such as stress.

We first consider the effects of self-affirmation on specific affective experiences rather than general affect. In one study, female undergraduates who consumed moderate to large amounts of alcohol read an article linking alcohol consumption with breast cancer risk. Prior to reading the article, participants were randomly assigned to a self-affirmation condition (in which they wrote an essay about a value important to them) or a standard no-affirmation control condition (in which they wrote about how a value unimportant to them might be important to someone else). We found that participants in the self-affirmation condition expressed more worry and anxiety about getting breast cancer – specific affective experiences that promote behavior change (Klein, Harris, Ferrer, & Zajac, 2011). Moreover, self-affirmation was found to strengthen the relationship between affective responses and intentions. Two additional studies demonstrated that these effects on message-specific affect mediated subsequent effects on

Finally, as a complement to our overarching investigation of how affect moderates the beneficial effects of self-affirmation, we explored how self-affirmation might offset the influence of negative affect – in this case, chronic stress. Much work suggests that chronic stress can impair performance on difficult tasks (Liston, McEwen, & Casey, 2009). We hypothesized that self-affirmation can ameliorate such effects. Undergraduate students varying in chronic stress were given 30 difficult Remote Associate Test (RAT) items and asked to complete them in front of an evaluator. This experience was stressful as demonstrated by increased heart rate and blood pressure. Importantly, self-affirmed individuals performed better on the RAT task than controls, particularly among participants who were chronically stressed.

As a group, these seven studies demonstrate a multifaceted relationship between affect and self-affirmation, building on previous research showing no direct effects of self-affirmation on general measures of affect. Self-affirmation appears to have effects on more precise threat-relevant affective experiences such as worry, and there are important interactive effects between self-affirmation and affect on message processing, behavioral intentions, and task performance.

Less about Me, More about You: How Self-Affirmation Changes Word-of-Mouth Intentions for the Self versus Others

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Previous literature on WOM has focused on consumers' communications about their own experiences (Berger and Schwartz 2011; Dichter 1966; Dye 2000), however, consumers may also talk about others' consumption experiences, sometimes when jointly experiencing a product or service (e.g., dining companions) or when another consumer reports an experience and the target consumer must consider whether to pass that story on. The present research shows that self-affirmation decreases the tendency for consumers to complain about their own, but to increase the tendency to talk about others' negative experiences, the "Consumer Champion Effect." We trace this effect to the broader perspective adopted by affirmed individuals, which mutes the extremity of their own emotional responses to events while it concurrently produces a more accurate understanding and deeper appreciation of the intensity of others' emotions. These responses thereby lead to an ironic effect of self-affirmation in which very calm consumers, who are not upset about their own negative experiences, may nevertheless be vocal critics of a firm on behalf of others.

Prior research has shown that the "self-affirmation task," that is, reflecting on core values, reminds people of their broader identity (Sherman and Cohen 2006). Within this broader perspective, people feel more secure in their self-integrity and less pressure to defend a particular aspect of the self. As a consequence, affirmed consumers are more likely to process potentially threatening messages, for example, reports that favored products might have negative health consequences, in an open-minded way (Sherman, Nelson, & Steele, 2000). We build on this prior research to explore additional consequences of a broadened self-view. First, in a direct extension of prior work, we posit that a broader view of self may mute the intensity of people's own feelings about a product or services failure because each event is "just one thing" in a broader view of the self. That is, the affirmed individual is not whipsawed about by each individual passing event because the broader view incorporates other, more stabilizing influences (thoughts and feelings about the rest of one's life). This theorizing leads to the hypothesis that affirmed consumers will be less angry after experiencing product or service failures, and, in turn, when they have a chance to spread negative WOM, they will be less likely to do so.

However, we also propose a novel influence of a broader perspective resulting from self-affirmation, specifically, that a broader view incorporates the feelings of others to a greater extent, leading affirmed individuals to be more attentive toward others' affective reactions. Supporting our argument Crocker et al. (2008) showed that self-affirmation increased other-directed positive feelings such as love. However, moving beyond Cocker et al. (2008) who focused on positive emotions expressed toward others, we show that affirmed consumers more deeply appreciate the intensity of others' positive as well as negative emotions. Further, we suggest affirmed consumers estimate more extreme (and accurate) emotional profiles in others' affective reactions. After self-affirmation, others' positive emotions seem to be more positive, while negative emotions seem to be more negative. As a consequence, affirmed consumers will be more willing to complain on behalf of those others, an effect we term, the "Consumer Champion Effect."

The first experiment, consisting of two studies, examines the influence of self-affirmation on estimation of others' emotions. In experiment 1a, self-affirmation was manipulated using an essay writ-

ing task, commonly employed in this literature (Sherman and Cohen 2006). Participants in the high self-affirmation condition wrote an essay about their most important value while those in the low self-affirmation condition wrote an essay about the least important value. Then, participants listened to moderately annoying sounds (e.g., electric drill, squeaking door) then indicated either what they felt about the sounds or what they thought another person felt about the sounds. The results show that self-affirmation reduced the intensity of one's felt emotions while it amplified the estimated intensity of others' emotions. We also provide evidence that affirmed consumers more accurately estimate others' emotions while projecting less of their own emotional states.

Experiment 1b further examines consumers' assessments of others' emotions through their interpretation of posted user reviews. In addition, in this experiment, instead of manipulating self-affirmation through an essay writing task, we measured individual differences in self-affirmation tendency, specifically, their self-concept clarity. We observed that participants with high self-concept clarity estimated more intense emotions from both positive and negative reviews, seeing positive reviews as more positive and negative reviews as more negative.

In experiment 2, which was a scenario study, participants were asked to imagine various situations involving product or service failure, for example, poor restaurant service during a celebratory dinner, and then to estimate either their own or the other person's emotional reactions. Self-affirmation was manipulated as in study 1a using an essay writing task. We found self-affirmation led to lower willingness to generate negative WOM for the self but greater willingness to generate negative WOM on behalf of the other person.

Experiment 3 was intended to probe the process underlying the effect further by exploring the effects of a theoretically motivated moderator, specifically, anonymity of the communication. If self-affirmation produces the Consumer Champion Effect by reducing narrow and defensive processing, it should be less prevalent when such processing is already limited, such as when one's comments are anonymous. Consistent with this view, when participants had to identify themselves, we again found that self-affirmation lessened participants' tendency to report their own concerns but more likely to champion the concerns of others. When anonymity was guaranteed, self-affirmation was less effective.

Self-Affirmation has the Power to Offset the Harmful Effects of Money Reminders

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Self-affirmation, which encourages people to ponder why their core values are important to them, promotes a broad-minded, big picture perspective of the self, and enhances psychological resources of self-integrity (Sherman and Cohen 2006). Prior research has provided ample evidence that self-affirmation positively affects interpersonal aspects of the self by making people be more open to those holding opposite opinions who accordingly are judged favorably (Cohen, Aronson and Steele 2000; Sherman and Cohen 2002), reducing within-relationship threats (Lockwood et al. 2004), and enhancing a key other-directed feeling—love (Crocker, Niiya, and Mischkowski 2008)

In this paper, we asked the question: Given its impressive ability to promote prosocial responses, could self-affirmation reduce the negative effects of money on the interpersonal self? Money, a social resource, makes people feel self-sufficient and behave accordingly (Vohs, Mead and Goode 2006, 2008). When reminded of money, people pursue personal goals and prefer to be separate from others.

Thus, people prefer that others do not depend on them, and want to be free from dependency (e.g., reduced helpfulness toward others and reduced requests for help) (Vohs et al. 2006, 2008). Further, money leads people to prefer to be separate from others, and to be less distressed about social exclusion (Zhou, Vohs and Baumeister 2009). In sum, prior research has consistently found that money negatively affects the interpersonal self. We proposed that affirming important values will help people be less affected by money. Within the broader and abstract perspective of the self, money should lose its symbolic power.

In the first experiment, we tested whether self-affirmation reduces tendencies to be free of dependents and dependency that money brings about. First, participants received the self-affirmation (vs. control) manipulation. In the self-affirmation condition, participants wrote an essay on a paper explaining why their core value is important to them, whereas those in the control condition explained why a less important value would be important to the average person. In the middle of writing about values, one of two screensavers appeared. Participants in the money (vs. control) condition saw a screensaver depicting various denominations of currency floating underwater (vs. white dots on a black background).

Next, to measure the tendency to be free of dependents, we used willingness to help others in need. Participants were asked to read about a non-profit organization—Operation Smile, which is an international children's medical charity that provides reconstructive surgery for children born with facial deformities, such as cleft lip and cleft palate. Then, they were told that in this experiment, five participants would be randomly selected to win a bonus payment of \$50. If they were chosen as a winner, they could donate all or part of the \$50 to Operation Smile. They were asked to write down the amount of money they would donate to Operation Smile.

Finally, as an indicator of dependency, we used a request for help during a difficult task. Participants were asked to outline all segments of a geometric figure without lifting their pencil or retracing any segments. Unbeknownst to the participants, the figure was unsolvable. Participants were told that it was not a matter of how many tries it took or how long it took them to solve the puzzle. They were instructed work on it until they either solved it or decided to get help from the administrator. After 10 minutes, they were asked to stop.

Consistent with prior research, money priming led to self-sufficiency orientations, reducing helpfulness toward others in need and dependency on others while attempting a difficult task (Vohs et al. 2006, 2008). In the no self-affirmation condition, participants primed with money (vs. not primed) donated less money and were less likely to request help. However, self-affirmation reduced such an adverse money prime effect. Participants who self-affirmed and received the money prime donated more money, and were more likely to ask for help while solving a difficult task, as opposed to those who did not self-affirm prior to the money prime.

In the second experiment, we tested if self-affirmation reduces different effects of money priming—tendencies to reduce social contact and to feel less distressed under social exclusion. First, participants received the self-affirmation manipulation and the money priming, as in study 1. Then, participants were asked to choose between two activities. Within each item, one option was an activity for one person (e.g., planning your own vacation) and the other option was for two people or more (e.g., planning a family vacation).

Next, we manipulated social exclusion by asking all participants to play a computerized ball-tossing game (Cyberball; Eisenberger et al. 2003). Participants were led to believe they played with 3 live participants, but in fact, the computer simulated the other play-

ers. Initially, the ball was tossed equally among the 4 players. In the normal-play condition, this equal play continued throughout the game. In the social-exclusion condition, the simulated confederates stopped throwing the ball to the live participants after 10 throws. Afterward, participants rated the social distress they felt about the game using the Southampton Social Self-Esteem Scale (Sedikides 2008). Sample items on this scale included, "I feel devalued," and, "I feel rejected."

Consistent with prior research, money priming led to social separateness (Vohs et al. 2006, 2008). In the no self-affirmation condition, participants primed with money (vs. not primed with money) chose more individually focused leisure experiences and were less likely to feel distressed after social exclusion. However, self-affirmation reduced the adverse money prime effect. Participants who self-affirmed and received the money prime were less likely to choose individually focused leisure experiences, and were more likely to feel distressed after social exclusion, as opposed to those who did not self-affirm prior to the money prime.

Conclusion: Self-affirmation and money are both simple but powerful motivators of behavior change. Past work has documented the deleterious effects that even small and subtle reminders of money can have on interpersonal outcomes. The current work found that self-affirmation can not only nullify such troubling negative outcomes but in some cases actually reverse them. By understanding how self-affirmation alters the typical effects of money priming, the field is in a better position to understand more about the psychology of money as well as how self-affirmation works – seemingly to instigate the interpersonal self over the personal self.

REFERENCE

- Aronson, J., Cohen, G. L., & Nail, P. R. (1999). Self-affirmation theory: An update and appraisal. In E. Harmon-Jones & J. Mills (Eds.), *Cognitive dissonance: Progress on a pivotal theory in social psychology* (pp.127–148). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Berger, Jonah and Eric M. Schwartz (2011), "What Drives Immediate and Ongoing Word of Mouth?" *Journal of Marketing Research*, 48 (5), 869-80.
- Cohen, Geoffrey L., Joshua Aronson, and Claude M. Steele (2000), "When Beliefs Yield to Evidence: Reducing Biased Evaluation by Affirming the Self," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26, 1151–1164.
- Cohen, G. L., Garcia, J., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Apfel, N., & Brzustoski, P. (2009). Recursive processes in self-affirmation: Intervening to close the minority achievement gap. *Science*, 324, 400-403.
- Creswell, J. D., Dutcher, J. M., Klein, W. M. P., Harris, P. R., & Levine, J. M. (2013). *Self-affirmation facilitates problem-solving under stress*. Manuscript under review.
- Crocker, Jennifer, Yu Niiya, and Domonik Mischkowski (2008), "Why Does Writing about Important Values Reduce Defensiveness? Self-Affirmation and the Role of Positive Other-Directed Feelings," *Psychological Science*, 19, 740–747.
- Dichter, Ernest (1966), "How Word-of-Mouth Advertising Works," *Harvard Business Review*, (November-December), 147-166.
- Dye, Renee (2000), "The Buzz on Buzz," *Harvard Business Review*, (November-December), 139-146.
- Eisenberger, Naomi I., Matthew D. Lieberman, and Kipling D. Williams (2003), "Does Rejection Hurt? An fMRI Study of Social Exclusion," *Science*, 302, 290–292.
- Ferrer, R. A., Koblitz, A. R., Klein, W. M. P., & Graff, K. (2013). *The success of value affirmations depends on incidental emotional state: Results from a national sample*. Manuscript in preparation.
- Ferrer, R. A., Shmueli, D., Bergman, H. E., Harris, P. R., & Klein, W. M. P. (2012). Effects of self-affirmation on implementation intentions and the moderating role of affect. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 3, 300-307.
- Garcia, J., & Cohen, G. L. (in press). Social psychology and educational intervention. In E. Shafir (Ed.), *Behavioral foundations of policy*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Griffin, D. W. & Harris, P. R. (2011). Calibrating the response to health warnings: Limiting both overreaction and underreaction with self-affirmation. *Psychological Science*, 22, 572-578.
- Harris, P. R., & Epton, T. (2009). The impact of self-affirmation on health cognition, health behaviour and other health related responses: A narrative review. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 3, 962-978.
- Klein, W. M. P., Harris, P. R., Ferrer, R. A., & Zajac, L. E. (2011). Affective perceptions of vulnerability in response to threatening messages: Effects of self-affirmation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47, 1237-1242.
- Liberman, A., & Chaiken, S. (1992). Defensive processing of personally relevant health messages. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, 669-679.
- Liston C., McEwen B. S., & Casey B. J. (2009). Psychosocial stress reversibly disrupts prefrontal processing and attentional control. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 106, 912–917.
- Lockwood, Penelope, Can Dolderman, Pamela Sadler, and Elinora Gerchak (2004), "Feeling Better about Doing Worse: Social Comparisons within Romantic Relationships," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 80-95.
- Logel, C., & Cohen, G. L. (2012). The role of the self in physical health: Testing the effect of a values-affirmation intervention on weight loss. *Psychological Science*, 23, 53-55.
- Sedikides, Constantine (2008), "The Southampton State Self-Esteem Scale". Unpublished manuscript, University of Southampton, Southampton, England.
- Schmeichel, B.J., & Vohs, K. D. (2009). Self-affirmation and self-control: Affirming core values counteracts ego depletion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96, 770-782.
- Sherman, David. K. and Geoffrey L. Cohen (2002), "Accepting Threatening Information: Self-Affirmation and the Reduction of Defensive Biases," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11, 119–123.
- Sherman, David K. and Geoffrey L. Cohen (2006), "The Psychology of Self-Defense: Self-Affirmation Theory," In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, M. P. Zanna, Ed. Vol. 38. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 183-242.
- Sherman, David. K., and Kimberly A. Hartson (2011), "Reconciling Self-Protection with Self-Improvement: Self-Affirmation Theory," In *The handbook of self-enhancement and self-protection*, M. Alicke & C. Sedikides, Ed. New York: Guilford Press, 128–151.
- Sherman, D. K., Hartson, K. A., Binning, K., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Garcia, J., Taborsky-Barba, S., Tomassetti, S., Nussbaum, A. D., & Cohen, G. (2013). Deflecting the trajectory and changing the narrative: How self-affirmation affects academic performance and motivation under identity threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

- Sherman, David A. K., Leif D. Nelson, and Claude M. Steele (2000), "Do Messages about Health Risks Threaten The Self? Increasing the Acceptance of Threatening Health Messages via Self-Affirmation," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26 (9), 1046-58.
- Steele, Claude M. (1988), "The Psychology of Self-Affirmation: Sustaining the Integrity of the Self," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, L. Berkowitz, Ed. Vol. 21. New York: Academic Press, 261-302.
- Stone, J., & Cooper, J. (2001). A self-standards model of cognitive dissonance. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 37, 228-243.
- Strack, F., Schwarz, N., & Gschneidinger, E. (1985). Happiness and reminiscing: The role of time perspective, affect, and mode of thinking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(6), 1460-1469.
- Vallacher, R. R., & Wegner, D. M. (1989). Levels of personal agency: Individual variation in action identification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, 660-671.
- Vohs, Kathleen D., Nicole L. Mead, and Miranda R. Goode (2006), "Psychological Consequences of Money," *Science*, 314, 1154-1156.
- Vohs, Kathleen D., Nicole L. Mead, and Miranda R. Goode (2008), "Merely Activating the Concept of Money Changes Personal and Interpersonal Behavior," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17 (3), 208-212.
- Wakslak, C., J., & Trope, Y. (2009). Cognitive consequences of affirming the self: The relationship between self-affirmation and object construal. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45, 927-932.
- Wilson, T. D. (2011). *Redirect: The surprising new science of psychological change*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
- Zhou, Xinyue, Kathleen D. Vohs, and Roy F. Baumeister (2009), "The Symbolic Power of Money : Reminders of Money Alter Social Distress and Physical Pain," *Psychological Science*, 20 (6), 700-706.