

Motivational and Emotional Aspects of the Self

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Key Words

self-awareness, self-enhancement, self-verification, self-expansion, self-conscious emotions, motivation, emotion, guilt, shame, pride, self-evaluation

Abstract

Recent theory and research are reviewed regarding self-related motives (self-enhancement, self-verification, and self-expansion) and self-conscious emotions (guilt, shame, pride, social anxiety, and embarrassment), with an emphasis on how these motivational and emotional aspects of the self might be related. Specifically, these motives and emotions appear to function to protect people's social well-being. The motives to self-enhance, self-verify, and self-expand are partly rooted in people's concerns with social approval and acceptance, and self-conscious emotions arise in response to events that have real or imagined implications for others' judgments of the individual. Thus, these motives and emotions do not operate to maintain certain states of the self, as some have suggested, but rather to facilitate people's social interactions and relationships.

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MOTIVATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF THE SELF

Many of the philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists who founded the social and behavioral sciences were keenly interested in topics related to self and identity. James, Cooley, Mead, Blumer, and others viewed self-thought and self-representation as a bridge between the social events that occurred outside of the individual (including both interpersonal interactions and society more broadly) and the individual's own thoughts,

behaviors, and emotions. This interest dwindled with the advent of behaviorism and, with the exception of work by the humanistic psychologists, the scientific study of the self lay dormant for nearly 50 years. Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, the study of self and identity regained respectability, fueled partly by the cognitive revolution, which led to cognitive models of self-awareness, self-conceptualization, and self-regulation (e.g., Carver & Scheier 1981, Duval & Wicklund 1972, Markus 1977).

Following this resurgence of interest, research on self-processes proceeded along two relatively distinct lines. One line focused primarily on "cold," cognitive aspects of the self such as self-construals, self-schematic processing, self-organization, self-categorization, self and memory, self-reference effects, and executive processes. Although some of this work examined emotions and motives as well, the processes under investigation were primarily cognitive. The other line of research focused on "hot" motivational and emotional self-processes such as those involved in self-esteem, self-enhancement, self-verification, and self-conscious emotions. These two literatures on self-processes are both huge and burgeoning, so the focus of this review is limited to recent work on motivational and emotional aspects of the self. The reader is referred to previous reviews by Banaji & Prentice (1994) and Ellemers et al. (2002), as well as to Leary & Tangney (2003a), for coverage of other areas.

Much of the popularity of the self as an explanatory construct stems from theories that attribute people's thoughts or behaviors to "self-motives" such as motives for self-enhancement, self-verification, self-expansion, or self-assessment. Although differing in specifics, these approaches assume that human thought and action are affected by motives to maintain or promote certain kinds of self-images. At the same time, psychologists have long known that people's self-thoughts are strongly linked to their emotions. Researchers who study self-processes

have been particularly interested in the so-called self-conscious emotions—shame, guilt, embarrassment, social anxiety, and pride—although, as I discuss below, virtually every emotion, not only self-conscious emotions, can be evoked by self-reflection.

Motives and emotions are inextricably linked. Fulfilled and unfulfilled motives usually evoke emotional reactions, and emotions are often reactions to fulfilled or thwarted motives (Johnson-Laird & Oatley 1992). Yet, the literatures on self-related motives and emotions have developed independently, with little discussion of the relationships between them. I try to rectify this situation at the end of the article. However, I begin by examining the three self-motives that have garnered the most attention, followed by a look at the self-conscious emotions.

SELF-MOTIVES

Theorists have posited the existence of a number of self-motives, including motives for self-enhancement, self-verification, self-expansion, self-appraisal, self-improvement, self-actualization, and self-transcendence. Unfortunately, progress in studying self-processes, including self-relevant motives, has been hampered by vagueness and inconsistency in how writers have used the term “self.” “Self” has been used to refer to several distinct phenomena, including aspects of personality, the cognitive processes that underlie self-awareness, a person’s mental representation of him- or herself, an executive control center that mediates decision-making and self-regulation, and the whole person (for discussions of problems with the definition of self, see Leary & Tangney 2003b, Olson 1999).

In the case of self-motives, some concepts refer to mechanisms by which people create or maintain certain self-images, self-beliefs, or self-evaluations in their own minds. For example, self-enhancement involves the desire to maintain the positivity of one’s self-concept, and self-verification is the desire to confirm one’s existing self-views. In contrast, other

terms refer to motives involving the individual as a person. For example, self-improvement is not a motive to improve the psychological self but rather a tendency toward increasing the person’s capabilities. Likewise, self-actualization involves the hypothesized movement toward becoming a fully functioning person. Neither self-improvement nor self-actualization are aimed toward changing the self per se (as opposed to the person), although the self may indeed be involved.

In my view, a “self-motive” is an inclination that is focused on establishing or maintaining a particular state of self-awareness, self-representation, or self-evaluation. Thus, self-enhancement and self-verification might qualify as self-motives because they involve a tendency for the psychological self to maintain a certain state (of positivity or consistency). However, self-improvement and self-actualization would not be regarded as self-motives because, although they may involve self-reflection, they are not about the self. And, to complicate matters further, at least one concept, self-expansion, has been used to refer both to a motive to expand one’s behavioral efficacy (which is not a self-motive according to my definition) and to expand the breadth of one’s self-concept (which does seem to qualify as a self-motive).¹

SELF-ENHANCEMENT

By far, the greatest amount of research on self-motives has involved self-enhancement—the desire to maintain or increase the positivity (or decrease the negativity) of one’s self-concept or, alternatively, the desire to maintain,

Self-motive: any inclination that is aimed toward establishing or maintaining a particular state of self-awareness, self-representation, or self-evaluation

Self-enhancement: the desire to maintain or increase the positivity (or decrease the negativity) of one’s self-concept; the desire to maintain, protect, and enhance one’s self-esteem

¹A lesser studied self-motive is self-assessment—the desire to have objective, accurate, and diagnostic information about oneself. This effect is shown in experimental studies when people prefer receiving information about themselves that is highly diagnostic in the sense that it measures aspects of themselves accurately (e.g., Brown 1990, Sedikides 1993, Strube 1990, Trope 1986). Although people clearly desire accurate feedback under certain circumstances, the fact that this effect is stronger when the potential information is likely to be positive suggests that self-assessment often takes a backseat to self-enhancement (Sedikides 1993).

protect, and enhance one's self-esteem. A large number of phenomena have been explained with reference to the motive to self-enhance. Self-enhancement has been identified as underlying people's tendency to believe that they have improved relative to the past and that their personal improvement has been greater than other people's (Wilson & Ross 2001), self-handicap in order to provide an attribution for failure that does not implicate their ability (McCrae & Hirt 2001), seek information that supports their self-esteem (Ditto & Lopez 1993), take more personal responsibility for success than failure (Blaine & Crocker 1993), idiosyncratically define their traits in ways that cast them in a positive light (Dunning & Cohen 1992), overvalue people, places, and things with which they are associated (Pelham et al. 2002), interpret other people's behaviors and traits in ways that reflect well on them personally (Dunning & Beauregard 2000), believe that they are better than they actually are (Alicke & Govorum 2006), compare themselves with others who are worse than they are (Wood et al. 1999), derogate others in order to feel good about themselves (Fein & Spencer 1997), distance themselves from those who outperform them (Tesser 1988), and deny that they possess these sorts of self-enhancing tendencies (Pronin et al. 2002). Space does not permit a full review of these literatures, so I focus on four phenomena that have been attributed to the self-enhancement motive—self-serving attributions, the better-than-average effect, implicit egotism, and the bias blind spot.

Self-Serving Attributions

The earliest programmatic research on self-enhancement focused on self-serving attributions (for early discussions, see Bradley 1978, Snyder et al. 1978). Since then, hundreds of studies have shown that people tend to attribute positive events to their own personal characteristics but attribute negative events to factors beyond their control, presumably in an effort to maintain a positive self-image and

self-esteem (Blaine & Crocker 1993). Self-serving attributions are also seen when people work together in groups. When a group performs well, each member tends to feel that he or she was more responsible for the group's success than most of the other members were. When the group performs poorly, however, each member feels less responsible for the outcome than does the average member (Mullen & Riordan 1988, Schlenker & Miller 1977). In addition, group members sometimes make group-serving attributions. Members of groups tend to attribute favorable group outcomes to the group itself but conclude that bad things that befall the group are due to factors outside the group or beyond its control (Ellemers et al. 1999, Sherman & Kim 2005). If group members are led to affirm their personal sense of self, group-serving attributions are reduced (Sherman & Kim 2005), presumably because self-affirmation lowers the motive to self-enhance through group-serving attributions.

Most researchers have explained self-serving attributions in terms of people's efforts to protect or enhance their self-esteem (Blaine & Crocker 1993). Not only does claiming responsibility for positive events and denying responsibility for negative events appear inherently self-enhancing, but experimental manipulations that threaten or boost self-esteem influence self-serving attributions (Sherman & Kim 2005). However, from the beginnings of research on self-serving attributions, other explanations have been offered. First, Miller & Ross (1975) argued that such effects might occur because people accept greater personal responsibility for expected than unexpected outcomes, and people are more likely to expect success than failure. Second, events that implicate the individual might influence the salience of the self as a judgmental anchor so that self-serving and group-serving attributions reflect the degree to which various plausible causes are cognitively available (Cadinu & Rothbart 1996, Otten 2002, Sherman & Kim 2005). Third, self-serving attributions sometimes

reflect self-presentational efforts to maintain a positive image in the eyes of other people rather than intrapsychic efforts to buttress self-esteem (Bradley 1978, Leary 1995). I return to explanations of self-enhancing biases below, but, for now, the safest conclusion after more than 30 years of research is that self-serving patterns of attributions may reflect self-enhancement motives, logical inferences about the causes of one's successes and failures, the salience of factors affecting one's outcomes, and self-presentational processes.

The Better-than-Average Effect

Many studies have shown that people tend to evaluate themselves more positively than objective information warrants, as well as more positively than third-party observers do (Colvin et al. 1995, Dunning et al. 1989, Robins & Beer 2001, Zuckerman et al. 2004). In fact, people tend to evaluate themselves more positively than they rate the average person on virtually every dimension that has been studied (for a review, see Alicke & Govorum 2006). In one study (Alicke et al. 1995), participants rated themselves and the average college student on 20 positive traits and 20 negative traits. Results showed that the average participant rated him- or herself more positively than did the average student on 38 of the 40 traits. The better-than-average effect is quite robust and has been obtained in a number of cultures (Alicke & Govorum 2006; Brown & Kobayashi 2002; Hoorens 1993; Sedikides et al. 2003, 2005). Interestingly, the psychological processes that underlie the better-than-average effect have not been directly examined, possibly because researchers have assumed that it arises from the motive for self-enhancement.

Implicit Self-Enhancement

Researchers have explored the possibility that people may self-enhance not only by evaluating themselves favorably but also by positively evaluating things that are associated

with them. Implicit egotism is the tendency for people's positive, self-enhancing evaluations of themselves to spill over into their evaluations of objects, places, and people that are associated with them (Greenwald & Banaji 1995). For example, research on the endowment effect shows that people come to evaluate things they own more positively than they did prior to owning them (Beggan 1992, Kahneman et al. 1990). Implicit egotism may also underlie people's tendency to evaluate the groups to which they belong favorably (Gramzow & Gaertner 2005). Similarly, research has shown that people tend to evaluate the letters of the alphabet that appear in their own names more positively than the letters that are not in their names, and the effect is particularly strong for people's initials (Hodson & Olson 2005, Kitayama & Karasawa 1997, Koole et al. 2001).

This case of implicit egotism has intriguing implications. If people evaluate the letters in their own names particularly positively, perhaps they also like things that also have those letters. In support of this idea, Pelham et al. (2002) found that people live in states that start with the same letter as their own names at higher-than-chance levels. Furthermore, people whose names match a city that begins with "Saint," such as St. Louis, are disproportionately likely to live in a name-sake city (Pelham et al. 2002). Perhaps more startling, people are disproportionately likely to have jobs that start with their own initials (owners of hardware stores were more likely to have names starting with "H" than one would expect, for example) and to marry people whose names resemble their own, and this effect is not simply due to ethnic matching (Jones et al. 2004, Pelham et al. 2002).

Controlled experiments have demonstrated the name letter effect as well. People prefer bogus brands of tea, crackers, and candy that resemble their own names to brands that do not resemble their names (Brendl et al. 2004). Other research showed that participants liked other participants whose arbitrary experimental number resembled their own

Better-than-average effect: the tendency for people to evaluate themselves more positively than they rate the average person

Bias blind spot: the tendency for people to think that they are less biased than most other people are

birth date and whose surnames shared letters with their own names (Jones et al. 2004). Interestingly, the biases to rate name letters and birthdates positively are correlated, suggesting the existence of individual differences in implicit self-enhancement (Koole et al. 2001).

Although the name letter effect has been replicated in at least 14 countries, questions have been raised about its strength and generalizability (Gallucci 2003, Pelham et al. 2003). For example, in four experiments, Hodson & Olson (2005) obtained the name letter effect when participants rated letters and brand names but not when they rated generic attitude objects involving foods, animals, national groups, or leisure activities. Hodson & Olson suggested that the effect might occur primarily for objects and activities that serve a value-expressive function by communicating one's beliefs, values, or identity.

Although implicit egotism effects are robust, the psychological mechanisms that underlie them are not clear. We do know that implicit self-enhancement operates automatically and without conscious reflection. When people are induced to think deliberately, these automatic effects reduce or disappear, but when people are placed under cognitive load, positive self-evaluations increase (Koole et al. 2001, Paulhus & Levitt 1987).

The Bias Blind Spot

Ironically, people's tendency to self-enhance also leads them to think they are not self-enhancing. Pronin et al. (2004) explored the "bias blind spot"—the tendency for people to think that they are less susceptible to biases than other people are. In one study, participants rated how much they personally showed eight biases in perception and judgment, including the better-than-average effect and self-serving attributional bias, and also rated how much the average American shows each bias. Results showed that participants thought that they were affected less by all eight biases than the average American (Pronin et al. 2002).

Two Debates Regarding Self-Enhancement

Although people show strong self-enhancing patterns, this topic has been subject to two particularly interesting and generative debates involving cultural differences and whether self-enhancement is a benefit or a liability.

Cultural differences. Most studies of self-enhancement have been conducted in the United States, Europe, and Australia, leaving open the question of whether people in other cultures, particularly in east Asia, also self-enhance and whether self-enhancement is related to psychological outcomes similarly in the East and West. On one side of the debate, researchers have suggested that people in certain cultures, such as Japan, do not show the same self-enhancing tendencies as people in the United States (Heine et al. 1999, Markus & Kitayama 1991). Several studies show that Japanese participants more readily accept negative feedback about themselves, are not as unrealistically optimistic about their futures, and tend to be modest rather than self-enhancing, leading some to conclude that they are not motivated to maintain a positive view of themselves (Heine et al. 2001, Heine & Lehman 1995). People who are raised in collectivistic cultures may avoid self-enhancement because it brings attention to them and may foster friction among group members (Heine 2001). Furthermore, East Asian societies tend to emphasize self-improvement over self-enhancement, which may promote self-criticism (Heine et al. 2001).

Other researchers have argued that all people prefer to feel good rather than bad about themselves and behave in self-enhancing ways that promote self-esteem (Sedikides et al. 2003). However, because different characteristics are valued in different cultures, people promote their self-esteem in culturally defined ways. Ironically, either self-criticism or self-enhancement can make people feel good

about themselves, depending on what their culture values. In most Western societies, characteristics such as confidence, individualism, autonomy, and superiority are valued, so people want to see themselves (and for others to see them) in these ways. In other societies, greater value may be placed on modesty, interdependency, harmony, and self-criticism, so that people prefer to possess these kinds of collectivist characteristics.

In support of this hypothesis, Sedikides et al. (2003) found that both American and Japanese participants self-enhanced but used different tactics to do so. American participants self-enhanced primarily on individualistic attributes (such as independence and uniqueness), whereas Japanese participants self-enhanced primarily on collectivist attributes (such as agreeableness and cooperation). Similarly, meta-analyses by Sedikides et al. (2005) showed that Western participants self-enhance on attributes that are relevant to individualism, whereas Eastern participants self-enhance on attributes relative to collectivism. This and other research (Chang & Asakawa 2003, Chang et al. 2001, Kurman 2001) suggest that differences in self-enhancement between American and Japanese participants are more nuanced than a general East-West model would suggest and that self-enhancement does occur in non-Western cultures (see, however, Heine 2005.) Even so, European Americans may be more prone to self-enhancement than East Asians, depending on the domain under investigation (Sedikides et al. 2003, Yik et al. 1998), and members of both cultural groups sometimes show the other pattern (with East Asians showing more self-enhancement) under certain circumstances (Chang & Asakawa 2003, Chang et al. 2001, Sedikides et al. 2003). In addition, it is not yet clear whether the cultural differences reflect differences in self-enhancement per se or some other process, such as the ease with which memories of positive and negative events are primed (see Chang & Asakawa 2003) or self-presentational differences in the desire to be

seen as enhancing versus modest by others (Kudo & Numazaki 2003, Kurman 2003).

The healthy illusion debate. A second debate involves whether self-enhancement is beneficial or detrimental to people's well-being. One argument is that self-enhancing biases promote well-being, more effective behavior, and greater success (Taylor & Brown 1988). Advocates of this hypothesis point out that self-esteem tends to be associated with positive outcomes, such as lower anxiety, higher confidence, lower stress, and greater success, whereas low self-esteem tends to be associated with problems such as anxiety, drug abuse, delinquency, and depression (Taylor & Brown 1988, 1994; Taylor et al. 2003a,b). For example, a study of people who were in or near the World Trade Center towers at the time of the September 11 attacks showed that self-enhancement was associated with better resilience and adjustment (Bonanno et al. 2005). Similarly, more positive self-evaluations predicted better adjustment among civilians who were coping with the aftermath of civil war in Bosnia and among people whose spouses had died (Bonanno et al. 2002).

Other researchers question whether self-enhancement is wholly beneficial (Block & Colvin 1994, Colvin et al. 1995, Robins & Beer 2001). They point out that the relationships between high self-esteem and positive outcomes are weak and that research has revealed several drawbacks of having high self-esteem (Baumeister et al. 2003). For example, efforts to self-enhance may lead people, particularly those with high trait self-esteem, to make risky decisions, treat others shabbily, and react aggressively (Baumeister et al. 1993a, 1996; Heatherton & Vohs 2000; Johnson et al. 1997). Furthermore, processing information in a self-serving manner is associated with greater unethical behavior (von Hippel et al. 2005).

In addition, self-enhancement leads people to conclude that their perceptions of themselves are more accurate than other people's perceptions of themselves, that their own

Self-verification: the tendency for people to prefer and seek out information that is consistent with their existing views of themselves

perceptions of other people are more accurate than others' impressions of them, and that other people are less objective and fair than they are (Pronin et al. 2002, 2004). Thus, when others disagree with their perceptions and opinions, people tend to assume that the others are deluded, biased, or ignorant, leading to a good deal of interpersonal conflict. Furthermore, people view self-enhancing individuals more negatively (Bonanno et al. 2002, 2005; Colvin et al. 1995; Leary et al. 1997; Robins & John 1997; however, see Joiner et al. 2003 for a possible gender difference in this effect). For example, in studies of the relationship between self-esteem and coping, people who experienced terrorist attacks, civil war, or death of a spouse were judged more negatively by others despite being more psychologically resilient (Bonanno et al. 2002, 2005). Although self-enhancing biases often make people feel good about themselves and have other short-term benefits, they can undermine people's interpersonal relationships and well-being in the long run (Colvin et al. 1995, Paulhus 1998, Robins & Beer 2001). Crocker & Park (2004) provide an exceptional overview of the various costs of self-enhancement.

Part of the difficulty in resolving the healthy illusion debate stems from the fact that many studies that purport to demonstrate beneficial effects of self-enhancement do not actually assess whether people's positive self-views are "illusory" or "self-enhancing" as opposed to justifiably positive (Kwan et al. 2004, Taylor & Armor 1996). In many studies, self-enhancement has been operationalized in terms of the positivity of participants' self-reports (e.g., Taylor et al. 2003a) or in terms of differences between participants' ratings of themselves versus their ratings of others (e.g., Alicke 1985), neither of which necessarily reflects whether the individual's perceptions are accurate or self-enhancing. Recently, studies that assessed self-enhancement independently of the mere absolute or relative positivity of people's self-evaluations have shown self-enhancement to have both beneficial and

detrimental effects (Kwan et al. 2004, Paulhus et al. 2003).

Furthermore, people who self-enhance may also tend to report excessively favorable well-being and adjustment, leading to spurious correlations between self-enhancement and self-reported well-being (Shedler et al. 1993). And, the effects of self-enhancement may depend on whether one examines the effects of self-enhancement on subjective experience, interpersonal relationships, task performance, or physical health. Altogether, as Paulhus (1998, p. 1207) observed, "self-enhancement is best viewed as a mixed blessing."

SELF-VERIFICATION

Swann's discovery that people sometimes prefer to receive negative rather than positive feedback challenged the notion that self-enhancement is the predominant self-relevant motive. In several studies, participants were found to choose feedback that was consistent with their current self-views even when those self-views were negative (e.g., Hixon & Swann 1993; Swann & Pelham 2002; Swann & Read 1981; Swann et al. 1989, 1992a). According to self-verification theory (Swann 1983, 1990), people are motivated to verify, validate, and sustain their existing self-concepts. Self-verifying information leads to stability in people's self-concepts and makes people feel that they understand themselves, thereby providing a reliable guide to thought and action that facilitates smooth, effective, and enjoyable interactions (Swann et al. 1992a).

Self-verification processes appear to influence behavior in at least three ways. First, the motive to self-verify leads people to interact with those who confirm their self-concepts. Experiments have shown that people prefer to interact with strangers who see them as they see themselves (Swann et al. 1989) and, in ongoing relationships, people are more committed to spouses whose views of them are consistent with their own self-concepts. In both cases, these effects occur even when

the person's self-concept is negative, demonstrating that people sometimes sacrifice self-enhancing positivity for self-verifying consistency (Burke & Stets 1999; Swann et al. 1992a, 1994). Similarly, students whose self-views more closely coincided with others' appraisals of them felt more connected to their groups and performed more successfully in them (Swann et al. 2000). Self-verification also occurs with respect to people's collective self-definitions—those aspects of people's self-concepts that involve memberships in social groups. People prefer to interact with others who see the groups to which they belong as they see them; again, this pattern occurs whether people's views of their groups are positive or negative (Chen et al. 2004). Although exceptions of the self-verifying pattern have been found, studies suggest that people gravitate toward interactions and relationships with people who verify their self-images.

Second, people tend to behave in ways that elicit self-verifying feedback from others. People tend to solicit feedback about themselves that is consistent with their self-concepts (Robinson & Smith-Lovin 1992, Swann et al. 1992b). Particularly when others have inaccurate impressions of them, people go out of their way to affirm their view of what they are like (Swann & Read 1981). Third, people look for, see, and remember information that verifies their view of themselves (Swann & Read 1981). That is, people's interpretations of self-relevant feedback are biased in ways that confirm their existing self-images. People not only sometimes misinterpret information in ways that are consistent with their self-views, but they also dismiss inconsistent but accurate feedback as inaccurate (Doherty et al. 1990).

Self-enhancement and self-verification motives may either coincide or conflict. In cases in which people have a positive self-view, both self-enhancement and self-verification lead them to seek positive information about themselves. However, when people's self-views are negative, self-enhancement leads

them to seek positive feedback, whereas self-verification leads them to seek negative feedback. Studies have explored how people with negative self-views reconcile these pressures toward enhancement versus verification. For example, Swann et al. (1989) found that people prefer receiving positive rather than negative information about themselves, as self-enhancement theorists predict. However, when people explicitly seek information about attributes on which their existing self-views are negative, they tend to seek unfavorable feedback.

Bernichon et al. (2003) suggested that the apparent conflict between self-enhancement and self-verification may also be reduced by distinguishing global self-esteem (how people generally feel about themselves) from specific self-views (people's appraisals of particular characteristics). Their research suggested that people with high self-esteem self-verified specific negative self-views but that people with low self-esteem did not, preferring instead positive feedback even if it was inconsistent with how they saw themselves (and, thus, not self-verifying). Along the same lines, Swann et al. (2002) examined how people balance their desires for self-enhancement and self-verification in the context of romantic relationships. They found that people desired to be perceived in highly positive ways on dimensions that were essential to attracting a romantic partner, such as physical attractiveness, but preferred to be seen in self-confirming ways on other dimensions.

There seems to be little question that people prefer a coherent, predictable self-image and often engage in behaviors that evoke reactions from other people that coincide with how they see themselves. Furthermore, these preferences sometimes lead people to prefer self-verifying information, even when it is negative. However, the data are less clear that all self-verification effects arise from the motive to verify and sustain one's existing self-concept *per se*. An alternative explanation traces self-verification effects to interpersonal concerns involving social acceptance.

Self-expansion: the process of
(a) improving one's potential efficacy for achieving goals by increasing one's resources, perspectives, and identities; and
(b) broadening one's self-concept by adding new self-related beliefs

Although people undoubtedly like others to perceive them positively, relating to people whose views of us are more favorable than our views of ourselves poses certain interpersonal risks. As nice as it is to be perceived positively, the love and social acceptance we receive from people who see us more positively than we see ourselves feels tenuous. If and when others learn that we are not what they thought, disillusionment, disappointment, and accusations of deceit may result. The worrisome threat of falling from grace may be enough to lead people toward self-verifying interactions and partners. Ironically, then, people may feel more comfortable being accepted by those who see them less positively but accurately. Indeed, there's a great deal of confidence inherent in being loved by someone who accurately sees one's flaws.

This interpersonal explanation might account for why self-verification strivings are strongest when people's self-views are confidently held (Swann & Ely 1984, Swann & Pelham 2002). People are likely to assume that confident self-images are accurate and, thus, will eventually be perceived by others. It might also explain why self-verification is more pronounced in established relationships, such as marriages (Swann et al. 1994). Early in a relationship, the risks of being seen inaccurately are not particularly serious. However, as a relationship deepens, suddenly being "found out" has greater consequences.

SELF-EXPANSION

The self-expansion model (Aron & Aron 1996, 1997) proposes that people possess a central motivation for self-expansion—a motive to increase the "physical and social resources, perspectives, and identities that facilitate achievement of any goal that might arise" (Aron et al. 2001, p. 478). The model is based on the notion, first articulated by James (1890), that people include other individuals in their sense of self. People who have incorporated others into their sense of self not only treat those individuals preferen-

tially (Aron et al. 1991) but also process information about them differently (Aron et al. 1991, Aron & Fraley 1999, Maschek et al. 2003, Smith et al. 1996). For example, when people include others as part of the self, social comparisons with those individuals become less self-serving (Gardner et al. 2002), and people seem to confuse themselves with the other when making judgments (Aron & Fraley 1999). However, the self-expansion model goes beyond the idea that people merely incorporate others into their self-concept to assert that people are motivated to do so in the service of self-expansion.

Much of the research on self-expansion has dealt with its role in close relationships. The model suggests that developing an interpersonal relationship "expands the self" via several routes. For example, a new partner may perceive and validate aspects of the person that were previously ignored, or the individual may try out new or suppressed identities that are well received by the partner. Furthermore, to the extent that the individual includes the partner within his or her own view of him- or herself, he or she has access to new characteristics, resources, and perspectives. In a longitudinal study, Aron et al. (1995) asked university students to describe themselves ("Who are you today?") and answer other questions over a 10-week period. Their results showed that students who reported falling in love during this period showed a greater increase in the diversity of the domains that they used to describe themselves. In a second study, students who fell in love during the study showed greater increases in self-efficacy and self-esteem than students who did not fall in love. These changes were observed in both within-participants analyses (before versus after falling in love) and between-participants analyses (those who did and did not fall in love) and were not merely due to changes in mood.

Although a good deal of research has shown that people are attracted to those who are similar to them, people may also be attracted to those who are different because dissimilar others provide a greater potential to

expand one's self-concept (Aron et al. 2002). Along these lines, Amodio & Showers (2005) found that, for people in less committed relationships, greater perceived dissimilarity predicted greater liking. Because lower similarity implies a greater possibility of self-expansion, people who are less similar to oneself are sometimes liked better in the early stages of relationship development.

Consistent with the notion that self-expansion has a motivational quality, behaviors that expand people's self-concepts are affectively positive (Aron et al. 2000, Reissman et al. 1993). However, the positive emotions associated with rapid self-expansion early in a relationship wane as the process of self-expansion slows over time, which may account for the decline in relationship satisfaction in long-term relationships. If so, giving couples new opportunities for self-expansion may reignite positive affect. In support of this hypothesis, laboratory and field experiments showed that couples who participated in involving, self-expanding activities reported increases in relationship satisfaction (Aron et al. 2000, Reissman et al. 1993).

People also expand the self by identifying with groups (Smith et al. 1996, Smith & Henry 1996). In an extension of the self-expansion model, Wright et al. (2002) proposed that in-group identification is partly the result of the self-expansion motive. In their words, "we seek to include groups in the self because doing so increases our confidence that we can meet the demands of our world and achieve goals" (p. 350). Tropp & Wright (2001) showed that the cognitive representations of oneself and one's in-group are more strongly interconnected among people who identify highly with their in-groups, suggesting that people's self-concepts have expanded to include the group.

As noted above, authors have used the word "self" to refer to several different phenomena, and this problem has befallen the study of self-expansion in particular. Researchers interested in self-expansion have used "self" in two distinct ways that are

synonymous with "person" and with "self-concept." In one usage, self-expansion is conceptualized as a process of improving one's potential efficacy for achieving one's goals by increasing one's resources, perspectives, and identities (a process that Aron et al. 2001 compare to self-improvement; see Taylor et al. 1995). The other usage of self-expansion refers to people broadening their beliefs about themselves and their potential to act effectively—an expansion of the self-concept (Gardner et al. 2002). These two elements of self-expansion obviously coincide (e.g., expanding one's capabilities should be reflected in self-beliefs regarding one's potential effectiveness), yet they should be regarded as distinct. Research clearly supports the notion that people's self-concepts expand and diversify when they enter relationships and have other novel experiences and that people seek experiences and relationships that increase their efficacy. However, there is less evidence to support the broader hypothesis that people are motivated to expand their sense of self per se or that they engage in interpersonal behavior with the goal of expanding their self-image.

THE THEORETICAL VIABILITY OF SELF-MOTIVES

The general assumption has been that these inclinations to seek self-enhancing, self-verifying, and self-expanding experiences and feedback reflect inherent motives of the self (Aron et al. 2001, Gaertner et al. 2002, Sedikides 1993, Sedikides & Strube 1997, Swann 1990). Although no one could doubt that people act in ways that enhance, verify, and expand their current views of themselves, one can reasonably ask whether these effects reflect a motivational feature of the self as opposed to the use of the self to satisfy other (nonself) motives. To put it differently, does the self actually have motives to sustain certain states of the self-concept, or is the self, as the cognitive mechanism that underlies self-awareness and self-relevant thought, merely

Terror management theory:

traces a great deal of human behavior to people's efforts to reduce existential anxiety caused by knowledge of their own mortality

Sociometer theory: conceptualizes self-esteem as a component of a psychological system that monitors the social environment for cues that indicate one's relational value to other people

involved in satisfying other, perhaps more basic, motives? This is a difficult question—one for which no easy answer currently exists—but theorists are beginning to entertain the possibility that these effects do not arise out of any inherent motivational properties of the self. Attention has been directed most intently to alternative explanations of the self-enhancement motive; because of space limitations, I mention only two perspectives—terror management theory and sociometer theory—to show how certain self-motives are being reconceptualized as operating in the service of other, nonself motives.

Terror management theory (Solomon et al. 1991) proposes that people self-enhance because self-esteem buffers them against the existential anxiety caused by knowledge that they will someday die. According to the theory, awareness of one's own mortality creates paralyzing terror unless people construct views of their worlds and themselves that convince them that they are valuable participants in a meaningful world. People experience anxiety when their worldview is undermined (for example, by threats to important beliefs or institutions) or when they believe that they are not meeting their culture's standards (and, thus, have low self-esteem). However, people who have high self-esteem are buffered against terror because they believe that they are living up to important cultural values and, thus, will achieve either literal immortality (in terms of going to heaven, being reincarnated, or whatever) or symbolic immortality (in that their impact, good works, and memory will live on after they die). In either case, this assurance, buttressed by high self-esteem, protects them against the anxiety they would otherwise feel. Put simply, terror management theory suggests that people self-enhance to keep terror at bay.

Research has supported many predictions of terror management theory. Studies have shown that people who are reminded of their own mortality defend their cultural worldviews (Florian & Mikulincer 1997, Greenberg et al. 1992a, Rosenblatt et al. 1989), people

with high versus low self-esteem react differently to reminders of mortality and other threatening stimuli (Greenberg et al. 1992b, Harmon-Jones et al. 1997), and making death salient increases people's desire to have high self-esteem (Greenberg et al. 1992b). However, it is not certain that the primary function of self-enhancement is to assuage existential terror (see Leary 2002).

A second approach to self-enhancement suggests that many effects that have been attributed to self-motives arise in the service of promoting one's social acceptance by other people. Sociometer theory (Leary & Baumeister 2000, Leary & Downs 1995) suggests that self-esteem is part of a sociometer that monitors people's relational value in other people's eyes. Because people's well-being requires that they be valued and accepted by other people, people must be attuned to indications that other people do not value them as social interactants, group members, and relationship partners. When people detect cues that other people may reject them, they are alerted by an aversive loss of self-esteem. Thus, events that lower self-esteem—such as failure, rejection, humiliating events, and immoral actions—do so because these events may result in the person being devalued or rejected (Leary et al. 1995). According to sociometer theory, people do not self-enhance for its own sake but rather because they are trying to increase their value and acceptance in others' eyes, an idea that is consistent with early explanations that stressed the interpersonal functions of self-enhancement (e.g., Bradley 1978).

Research supports sociometer theory's description of the role of self-esteem in monitoring relational value. In laboratory experiments, manipulations that convey rejection, disapproval, or disinterest consistently lower participants' state self-esteem (Leary et al. 1995, 1998, 2001; Nezlek et al. 1997), and rejecting events in everyday life are associated with negative self-feelings as well (Baumeister et al. 1993b, Leary et al. 1995, Murray et al. 2003). Furthermore, the effects of performing

certain actions on people's self-esteem parallel how they believe those behaviors will affect the degree to which others will accept or reject them (Leary et al. 1995), and longitudinal research shows that perceived relational value predicts changes in self-esteem over time (Srivastava & Beer 2005). Even people who claim to be unconcerned with others' approval show declines in self-esteem when they are rejected (Leary et al. 2003).

Overall, research on self-related motives has reached a point where researchers are increasingly asking whether people are motivated to maintain certain states of the self as has been assumed or whether these phenomena actually reflect the role of the self in other interpersonal motives. As Leary & Tangney (2003b) suggested, "it may be more parsimonious to conclude that emotional and motivational systems are intimately linked to the self but are not an inherent part of it" (p. 11).

THE SELF AND EMOTION

Animals that lack self-awareness nonetheless experience a wide array of emotional states (Masson & McCarthy 1994), as do infants before they acquire the ability to self-reflect, indicating that self-awareness is not necessary for emotion. Even so, the capacity for self-relevant thought renders human beings' emotional lives more complex than those of selfless animals. The ability to think about oneself over time (the extended self) allows emotions to arise from thoughts about oneself in the past and future, the ability to reflect on one's own subjective reactions (private self) allows emotions to arise from self-evaluation and inferences about others' judgments, and the ability to conceptualize oneself in abstract and symbolic ways (conceptual self) allows emotions to arise from abstract and arbitrary self-judgments (see Leary & Buttermore 2003, Neisser 1988).

Self-Conscious Emotions

Researchers have designated a distinct family of "self-conscious emotions" that includes

guilt, shame, embarrassment, social anxiety, and pride, but the basis of this designation has been a matter of debate. Some theorists have conceptualized self-conscious emotions as emotions that emerge from self-reflection and self-evaluation. For example, Mascolo & Fischer (1995) traced emotions such as pride, shame, and guilt to people's evaluations of their own value, worth, or wrongdoing, and Tracy & Robins (2004a) proposed that people experience self-conscious emotions "when they become aware that they have lived up to, or failed to live up to, some actual or ideal self-representation" (p. 105). However, the self-conscious emotions are not unique in being elicited by self-reflection or self-evaluation. For example, an athlete who worries about playing in an upcoming game is anxious as a result of self-reflection and self-evaluation, yet we do not characterize anxiety as a "self-conscious" emotion. In fact, virtually every emotion can be elicited purely by self-reflection, so this criterion cannot serve as a means of distinguishing self-conscious emotions from other emotional states.

Other theorists have suggested that self-conscious emotions involve inferences about other people's evaluations of the individual. When people feel ashamed, guilty, embarrassed, socially anxious, or proud, they are assessing themselves from the perspectives of real or imagined other people. Thus, several researchers have proposed that self-conscious emotions involve reactions to social-evaluative events or transgressions of social standards (see Dickerson et al. 2004, Keltner & Beer 2004). In some cases, the reaction is in response to the judgments of specific individuals, whereas in other cases, it is a reaction to an internalized standard of some "generalized other" (Mead 1934).

Evidence that self-conscious emotions fundamentally involve drawing inferences about other people's evaluations rather than simply comparing one's behavior to personal self-representations or standards comes from several sources. First, we do not see evidence of self-conscious emotions in young children

Self-conscious

emotions: emotions such as guilt, shame, embarrassment, social anxiety, and pride that arise from people's inferences about others' evaluations of them, particularly with respect to their social acceptability

until they have internalized knowledge of others' standards and judgments and can take others' perspectives (Barrett 1995, Harter 1999, Lewis 1994, Stipek 1995, Stipek et al. 1992). Furthermore, self-conscious emotions are much more strongly tied to what people think other people think of them than to what people think of themselves. For example, people may become embarrassed when other people perceive them in an undesired fashion even when they know that those people's perceptions of them are inaccurate (Miller 1996), and other people can make us feel guilty or ashamed even though we know that we did nothing wrong. Likewise, people may feel proud while knowing that they did nothing exemplary, as when people bask in the reflected glory of others who excel (Cialdini et al. 1976). People experience self-conscious emotions not because of how they evaluate themselves but rather because of how they think they are being evaluated or might be evaluated by others.

Consensus is emerging that self-conscious emotions are involved in the self-regulation of interpersonal behavior. Successfully relating to other people requires that an individual abide by social and moral standards and occasionally subordinate one's own interests in favor of those of the group or other people. Self-conscious emotions play a central role in guiding behavior, motivating people to adhere to norms and morals, affectively punishing misbehaviors, and promoting appropriate remedial responses when needed (Baumeister et al. 1994, Beer & Keltner 2004, Keltner & Beer 2005, Keltner & Buswell 1997, Miller & Leary 1992, Tangney 2002, Tangney et al. 2007). In fact, people who do not experience self-conscious emotions mismanage their interpersonal relationships in situations that would produce embarrassment, guilt, or shame in most other people (Beer et al. 2003, Keltner et al. 1995, Tangney & Dearing 2002). Furthermore, people with damage to the orbitofrontal cortex, known to be a center for executive and self-regulatory control, show both deficits in self-conscious

emotions and inappropriate social behavior (Beer et al. 2003).

Of course, people can experience emotions simply from thinking about or evaluating themselves in their own minds, creating happiness, anger, anxiety, sadness, guilt, pride, and other emotions. People internalize others' values, then use those values to judge themselves. Importantly, the emotional consequences of these imagined reactions help to regulate people's behavior even in the absence of explicit feedback from others. Yet, the necessary and sufficient cause of self-conscious emotions is the real or imagined appraisals of other people, even if those appraisals are in one's mind (see Baldwin & Baccus 2004).

In addition, the expressive features of self-conscious emotions appear to serve as social signals that influence the inferences and behavior of onlookers (Keltner 1995; Keltner & Buswell 1996, 1997; Leary et al. 1992). In particular, the negative self-conscious emotions—guilt, shame, and embarrassment—include behavioral features that are seen in the appeasement displays of many other species, including gaze aversion, nervous smiling, reduced physical size, and a downward movement of the head (Keltner & Buswell 1997, Leary et al. 1992). Behaviors associated with pride, on the other hand, seem to convey a sense of accomplishment or superiority (Lazarus 1991, Tracy & Robins 2004c).

Guilt and Shame

For many years, the consensus was that people felt guilty when they violated their own personal standards but ashamed when they violated social standards. However, Lewis (1971), Tangney (1992), and others have shown that the distinction between guilt and shame lies not in the nature of the standards being violated but rather in the degree to which the person views the violation as a reflection upon his or her behavior (which produces guilt) or upon his or her global character (which produces shame) (Tangney 1992; Tangney et al. 1994, 1996a). Put simply, people feel guilty

when they think they did a bad thing but feel ashamed when they think they are a bad person (Niedenthal et al. 1994, Tangney & Dearing 2002).

People also experience vicarious guilt and shame due to the actions of other people who are associated with them (Branscombe & Doojse 2004, Lickel et al. 2005). For example, when in-group members engage in negative behaviors that are relevant to the identity of the group, other members may experience vicarious guilt or shame even though they personally did nothing wrong (Lickel et al. 2004). Participants who identified strongly with their national or ethnic group reported shame when other group members behaved prejudicially (Johns et al. 2005, Schmader & Lickel 2006).

Guilt and shame have different cognitive, subjective, and behavioral features. Shame is a more painful emotion that is accompanied by feelings of worthlessness, efforts to deny the transgression or escape the situation, defensiveness, and anger (Gramzow & Tangney 1992, Tangney et al. 1996b). When ashamed, people focus on themselves rather than the people they have hurt (Leith & Baumeister 1998, Tangney 1992, Tangney et al. 1994). In contrast, guilt is less painful, presumably because the person's negative self-judgment applies to a specific behavior rather than to his or her character. When people experience guilt, they typically feel regret regarding their transgression, are empathic toward those they have hurt, and try to correct the situation through apology and reparation (Baumeister et al. 1994, Leith & Baumeister 1998, Tangney et al. 1994). Guilt also seems to involve a lower degree of self-focused attention than shame, possibly because guilty people focus primarily on those they have harmed, whereas ashamed people focus primarily on themselves (Arndt & Goldenberg 2004).

These differences have led theorists to suggest that guilt is a more adaptive emotion than shame from both an interpersonal and psychological perspective (Baumeister et al. 1994, Tangney 2002, Tangney et al. 1996a). Not only is guilt more strongly associated with

empathy and behaviors that redress undesired situations, but individual differences in guilt-proneness are associated with better psychological adjustment than individual differences in shame-proneness (for a review, see Tangney et al. 1995). Furthermore, contrary to the assumption that shame deters people from engaging in undesirable behaviors, people who are high in shame-proneness are actually more likely to commit immoral and illegal actions than are those low in shame-proneness. In contrast, guilt-proneness is associated with more socially acceptable behaviors (Tangney 1994, Tangney & Dearing 2002).²

Social Anxiety and Embarrassment

Social anxiety and embarrassment involve people's concerns with how they are being perceived and evaluated by others. Social anxiety arises when people are motivated to make a particular impression on others but doubt that they will be able to do so, and embarrassment occurs when people believe that others have already formed an undesired impression of them (Leary & Kowalski 1995, Miller 1996, Schlenker & Leary 1982). Experiments that raise and lower people's concerns with others' impressions of them cause changes in their social anxiety (DePaulo et al. 1990, Leary 1986), and people's beliefs in their ability to make desired impressions predict how socially anxious they feel in real and imagined encounters (Alden & Wallace 1991, Leary et al. 1988, Patterson & Ritts 1997). Social anxiety is clearly an interpersonal emotion that is involved in detecting and responding to events that have implications for the degree to which people are valued and accepted by others (see Leary 2001).

Likewise, embarrassment is caused by events that might lead others to draw negative inferences about the individual (Miller 1995).

²The uniformly maladaptive nature of the reactions that accompany shame raises the question of why shame might have evolved in the first place. This question goes beyond the focus of the current review but is addressed by Tangney (2003).

Thus, people report feeling embarrassed as a result of pratfalls (e.g., falling down), cognitive shortcomings (e.g., forgetting something important), loss of bodily control (e.g., belching), failure to maintain their own or another's privacy (e.g., unexpectedly being seen naked or seeing others naked), and stilted social interactions that connote interpersonal ineptitude (e.g., awkward silences in conversations) (Miller 1992). In addition, people may be teased into embarrassment when others point out their undesired characteristics or behaviors (Keltner & Buswell 1997, Miller 1992).

Pride

Pride has received less theoretical and empirical attention than guilt, shame, embarrassment, or social anxiety. Pride appears to arise when people believe that they are responsible for a socially valued outcome or that they are a socially valued person (Barrett 1995, Mascolo & Fischer 1995). Although pride typically involves outcomes for which the individual was personally responsible, it may also arise from the outcomes of others with whom one is associated and even from possession of a valued object (Lazarus 1991).

Researchers have suggested that two forms of pride reflect pride in one's behavior versus pride in one's personal characteristics, a distinction that parallels that between guilt and shame (Lewis 1992, Tangney 2003, Tracy & Robins 2006). Preliminary evidence suggests that pride in one's actions is more adaptive than pride in who one is, which tends to be hubristic and egocentric (Lewis 1992, Tracy & Robins 2006). Evidence also suggests that some instances of pride are defensive reactions to threat rather than reasonable responses to one's own actions or outcomes (McGregor et al. 2005). Although research supports the distinction between two forms of pride and the more adaptive nature of pride-in-behavior (Tracy & Robins 2003, 2006), it is not clear whether these ought to be regarded as two types of pride or as two distinct emotions (as guilt and shame are).

The functions of pride have not been deeply investigated, but they may involve motivating socially valued behaviors (i.e., people may behave in socially valued ways to experience the pleasant feeling of pride) or bringing one's positive accomplishments or attributes to other people's attention. The fact that pride has a distinct nonverbal expression that is recognized by both children and adults cross-culturally (Tracy & Robins 2004c, Tracy et al. 2005) suggests that its expression may serve some interpersonal function such as conveying success, competence, or status.

THE LINK BETWEEN SELF-MOTIVES AND EMOTIONS

As noted, motives and emotions are closely linked. Achieving or not achieving the goal that is associated with a motivational state results in affective reactions, and emotions typically imply the existence of a motive that was or was not fulfilled (see Johnson-Laird & Oatley 1992, Zurbriggen & Sturman 2002). This consideration raises a previously unexplored question regarding the relationship between self-motives and self-conscious emotions. Why are particular motives and emotions linked to the self, and what relationship, if any, do these motives and emotions have to each other? There may be two answers to this question—one that may be broadly applied to a number of motives and emotions, and another that is more specific to the particular motives and emotions discussed in this article.

The Co-option of Self-Awareness for Motivation and Emotion

The broad answer is that, once human beings acquired self-awareness during their evolutionary past, self-reflection came into play in a wide array of motivated actions and emotional responses that previously operated non-consciously (as they do in animals without a self). For example, using the extended self to contemplate the past or future could create

motivational and emotional states under conditions that would have not done so prior to the emergence of self-awareness. Thus, once human beings became self-aware, self-thought created cognitive and emotional states that previously arose only from the tangible satisfaction of particular needs or goals. [See Leary & Buttermore (2003) for a discussion of the effects of the evolution of self-awareness.]

Most relevant to the current article, cognitively construing the causes or meaning of events in particular self-relevant ways could lead to feelings of success, satisfaction, and self-approval in the absence of actual success. Through cognitively self-enhancing, people could reap the emotional benefits of doing well or being a good person without actually having performed in an exemplary manner. Similarly, by interpreting feedback in a self-verifying way, people could promote certainty regarding their self-image. In addition, the emergence of self-awareness permitted people to develop self-concepts and to evaluate themselves in their own minds, setting the stage for an array of phenomena that involve self-evaluation, self-verification, and self-expansion. These innovations in the cognitive self presaged the beginnings of modern human life, including deliberate self-regulation, symbolic collective identities, and deliberate conformity to arbitrary cultural standards, as well as an array of emotions elicited solely by self-reflection, such as prolonged worry (Leary 2004).

Although the self is undoubtedly involved in motives and emotions in this fashion, we may ask whether it is most parsimonious to regard the self's role in these sorts of cognitive-emotional reactions as reflecting one or more "self-motives" as opposed to the use of self-thought in the service of fostering positive affect or pursuing other motives. Stated differently, is the self actually motivated to maintain certain kinds of self-enhancing, self-verifying, or self-expanding thoughts, or do people simply use their powers of self-reflection to think about themselves in ways that lead to desired

emotions and outcomes? Contrary to the impression that one gets from much of the existing literature, there is relatively little evidence that the self is inherently motivated to promote certain self-images or that certain self-images reliably produce self-conscious emotions in the absence of real or imagined interpersonal implications.

Interpersonal Motives and Emotions

The second answer to the question of how self-motives relate to self-conscious emotions assumes that the ability to self-reflect functions primarily to promote people's actual physical and social well-being rather than merely to sustain certain self-images or to produce self-related emotions. As we have seen, the so-called self-motives typically reflect concerns with real or imagined interpersonal relations, and the self-conscious emotions arise from concerns with what others are thinking about the individual. Both require the individual to imagine him- or herself from the perspectives of other people and, thus, involve the self. In fact, the ability to think consciously about oneself may be necessary in order to draw inferences about other people's perceptions of oneself and may have evolved for just that purpose (Humphrey 1986).

Viewed in this way, the majority of reactions involving self-motives and self-conscious emotions are not fundamentally about the psychological self but rather are inclinations toward and reactions to interpersonal relationships. That is, human beings are not inherently motivated to create or sustain certain mental images or feelings about themselves (i.e., they may have no self-motives *per se*) but rather are motivated to create and sustain certain kinds of interpersonal relationships for which these motives and emotions are relevant. As Lazarus (1991) observed, "Although emotions can seem to arise privately and without others being around . . . they always involve other persons" (p. 241) (see also Keltner & Haidt 1999).

This is not to say that people never use their powers of self-reflection to create psychological states to reduce anxiety, promote feelings of accomplishment, or make themselves feel good when situational conditions would not otherwise elicit such states naturally. But self-relevant rationalizations, illusions, biases, and other cognitive shenanigans are not likely to be the fundamental purpose of the self-motives and self-conscious emotions discussed here. Fundamental motives are aimed toward satisfying fundamental needs, and emotions appear to serve the dual functions of alerting people to certain conditions and prompting them to respond to those conditions (Oatley & Jenkins 1996). The outcomes toward which motives and emotions are pointed are situated in the individual's social and physical environment and not merely in the individual's own mind.

CONCLUSION

The appearance of self-awareness led to dramatic changes in human thought, emo-

tion, and behavior (Leary 2004). Among other things, self-awareness allowed people to think about how they were perceived and evaluated by others and to regulate their behavior to bring about desired interpersonal outcomes. Many, although by no means all, of the "hot" self-relevant processes investigated by behavioral researchers, including those discussed in this article, directly or indirectly involve this interest in being perceived and treated in desired ways by other people. The motives to self-enhance, self-verify, and self-expand are partly rooted in people's pervasive concerns with approval and acceptance, and self-conscious emotions are reactions to events that involve people's real or potential standing in the eyes of other people. Because people can think about themselves in their own minds, they sometimes conjure up these motives and emotions in the absence of real interpersonal events, yet these phenomena appear to be fundamentally rooted in the vitally important need for social connection.

SUMMARY POINTS

1. Psychologists have ascribed a good deal of human behavior and emotion to self-enhancement, self-verification, self-expansion, and other self-relevant motives.
2. Although people undoubtedly self-enhance (for example, through self-serving attributions, the better-than-average effect, implicit self-enhancement, and the bias blind spot), self-verify (by seeking information that is consistent with their self-views), and self-expand (by seeking experiences that broaden their resources, perspectives, and identities), questions may be raised regarding whether these are motives to maintain particular states of the psychological self.
3. Rather than serving intrapsychic motives, self-enhancement, self-verification, and self-expansion may reflect efforts to obtain material or interpersonal outcomes, such as to establish, maintain, and protect one's relationships with other people.
4. The capacity for self-awareness renders human beings' emotional experiences quite different from those of self-less animals by allowing people to generate emotion purely through self-relevant thought and by permitting people to imagine how they are being perceived by other people.
5. The so-called self-conscious emotions—guilt, shame, embarrassment, social anxiety, and pride—are reactions to inferences about other people's evaluations of the

individual, playing a role in guiding behavior, motivating people to adhere to norms and morals, affectively punishing misbehaviors, and promoting corrective actions following misdeeds.

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