

A THEORY OF SURRENDER:
UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGICAL SURRENDER
WITH COMPARISON TO EGO DEFENSE

by

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ABSTRACT

This theoretical dissertation was an investigation of psychological literature to research the underdeveloped topic of psychological surrender and compare it to ego defense. An extensive review of ego defense literature includes specialized focus on theoretical controversies. The sparse, disconnected literature on surrender was bound and analyzed, revealing themes that collectively describe the nature of the phenomenon. Integration of literature on ego development, ego strength, positive psychology, and systems theory enabled a broader framework within which to theorize. A conceptual theory of the overall nature of defenses was constructed, and it is posited that defenses can develop beyond the stage of maturity. A conceptual theory and developmental model of surrender were generated, and core nomenclature was established. Surrender is not defeat; it is concluded to be a transformative psychological phenomenon that is oriented toward learning, works in service of the innate desire to grow, is motivated by curiosity, and is a distinct alternative to defenses as a response to anxiety and conflict. It was determined that surrender and defenses work in dynamic synergy in the process of sociocultural and psychological development. Numerous, specific suggestions are offered for future research efforts.

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DEDICATION

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,
for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:14 NIV

Thank you, God, for speaking to me so clearly through Your gift of
my husband, Mark Stevens Moze.

My Dear Perfect Husband,

Your capacity for vision and insight illuminated this path for
me! Your limitless forms of support and encouragement provided for
my ability to walk this path! Thank you for loving me so!

Your Darlin' Wife

"Be still and know." Psalm 46:10 NIV

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This theoretical dissertation was an investigation of psychological literature to research the underdeveloped topic of psychological surrender and compare it to ego defense. This chapter provides the framework for the research by means of an historical background and overview that situates the topic in the literature, the research objectives that state the specific goals of the research, and a section on theoretical tools that explains the method of inquiry.

Historical Background and Overview

This research focuses on the phenomenon of psychological surrender and its relationship to psychological defense. The premise is that psychological surrender might be the experiential phenomenon that occurs when one shifts out of a posture of defense, and that surrender might even be an alternative to defense as a response to subjective experiences of psychological conflict. Branscomb (1993) states that surrender is the voluntary giving up of defenses in service of psychological healing, yet preliminary research shows discussions revolving around the voluntary versus involuntary nature of both surrender and ego defenses. As such, the premise of this study provides for broader discovery about the overall phenomena of surrender and ego defenses, and also looks at the possibility that surrender is an alternative to defense as a response to conflict. In addition, surrender tends to be framed by the literature in terms of pathology, and

the premise of this research allows surrender to also be considered in terms of health and normative development.

Ego defense literature explains that the human response to the subjective experience of psychological conflict is one of psychological defense (Cramer, 2006; Plutchik, 1995; Vaillant, 1995b). Defense literature also explains that, while therapy seeks to help people move past habituated or developmentally limiting use of defenses, therapy can also create psychological conflict and clients can resist the very change that they seek; in other words, resistance is a form of defense that is specific to treatment (Buckley, 1995; Clark, 1998; Frankel & Levitt, 2006; S. Kreidler & H. Kreidler, 2004; Mahoney, 1991; Vaillant, 2000; Wachtel, 1999). Generally speaking, people use defenses to keep the status quo outside of therapy and use resistance to halt the process of change within therapy, both of which can limit personal change and psychological growth (Cooper, 1998; Wachtel, 1999). Defenses and resistance are both self-protective, not always healthy, and addressed by the construct of ego defenses.

The construct of ego mechanisms of defense is one of the most widely accepted and validated constructs in the field of psychology, and yet it is a subject that is rife with controversies and also poses challenges for empirical study (Buckley, 1995; Conte & Plutchik, 1995; Plutchik, 1995; Sjoback, 2004; Vaillant, 1998). A few examples of those controversies and challenges include a lack of consensus about what number and kinds of defenses exist, whether defenses are necessarily maladaptive or adaptive, and how to measure or assess defenses. The entirety of controversies and challenges limits the progress toward fully

understanding defense mechanisms. This consequently also limits the capacity to inform those disciplines and professions that seek to further understand the role of defenses in psychological well-being and help people realize the psychological changes that they seek.

There is a theoretical gap between the discussions and research about ego mechanisms of defense and the therapeutic approaches that aim to help people move past resistance in order to realize the change that they seek. There is an abundance of therapeutic interventions and techniques, but the lack of unity in theories about defenses and anxiety seriously clouds therapeutic efforts (Zerbe, 1990). Additionally, the field of psychology can benefit from a fuller understanding about the general experience of change, rather than simply the content or mechanics of change (Mahoney, 1991). What is missing is a fuller understanding of the actual phenomenon that is experienced when one psychologically shifts out of a given defensive or resistant posture into an alternative one.

The current state of psychological literature on surrender is underdeveloped and unexamined, yet the preliminary investigation that launched this present research revealed that surrender might be the phenomenon that occurs at that point of shift. Further understanding about the phenomenon of surrender also assists in viewing the theoretical underpinnings of defense theories from another perspective. Therefore, researching the nature of defenses and resistance, rather than studying the individual defenses, strengthens the capacity to

understand defenses in general and the comparative backdrop against which to view insights from the investigation of psychological surrender.

This research contributes to the conversations about ego mechanisms of defense and human resistance to change. This research also elevates awareness about the subject of psychological surrender, establishes a more solid basis for its own discourse, and provides support and direction for future research.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this research was to deduce a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of psychological surrender as it is represented in the literature and how it might relate to psychological defense. Therefore, the primary goals were (a) to bind the loose threads of literature on psychological surrender into a tighter fabric in order to advance, clarify, and frame an understanding of surrender, and (b) to posit a relationship between surrender and psychological defenses. Secondary goals were to contribute to the start of nomenclature for the topic of surrender and to discern areas for future research efforts. The mission was to form a new foundation upon which future research can occur to further understand surrender, ego defenses, and human resistance to change.

Theoretical Tools

This is a research inquiry guided by a basic, exploratory, theoretical methodology, and philosophically influenced by the intuitive inquiry approach. *Intuitive inquiry* is a dynamic approach to research that uses transpersonal skills such as intuition to guide inquiry (Anderson, 1998). Intuitive inquiry can be

incorporated into numerous forms of research and supports the process of intuitively selecting a topic that repeatedly attracts one's attention. Additional features include (a) being informed by compassion rather than emotional detachment, (b) allowing for and even anticipating the element of surprise that can lead to new ways of looking at a topic, and (c) encouraging a nonlinear focus and how the data might shape itself. Intuitive inquiry is simply doing research that seeks to understand a facet of human experience while being consciously aware of one's intuitive processes. Intuitive inquiry functioned as a conscious philosophical influence in this research versus the basic, exploratory, theoretical methodology that formally guided this research.

Basic research is the starting point on a continuum of types of research that range from contributing basic knowledge to illuminating issues of societal concern and attempting to solve specific problems. The dividing lines along the continuum are not necessarily clear (Patton, 2002), but the fundamental distinctions can be understood and applied to any method of research (M. Q. Patton, personal communication, April 7, 2008). The purpose of basic research is to further understand a phenomenon by investigating its nature in an effort to describe or explain it (Patton, 2002). Basic research generally occurs within a specific discipline and hopes to contribute knowledge that can launch further studies along the research continuum. Basic theoretical research is not problem-oriented; it seeks to explain a phenomenon without attention to specific applications (M. Q. Patton, personal communication, April 7, 2008). The standard

for judging the work is the overall rigor of the research and the verifiability of the findings (Patton, 2002).

Exploratory research is quite pure in its goals. Like basic research, exploratory research is a fundamental distinction of type that can be applied to any research method (M. Q. Patton, personal communication, April 7, 2008). Its uniqueness lays in its aim to investigate topics where little work has been done, where there is minimal understanding about a phenomenon, or where few hypotheses exist. This is the nature of the topic of surrender. Exploratory research asks questions, seeks new insights, attempts to generate ideas for future research, and develops new fields of inquiry by watching for emergent patterns in data (Patton, 2002; Robson, 2002).

Theoretical research attempts to develop a higher-level conceptualization of a phenomenon in order to better understand it (Bentz & J. J. Shapiro, 1998; Braud & Anderson, 1998). Theoretical research also informs and encourages new research by interrelating and integrating previously unrelated information (Braud & Anderson, 1998; Robson, 2002). Theoretical inquiry distills existing knowledge, is motivated by a sense of inadequacy in the current state of knowledge specific to a topic, attempts to extend a theory into areas where it has not been applied before, and is often a locus of interdisciplinary cross-fertilization (Bentz & J. J. Shapiro, 1998). In essence, theoretical inquiry seeks to generate new knowledge by analyzing, critiquing, extending, and integrating existing theories to further understand a phenomenon and create a more comprehensive and powerful theory (Bentz & J. J. Shapiro, 1998; Robson, 2002).

When a serviceable theory relevant to one's research interests exists, it is sensible to test its utility; if no theory exists, then theory generation is indicated, and what then becomes important is that some understanding of the phenomenon of interest is achieved. The goal is to provide a conceptual framework that can launch further research (Robson, 2002). Currently there is no serviceable theory of surrender that is recognized as foundational; instead, there is scattered literature that addresses the topic. This is why the present research is not just theoretical but also basic and exploratory. It investigates the underexplored topic of surrender and contributes basic knowledge by further explaining the phenomenon and providing a conceptual framework that can launch further research along the research continuum.

Generally, there is little specific structure to direct theoretical inquiries, and theoretical researchers are often left to their own devices to know how to perform the work (Bentz & J. J. Shapiro, 1998). While the present research was formally based on a basic, exploratory, theoretical methodology, none of these specifically stipulates the process used. In the cyclical process used in this research, a given cycle involved the focused search, review, and analysis of literature. Each cycle was guided by the research objectives, the information gained from any prior cycles, and intuitive inquiry. The process ended when sufficient content and analysis provided for the objectives to be realized.

The lack of theory around a topic minimizes the biases that can develop in a researcher (Robson, 2002). Also, areas in which there is little existing literature provide fertile ground for substantive and original theory generation (Glaser,

1998). In the present study, the lack of theory about surrender in the limited literature provided for minimal investigative bias and opportunity for theory conceptualization. The unexplored state of the literature on surrender afforded the capacity to be led by the literature and not by pre-existing paths of prior researchers. This allowed for minimal expectations and assisted the process of discovery.

Finally, this research involved no human subjects. Theoretical inquiry attempts to develop theory on theoretical grounds. It uses conceptual analysis, logical analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of existing information that illuminates the inquiry topic. While most inquiries seek to contribute to existent theories, theoretical inquiry distinctly and explicitly uses theory—or in this case, literature—as the raw data and does not involve human subjects (Bentz & J. J. Shapiro, 1998). While grounded theory is a theoretical approach to research that may involve human subjects (Patton, 2002), this research was not of that methodology.

Summarily, this is a basic, exploratory, theoretical research dissertation. It is influenced by the philosophy of intuitive inquiry. The cyclical process specifically allowed for select return to literature to surface the information necessary to satisfy the objectives.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW OF EGO DEFENSE MECHANISMS

Ego defenses are considered a valid and verifiable construct despite difficulties in researching them (Hentschel, Smith, Draguns, & Ehlers, 2004; Vaillant, 1998). The concept of defenses is the most robust and least controversial aspect of psychodynamic thinking and is considered both a cornerstone in the field of psychology and relevant across domains of human developmental studies (Buckley, 1995; Conte & Plutchik, 1995; Plutchik, 1995; Sjoback, 2004). While theoretical controversies exist, a basis of generally accepted concepts about defenses has evolved over the historical development of the topic. Currently, these concepts state that defenses (a) are beneficial to psychological health and development, although they can become problematic; (b) are deployed by the ego to manage psychological conflicts and maintain a sense of connectedness with others; (c) protect one's beliefs and resist the unknowns that challenge those beliefs; (d) tend to be understood as unconscious functions; and (e) show patterns of emergence and decline with psychological development, growing more complex as one matures. Together, the validity of the construct combined with the generally accepted theoretical underpinnings, and the consistency with which defenses are still misunderstood, keeps the topic ripe for inspection.

Defenses are a rediscovered topic that has had important developments in recent decades (Vaillant, 1995b; van Praag, 1995). Psychodynamic psychologists as well as cognitive, personality, developmental, and social psychologists are all finding ways to explore the topic (Cramer, 1998a, 2000; Draguns, 2004).

Defenses are being studied in general and with broader focus, such as lifespan development (Draguns, 2004; Vaillant, 1994). Defenses are also being studied with such specific foci as gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, IQ, obesity, eating disorders, physical health, and even Crohn's disease (Cramer, 2006; Hentschel, Smith, et al, 2004; Vaillant, 1995b).

Everyone uses defenses (Conte & Apter, 1995). They are always in action, they disguise what a person knows about self and others, and they somewhat reflect how people manage life's challenges and psychological well-being (Cramer, 1998a, 2006; Hentschel, Draguns, Ehlers, & Smith, 2004; Vaillant, 1998). As such, efforts to understand defenses help create a stronger framework in which to synthesize and comprehend incomprehensible behavior (Vaillant, 1994). This helps in clinical practices, personality assessments, stress- and emotion-related concerns, and in understanding the span of complexity of human behavior and development (Conte & Plutchik, 1995; Hentschel, Smith, et al., 2004; Lazarus, 2000; Solomon, 1998; Vaillant, 1994, 1998).

Ego defenses were discovered in clinical observations over a century ago, and it is the clinical arena that keeps the subject vibrant. The continued efforts to further understand defenses are essential for therapists in helping them (a) make sense of clients' behavior, both pathological and normative; (b) understand how people may or may not change; (c) come up with diagnoses and treatment plans; (d) create ideal therapeutic environments and alliances with clients; (e) identify individuals or groups that may be at risk for developing pathologies; and (f) assist in clients' overall well-being (Buckley, 1995; Clark, 1998; Cramer, 2006;

Solomon, 1998; Vaillant, 1992a, 1992e, 1994). Integrating knowledge of defenses into clinical practices also helps gauge therapeutic progress and understand the psychological changes that may have effected changes in symptoms (Cramer, 2000, 2006).

There is continued effort to evolve the content about defenses in the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" (Cramer, 2006; Vaillant, 1992a, 1992d). *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition (DSMIII)* (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 1980) was slated to include defense mechanisms as a diagnostic axis, but lack of consensus about definitions and terms negated its inclusion. A definition and glossary of terms was included in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition, Revised (DSMIII-R)* (APA, 1987). In the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM IV)* (APA, 1994), there appeared the Defensive Rating Scale as an axis of defense assessment.

Discussion about ego defenses is escalating in the field of personality psychology. A 1998 edition of the *Journal of Personality* devoted an entire issue to the subject of defense mechanisms. Personality research tends to focus on self-esteem, self-regulation, affect regulation, and coping, and there are persistent unresolved issues in understanding personality development that have obvious connections to understanding defense mechanisms (Norem, 1998). For instance, conflict and defenses have been considered within personality psychology in terms of negative outcomes without appreciating how conflict influences identity development, personality development, and overall human development (Cramer,

2004; Norem, 1998). Defenses have predictive ability relative to personality change and maturation (Cramer & Jones, 2007; Draguns, 2004; Vaillant, 1995b), and there are theoretical reasons to expect that defenses both influence and are influenced by personality characteristics (Cramer, 2006). Norem (1998) explains that defense theories may complicate personality constructs, but they positively challenge some of the assumptions that underlie personality research methods and can potentially help to surmount theoretical and empirical impasses that limit efforts in the field of personality psychology.

Defenses are also being discussed beyond the paradigm of pathology and with regard to their role in normality. Understanding defenses assists in helping people realize their unconscious strivings and aligning them with their conscious goals and plans to achieve them (Cramer, 2006; Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). Defenses are being discussed, researched, and found to be influential with regard to stress, resilience, happiness, job satisfaction, marital adjustment, interpersonal functioning, and successful aging (Cramer, 2006; APA, 1994; Vaillant, 1992a, 1994, 1995b, 2007).

Defenses are even being discussed relative to transformation. People seek to change and grow, and while poorly chosen, overused or habituated defenses can stall or halt personal development, their dynamic nature can also provide for growth and transformation (Cooper, 1998; Kegan, 1982; Solomon, 1998; Vaillant, 1994). Defenses can provide the time to postpone change and sustain psychological integrity (Kegan, 1982) while a person prepares to release them and surrender to the process of change (Solomon, 1998).

While the construct of defenses has wide acceptance, the concept is metaphorical because defenses are inferred from behavioral clues (Vaillant, 1992a, 1992c). As a result, research has had varying degrees of success over the decades due to the difficulties that are specific to defense research (Cramer, 2006; Draguns, 2004; Vaillant, 1998). There is divergence in definitions and presumed functions of defenses (Conte & Plutchik, 1995; Sjoback, 2004). Defenses are easier to define operationally than they are to study, making their consensual measurement and interpretations difficult (Draguns, 2004; Vaillant, 1992c, 1995b, 1998). There is concern as to whether what is being measured is accurate for diagnosis (Cramer, 2006). There are issues as to the number and kinds of defenses, whether defenses are necessarily pathological, and whether they are developmental or innate (Conte & Plutchik, 1995; Sjoback, 2004; Vaillant, 1998). The mere topic is somewhat tainted due to negative interpretations surrounding Freudian theories, and research has occurred under relabeled terms rather than be associated with Freudian psychology (Cramer, 2000; Lazarus, 2000; Vaillant, 1998). Dissent also surrounds what is even knowable about defenses (Sjoback, 2004).

The time-honored construct of defenses combined with the recognized value to further understand them, continually propel researcher efforts. Increased clinical interests, improved study designs, and wider scopes of theoretical discussion have generated research opportunities, spurred creative research, and built up momentum around the topic (Bauer & Rockland, 1995; Conte & Plutchik, 1995; Cramer, 2000; Vaillant, 1992a). It is generally accepted that continued

work to understand defenses can improve the ability of human development professionals to facilitate adaptive and growth functions in their clients, help in empathizing with people rather than condemning them, and provide contexts in which the irrational can become rational (Perry & Kardos, 1995; Solomon, 1998; Vaillant, 1992c, 1995a, 1995b). Understanding defenses helps appreciate that people have psychological reactions, not psychological disease (Vaillant, 1995b).

One theory of defenses may not be able to explain the broad range of defensive phenomena (Cooper, 1989), and as of the early 2000s, clinical observation, formal research, and theoretical formulation have yet to merge into an integrated whole (Draguns, 2004). Consequently, literature on ego defenses is daunting to review because it is vast and scattered, and empirical bases vary (Paulhus, Fridhandler, & Hayes, 1997). As a result of this complexity, and since it is helpful to discuss defenses as a collective (Vaillant, 1971), the literature is reviewed with a focus on defenses as a whole and not on individual defenses.

Even with the focus on defenses as a whole, the literature is still vast, scattered, and differentiated. Therefore, in order to derive an understanding of the overall nature of defenses, which is vital to the goals of this research, the literature is reviewed from many angles. After defining a few select terms, the literature is first reviewed as it historically unfolded with the work of significant theorists. Then, key issues that currently riddle defense research and theory are discussed. A look at clinical treatments, as informed by defense theories, provides another valuable perspective. The recommendations for future efforts, as put forth in the literature, provide insights into the current angle from which defenses are viewed,

and reveal how a look at surrender can offer a new perspective on the topic. Finally, an elaboration on uncommon issues that are identified in the literature provides a new range of considerations for understanding defenses. Together, these many angles provide scope to the topic of defenses and contribute details that help to generate an innovative consolidation of defense theories, offered in the discussion section. This consolidation presents a meta understanding of the overall nature of defenses and the necessary backdrop against which to compare psychological surrender.

Definitions

It is helpful to define three terms for this literature review. Those terms are ego, ego defense mechanisms, and resistance.

Ego

The term *ego* is used ambiguously; even within the field of psychology, it is often used without any qualifying definition. Hence, in the literature in general, it is left to the reader to infer the meaning of the term ego based on the context in which it is embedded.

Sometimes ego refers to a neutral mental apparatus designed to mechanistically balance conflicting psychological content. Depending upon theoretical perspectives, the conflict may be between instinctual drives (represented by the id in Freud's theory) or between drives and moral conscience (represented by the id and the superego in Freud's theory). This is the classic psychoanalytic view. Or, as in the object relations theory view (an early tangent of ego psychology), the competing influences may have to do with interpersonal

wants and needs. Further, from a more contemporary view, the conflicts can be combinations of these influences and also include personal goals and identity preservation.

Sometimes the ego is imbued with vested interest in events. It is considered a defender of intrapsychic and external peace. This is also a more contemporary view of the ego.

Another view holds the ego as somewhat personified. It is a mental entity that, infused with its own sense of self, seeks meaning and needs to be defended. This is common in personality psychology where the term *ego* is often used synonymously with the term *self*. The field of personality psychology did not even exist when Freud first introduced the concept of the ego or defenses (Draguns, 2004), but he was known to use the term ego interchangeably with the self (Hartmann, 1956). Freud had an evolving definition of the term as his own theories developed and even he put the term in quotation marks and used it with inconsistent meaning (Hartmann, 1956; Mahoney, 1991). His early use of the term referred to it as a passive manager of id impulses (Hartmann, 1956), whereas Freud's ego is now understood as the executive medium through which the images of the id and the superego are apprehended, and related tensions and anxieties are sought to be resolved (ideally by not allowing the thoughts to gain full shape in one's consciousness) (Ehlers, 2004; Sammallahti, 1995; Vaillant, 1992b, 1995b). But this understanding is not a consensual definition, and the difficulty in using various authors' definitions of the term ego is that authors define the term relative to their theoretical perspective.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the term ego represents the mental form through which flow impulses, cultural norms, interpersonal needs, personal goals, and environmental content, and which acts to achieve psychological balance when the blend of content is too disturbing to tolerate. Whether the ego is mechanistic or personified is left to the reader's discretion. Either way, whether the ego functions as the self or in service of the self, the importance is recognizing its role in trying to achieve psychological balance and its capacity to utilize defenses in those efforts.

Ego Defense Mechanisms

Defenses are defined in the *DSMIII-R* as:

Patterns of feelings, thoughts, or behaviors that are relatively involuntary and arise in response to perceptions of psychic danger. They are designed to hide or to alleviate the conflicts or stressors that give rise to anxiety. Some defense mechanisms, such as projection, splitting, and acting out, are almost invariably maladaptive. Others, such as suppression and denial, may be either maladaptive or adaptive, depending on their severity, their inflexibility, and the context in which they occur. Defense mechanisms that are usually adaptive, such as sublimation and humor, are not included here. (APA, 1987, p. 393).

Alternatively, authors often offer their own definitions. Defenses are various described as: (a) mental processes that seek to maintain psychological balance by minimizing the disturbing contents of awareness when people feel challenged in situations of conflict (Blackman, 2004), (b) mental operations that occur outside of awareness and function to protect an individual from experiencing excessive anxiety (Cramer, 1998a), (c) attentional devices that dim awareness to protect the mind and soothe the pain of anxiety (Goleman, 1985), (d) mental strategies for resolving intrapsychic conflicts triggered by internal or external events (S. Kreitler & H. Kreitler, 2004), (e) intrapsychic coping

mechanisms that keep anxiety within manageable limits (McCullough, 1992), and (f) ego mechanisms that resolve conflict (Mahoney, 1991). Some authors even use multiple definitions. Consider Vaillant's various descriptions of defenses: (a) habitual mental processes employed to resolve conflict between instinctual needs, internalized prohibitions, and external reality (1971); (b) mental mechanisms that manage affectively charged processes and the positioning of affects in relationship to thoughts (1992b); (c) the ways in which people involuntarily cope with sudden changes in internal and external environments (1992d); (d) cognitive styles and mental modes of altering inner and outer realities (1994); or (e) ego functions attempting to achieve psychological balance (1995b).

Essentially, the definition of defenses has not changed much since its inception (Ihilevich & Gleser, 1995), since at the core, defenses are understood as manipulations of the ego that massage psychological tension. Terms such as *conflict* and *anxiety* are often used in definitions, which may or may not be designed to honor classical Freudian theory. According to classical theory, conflicts are perceived, anxiety is felt, and defenses are deployed to calm both (Cramer, 2006; S. Kreitler & H. Kreitler, 2004; Sammallahti, 1995).

Siegel (1969) urged the distinction of the referents of defenses. He stated that some people consider defenses as the content of mind, where others refer to the aims of defenses, and still others refer to the processes of defense function. For Siegal, defense mechanisms are the processes of mind. He stressed that the imprecise use of the term and its presumed referents maintains a logical chaos in understanding defenses. His warnings and clarifications seem to have gone

unheeded, as he is cited only once in all of the literature reviewed; Siegal is referred to, in passing, in Vaillant's (1994) article as stating that defenses have not yielded easily to precise definition. Siegal's article (1969) comes from work with the Psychotherapy Research Project of The Menninger Foundation, supported by grant money from the National Institute of Mental Health. His work is grounded in research and published in the highly regarded *Journal of the American Psychological Association*. It is surprising that his article entitled "What Are Defense Mechanisms" is not cited in ego defense literature, but his early death at the age of 39 may have influenced the degree to which his work was promoted or became integrated into mainstream discussions.

Anna Freud tried to cure the inconsistent use of terms such as defenses, ego defenses, and defense mechanisms. She coined the phrase *ego mechanisms of defense* as her contribution to clarifying terms. However, it remains that the terms are still used interchangeably today, resulting in imprecise communication and misunderstanding.

Those who seek to differentiate the terms may be attempting to distinguish between mental content, mental aim, and mental processes as Siegal (1969) recommends, but the literature is inconclusive in this regard. In lieu of Siegal's recommendations, the controversies in defining defenses revolve more around their triggers. Classic Freudian theory believes that defenses are triggered from internal pressures when rising impulses are deemed forbidden and the attempt is made to keep them out of conscious awareness (Cramer, 1991, 1998a, 2006; Lewis, 1990; Norem, 1998; Sammallahti, 1995). Object relations theory says

defenses are triggered by distresses borne of perceived conflicts or tensions in interpersonal relationships (Cooper, 1998; Cramer, 2006; Ihilevich & Gleser, 1995). Contemporary theories include broader ranges of triggers that variously include threats to self-esteem or one's sense of self and identity, feelings of loss or shame or guilt, challenges to one's core beliefs, fear of acceptance, and any source that effects the experience of overwhelm for the ego (Cramer, 1998a, 1998b, 2006; Cramer & Jones, 2007; Grzegolowska-Klarkowska & Zolnierczyk, 1988; Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004; Hentschel, Smith, et al., 2004; Lewis, 1990; Paulhus et al., 1997; Sammallahti, 1995).

In addition to the referents and triggers of defenses, defining defenses is complicated by their presumed function. The understanding of defense function has expanded considerably since the inception of the construct (Ihilevich & Gleser, 1995). Early defense theory only viewed defenses as calming conflict and anxiety; contemporary theories have broader interpretations. For instance, Vaillant (1992d) lists four defense functions: (a) keeping affects within bearable limits during sudden changes in emotion, (b) restoring or sustaining psychological stasis by holding biological drives at bay, (c) creating time to integrate new information in an effort to sustain one's self-image, and (d) managing unresolvable conflict with people—living or dead—of whom one cannot bear to take leave. According to Vaillant (1994, 2000), defenses have an alchemical capacity in their ability to alter the relationship between self and other, transmute conflict, and buy time to respond otherwise. Ihilevich and Gleser (1995) list four different functions of defenses: (a) falsifying perceived threats, (b) creating the

illusion of mastery over threats, (c) eliminating or reducing consciously overwhelming anxiety, and (d) protecting or enhancing a person's sense of well-being. S. Kreidler and H. Kreidler (2004) agree that defenses try to resolve intrapsychic conflicts but add that they also serve as strategies for succeeding at everyday cognitive tasks. Davidson and MacGregor (1998) indicate that defenses are the ego's responses to the perception of threat. Benjamin (1995) states that defenses enhance the attainment of wishes or the reduction of fear. Depending upon the theory, wishes aim at impulse gratification or interpersonal goals, while fear is ultimately related to fear of the unknown and the threat of loss.

Succinctly, defenses are mechanisms of the ego, and there is general consensus that they are used to keep psychological content within bearable limits. For the purposes of this dissertation, defenses are ego responses deployed in the attempt to shift experiences of psychological overwhelm into states of psychological balance.

Resistance

Freud studied his clients in the therapeutic relationship and used the term resistance to refer to the entire range of defenses and the dynamic, unconscious power that can interfere with therapeutic efforts (Buckley, 1995; Reid, 1999). Clients can resist the very process of recovery or personal development that they seek (Buckley, 1995; Wachtel, 1999). Resistance is not listed as a defense, yet it is a defense that constrains therapeutic relationships and the processes of change (Clark, 1998; Wachtel, 1999). Generally, one uses defenses to keep the status quo outside of therapy and resistance to halt the process of change within therapy,

both of which can limit psychological growth by rigidifying one within an experience and reinforcing psychological barriers (Cooper, 1998; Wachtel, 1999). Simply stated, defenses defend what is known and resistance resists what is unknown.

Freud came to believe that real psychological change occurred in the realm of resistance and that resistance was energized by ego defense processes (Mahoney, 1991). Psychologists almost unequivocally state that psychological development involves episodes of resistance to change (Mahoney, Norcross, Prochaska, & Missar, 1989). The existence of resistance is less controversial than its interpretation (Mahoney, 1991). Contemporary theorists do not assume that resistance is necessarily unconscious or as universal as does psychoanalytic theory (Reid, 1999; Wachtel, 1999). Contemporary theories often view resistance as a conscious tool of noncompliant behavior (Reid, 1999).

Resistance occurs from fear of the unknown and its threat of loss of part of one's self (Eagle, 1999; Loevinger, 1987; Solomon, 1998). Resistance occurs in or out of the therapeutic context. For the purposes of this dissertation, the term *resistance* refers to resistance to change and appreciates that fear of the unknown underlies both resistance and defenses.

Trends in Defense Theory and Research

This section presents the understanding of defenses as it developed historically through the work of key theorists. This approach to the literature shows how the seed theory of defenses represented defense mechanisms in more narrow and pathological terms, grew to include new perspectives and broader

frameworks, and then came to recognize the healthy influence that defenses can have on psychological well-being. The trends highlight a pattern of understanding that becomes progressively wider and more inclusive in scope, creating a broad backdrop against which to understand surrender. This pattern and its background also foreshadow the need to continually expand the framework within which defenses are understood as well as the ways in which an investigation of surrender might contribute to an expanded framework for defenses.

The construct of defense mechanisms has not merely survived since its inception but has prevailed (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). The subject of ego defenses took root at the turn of the 20th century and has been part of psychological thinking ever since. The concept arose and is grounded in clinical observations by Sigmund Freud, but in the beginning, he and other psychoanalytic pioneers did not quantify or measure their observations (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). At that time, studying defenses empirically was unpopular, largely due to verification difficulties (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004; Vaillant, 2000). During the late 1920s to the early 1960s, efforts to study defenses met with significant criticism resulting from lack of test reliability, and empirical studies essentially ended (Cramer, 2000; Vaillant, 1998). Yet, the validity of the construct kept it alive with clinicians as they continued to integrate the concept into their practices (Cramer, 2000).

By the 1970s, although clinicians still valued the construct, they became disenchanted with defenses (Vaillant, 1998); they were frustrated by the lack of progress to further understand them. As such, efforts from the 1970s through the

1990s focused more on theory generation and attempts to explain broad ranges of clinical observations by integrating theoretical contexts other than just psychoanalytic theories (Cooper, 1989, 1998). These efforts addressed some of the theoretical issues that were constraining research (Vaillant, 1994) and ignited new research on defenses from the 1980s onward, offering a surge in new knowledge (Draguns, 2004; van Praag, 1995).

The present framework of defenses has widened considerably since its beginnings. Defenses are now viewed less as isolated phenomena and more as related to broader domains, even in evolutionary terms (Conte & Plutchik, 1995). Comparatively, the beginnings of defense theory had a much more narrow focus.

Classical Development

The literature agrees on the founding story of ego defense theory. Grounded in Sigmund Freud's tripartite model of the psyche and the ego's role in keeping painful thoughts and emotions out of consciousness, it advances into Anna Freud's intense focus on ego defenses and Klein's alternative focus on object relations theory, and ends with Hartmann's introduction of the concept of adaptation (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994; Conte & Plutchik, 1995; Cramer, 2006; Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004; Vaillant, 1995b). Each of these classic theorists is discussed in turn in this section.

Sigmund Freud

Freud started out as a scientific empiricist, practicing as a neurologist before working in the field of psychology (Vaillant, 1995b). The year 1894 designates his switch from neurology into the field of psychology. In that year he

is known to have (a) noticed that emotions can be disconnected from given ideas and selectively attached to other ideas by way of mental processes (Vaillant, 1992b, 1995b); (b) emphasized the dualistic intrapsychic functions of unconscious impulses and their manipulative counterforces (Cooper, 1998); (c) used the term defense to reference those counterforces (Buckley, 1995); (d) posited that defenses are the ego's response to ideas or affects deemed intolerable and are used to position such ideas or affects into tolerable relationships with one another, often resulting in the repressed expression of them (Cooper, 1998; Cramer, 2006; Vaillant, 1992b); and (e) described pathology as the result of unsuccessful compromise of intrapsychic conflict and repressed thoughts that overwhelm the capacity to function in a healthy way (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004; Mahoney, 1991; Plutchik, 1995).

Freud was in a constant struggle to conceptualize the peculiarities that he witnessed in his clinic. He continually massaged his conceptions for greater clarity, and his work evidences many radical departures and reformations of his own theories (Hartmann, 1956). Freud did not necessarily distinguish a defense from its resultant behavior, and this blurs the understanding of his work (Vaillant, 1992b).

Freud initially tried to describe several defense mechanisms, but he viewed repression as a defense that operated alongside nearly every other form of defense. He focused on it and on the designing of therapeutic approaches to disarm the unconscious and release the affects dammed up by repression (Buckley, 1995; Cooper, 1998). He also studied the defensive behaviors that

clients exhibited in therapy in the form of resistance to the very change that they sought (Buckley, 1995; Mahoney, 1991). Freud valued the role of defenses in providing a form of self-healing and psychological protection, but in 1905 he shelved the topic of ego defenses and spent the next twenty years studying three areas of interest: his drive theory and the unconscious, the neurosis that develops from repression of impulses, and therapeutic resistance (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994; Cooper, 1998; Safyer & Hauser, 1995; Vaillant, 1992b, 1995b).

During those twenty years, Freud's clinical experiences did not bear out his view of the ego as the conscious servant of the unconscious id (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994). He came to understand the ego as having multiple functions, including such things as memory, perception, judgment, and intentionality. He changed his original interpretation of the ego, and in 1923 he presented his tripartite model of the psyche that included the moral influences of the superego and represented the ego as functioning at both the conscious and unconscious levels (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994; Cooper, 1989; Mahoney, 1991). The unconscious was where primary processing of thoughts and emotions could contradict one another outside of time and logic. Consciousness was where secondary processing integrated time, cultural boundaries, and reasoning. Where early Freudian theory viewed defenses as conscious ego functions that squashed intolerable impulses, late Freudian theory viewed defenses as unconscious ego functions designed to manage the id's impulses and the superego's cultural norms (Cooper, 1989; Mahoney, 1991; Vaillant, 1992b, 1994).

With the introduction of his tripartite model, Freud designated the term *defense* to represent all ego techniques that manage internal conflicts, of which repression was considered one defense (Buckley, 1995; Vaillant, 1992b). The tripartite model imparted more control to the ego and renewed Freud's interest in defenses; hence, he concentrated again on the ego and its defense processes in relationship to anxiety (Bauer & Rockland, 1995; Cramer, 2006; Mahoney, 1991; Safyer & Hauser, 1995).

The tripartite model also changed Freud's view of anxiety. In his earliest theories, he considered anxiety as the accumulation of toxic substances that built up from repressed energies that could effect pathology (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994). With his tripartite model, he viewed anxiety as the emotional indicator of intrapsychic conflict that triggered defense functions (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994; Plutchik, 1995).

By 1926, Freud postulated a four-stage flow to the processes of defense, composed sequentially of an impulse, the experience of intrapsychic threat about the potential expression of the impulse, the mobilization of anxiety, and its reduction via defenses (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). This was significant in representing a causal flow to defense processes. Freud never developed a taxonomy of defenses (Cramer, 2006; Sammallahiti, 1995) but is distinguished for having established the theoretical foundation of ego defenses.

While Freud is often remembered for viewing defenses as purely pathological and solely unconscious, he was open to broader considerations. He also (a) came to understand that defenses could serve healthy functions (Vaillant,

1992b, 1995b); (b) had difficulty, over time, believing that defenses were wholly unconscious (Vaillant, 1992b); and (c) felt that immature egos may initiate defensive functions but that it takes a strong ego to design neurotic compromises in the first place and to gain therapeutic benefit (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994; Plutchik, 1995). This suggests that Freud was open to the very theoretical developments that thrive in contemporary theories: (a) the potential adaptive functions of defenses; (b) the possibility for defenses to function in consciousness, which ironically corroborates his initial inceptions about defenses; and (c) the developmental nature of the ego and of defense choice and use.

One underdiscussed facet of Freud's theory is his conception of psychic energy. Freud asserted that people have psychic energy and in limited amounts (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003; Mahoney, 1991). In his later theories, he believed that mental functions direct psychic energies in more ways than just repression. He indicated that psychic energy could be invested either in one's self or in others, and that too much energy invested in the self left insufficient amounts to invest in relationships, resulting in pathology (Mahoney, 1991). Freud believed that a healthy ego balances the needs of the individual self with the needs of the communal self.

Freud's thoughts about psychic energy align with Eastern notions of *prana* and the chakra system. Prana is the term that represents the energy that exists throughout the universe and may be concentrated and directed through the chakra system (Myss, 1996; Scotton, 1996). Chakras are considered energy centers located along one's spine through which prana, or energy, is channeled (Myss,

1996; Scotton, 1996). These energies can be directed by one's will, effecting health or illness (Myss, 1996; Scotton, 1996). Comparing Freud's ideas about psychic energy to Eastern ideas about willfully channeling prana may offer insights into defense function and psychological well-being.

In summary, Freud planted his seed ideas about ego defenses in 1894 and cultivated them in the 1920s into a preliminary theory. Defenses were considered ego mechanisms that sought to manage intrapsychic conflict within the id or between the id and the superego.

Anna Freud

From this point forward, Sigmund Freud continues to be referred to simply as Freud, and for heightened ease of differentiation, Anna Freud is specifically identified as Anna Freud rather than using the abbreviated identification of A. Freud; this will help minimize confusion between referents. While Anna Freud had a huge influence on ego defense theory, the name Freud is generally used to reference her father and his work (e.g. Freudian theory), and that same pattern is used in this text.

Anna Freud's legacy is the development of her father's ideas, marked by her 1936 book entitled *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (her present to him on his 80th birthday) (Vaillant, 1992b). In the book, she summarizes her father's contributions to ego defense theory and expands upon them; her work constitutes the landmark between the formative years of psychoanalysis and the emergence of ego psychology (Bauer & Rockland, 1995; Cramer, 2000; Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004).

Anna Freud distinguished the various defenses, attempted to create a taxonomy of defenses, and posited the possibility of a chronology of them (Paulhus et al., 1997; Sammallahti, 1995; Vaillant, 1992b). She classified the defenses she identified according to the source of their anxiety (whether of the id, the superego, or external influences), and she specified their purposes as well as their roles in pathology and healthy function (Cooper, 1989, 1998; Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004).

Freud is generally known to have listed nine defenses—repression, isolation, regression, reaction formation, undoing, introjection, projection, turning against the self, and reversal—to which Anna Freud added a tenth: sublimation (Bauer & Rockland, 1995; Buckley, 1995; Conte & Apter, 1995; Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). Vaillant (1992c) claims that, while convention says that Anna Freud listed ten defenses, he counted over twenty in her work. This inconsistency exemplifies one of many controversies in ego defense literature: the number of defenses.

Anna Freud refined her father's inconsistent references to defenses. Where Freud used descriptors such as defensive techniques or defensive methods, Anna Freud coined the phrase *mechanisms of defense* (Cooper, 1989). She specified that ego defensive functions are carried out by the mechanisms of defense—defenses—and that they are used for defense and defense only (Bauer & Rockland, 1995). Anna Freud's attempt at refinement foreshadows the rhetorical confusion that still exists today in the form of overlapping terminology, the

general absence of consensual nomenclature, and controversies in distinguishing defenses from coping strategies.

Where Freud concentrated more on the id and unconscious contents, Anna Freud concentrated more on the ego and its efforts to balance the influences of the id, superego, and external influences. She explained more about defenses and how they alter accurate perceptions of reality in order to manage excess anxiety (Cramer, 1998b). She demonstrated that defenses could be combined, and that they were used against intrapsychic conflict and external sources of conflict, and for adaptive functions (Buckley, 1995; Conte & Apter, 1995; Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). She is not known as expanding on the adaptive role of defenses; this is more the focus of a later theorist, Hartmann, but she did come to appreciate that defenses serve adaptive and healthy purposes.

Anna Freud speculated that defenses evolved and could be associated with developmental periods. She even tried to arrange them along a developmental continuum linked to anxieties, but this went underdeveloped and she did not finalize these thoughts (Buckley, 1995; Safyer & Hauser, 1995; Slavin & Greif, 1995). She believed that the ego needed to first differentiate itself from the id before defenses could be employed (Buckley, 1995), whereas later theorists considered the ego as an established mental operative from birth. She also raised the question as to whether repression was a baseline defense and that all the other defenses might develop to complete what repression leaves undone (Slavin & Greif, 1995). She even suggested that moderate use of defenses helps to develop the superego, stabilize values, and protect self-esteem, although these thoughts

were framed in reference to childhood years (Ihilevich & Gleser, 1995) and not necessarily to adult development. In her later work, Anna Freud notes that defenses seem to merge together when looked at on a micro level and that they can be better distinguished from a macro perspective (Vaillant, 1992c).

Anna Freud's work influenced a shift in therapeutic approaches. Where Freud's therapy aimed at uncovering unconscious material and interpreting it, therapy now focused on ego functions and the ego's role in behavior and therapeutic processes (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994). Interpreting the unconscious became less important than understanding the process by which the ego kept things out of consciousness in the first place. Focusing on ego processes also clarified anxiety as the emotion that indicates psychic tension, rather than anxiety being seen as the tension itself.

Anna Freud was intensely focused on defenses. Other theorists either expanded on her views and the broader functions that the ego might serve, or, like Klein, evolved new lines of thought altogether.

Klein

Klein was stimulated by Freud's discussion of the relationship between introjected parental figures and the influence of the superego, and she expanded on the internalized figure (Cooper, 1989). Where Freud's ideas about childhood development were derived from his work with adult clients, Klein worked directly with children. She studied children and their psychological disturbances and found relationships between their early impulses, their worlds of fantasy, and their

interactions with primary caregivers (Bauer & Rockland, 1995). Her work was the beginning of object relations theory.

The *object* in object relations theory is that which is perceived as distinct from one's self, and object relations refers to one's relationship to the object (Kegan, 1982). The literal interpretation of the term *object relations* suggests a theory about one's relations to objects, but it actually involves one's relationship to other people based on internalized interpretations of others and how one chooses to relate to those others (Mahoney, 1991). External objects become represented by internal objects: representational objects, not exact replicas (Bauer & Rockland, 1995; Cooper, 1989). Klein realized that children become troubled by contradictions between internalized images of their parental figures and the fantasies that they instinctively hold about them.

Object relations theory looks to the first year of life for the basic themes by which one tends to live (Kegan, 1982). It stresses how the environment either provides security or not for the development of a child, and that the degree of a caretaker's love comes to dwell in the child (Vaillant, 1995b). With object relations theory, the self is no longer a closed system of intrapsychic functions as in ego psychology; it is an interactive system (Cooper, 1998).

Klein's theory fully incorporates Freud's drive theory that instincts operate from birth onward, but her theory adds that the instincts influence the development of object relations, which then determine the ego structure (Kernberg, 2005). In this case, anxiety results from fear of persecution or

abandonment from objects and the fear of annihilation or the psychological death of the self (Kernberg, 2005; Zerbe, 1990).

Object relations theory suggests that defenses influence which aspect of one's self or of another person is made conscious and engaged behaviorally (Vaillant, 1992d). Defenses distort interpersonal emotions, alter one's impression of oneself or the impression of important others, and help to create a sense of healthy balance between self and attachment to another (Cramer, 2006; Sammallahti, 1995). Defenses protect the communal self rather than merely blocking out thoughts (Cooper, 1998). Object relations theory emphasizes how defenses protect against the fears of separation or abandonment, which are considered more significant to humans than the anxieties of intrapsychic conflicts (Ihilevich & Gleser, 1995).

Klein postulated that an infant's psychological growth is governed by defenses. She believed that growth was possible when the whole object—rather than fractions of it—could be conceived through the processes that resolve inconsistencies between object representations and fantasies about those objects (Bauer & Rockland, 1995; Buckley, 1995; Solomon, 1998). Where Freud saw objects as potential means of satisfying drives, object relations theory views objects as key in the development of the self. Anna Freud claimed that defenses could not be employed until after the ego had differentiated from the id, but Klein claimed that defenses were already in play in infancy and helped in the process of differentiating the ego (Buckley, 1995). For Klein, growth results from the use of defenses that successfully balance preservation against abandonment, with more

mature capacities to relate to the objects that might impose deprivation (Solomon, 1998).

Object relations theory suggests that a child's sense of self is related to the predominance of good or bad internalized object relations (Buckley, 1995). An infant's internal representation of a parent—notably the mother—can quickly turn bad when the parent does not respond on demand (Zerbe, 1990). This reality evidences the significance of childhood experiences with primary caretakers, and the reason why the theory emphasizes them. Object relations theory is often criticized as focusing too exclusively on the role of the mother and not including the wider range of experiences that a child encounters in his or her overall development (Mahoney, 1991), but it notably widened the lens through which to view defense function.

Klein's work influenced later object relations theorists, including Fairbairn, Winnicott, and Mahler. Her work is most noted in that of Kernberg because they both popularize the same defenses of splitting, omnipotence, devaluation, idealization, and projective identification (Sammallahti, 1995; Vaillant, 1992d).

The incompatibility between Klein's ideas about children's fantasies and Anna Freud's structural view of the ego made it difficult for the two to incorporate each other's work into their own (Bauer & Rockland, 1995). Where Anna Freud recommended that therapy should focus on defenses, Klein specified that it should focus on the content of anxious fantasies (Ehlers, 2004). Where psychoanalytic theory views a more dualistic combat between the id, ego, and

superego, object relations theory provides a more dialectic view of intrapsychic function. This is why the term *psychoanalytic* is used when referring to more classic ego theories and the term *psychodynamic* is used when referring to more inclusive psychological theories.

Hartmann

Hartmann is associated with Anna Freud's school of thought rather than Klein's, and offered significant contributions to early ego defense theory. Where Anna Freud's view was more conservative and focused purely on the ego's defensive nature, Hartmann stressed the adaptive potential of the ego. While Anna Freud mentioned the adaptive capacities of defenses, she never formally integrated Hartmann's work into her own (Kegan, 1982).

Hartmann looked beyond intrapsychic conflict and respected how contexts influence behavioral choices. He believed that defenses serve simultaneously as impulse control and as adaptation to social environments (Vaillant, 1995b). He emphasized the ego as an organ of adaptation that could use defenses, among other ego functions, to cope with internal and external demands (Cooper, 1998).

For Hartmann, the imagery of an intrapsychic battleground was replaced with a more interpersonal context. He believed the ego was involved with more than conflict management; it was also involved in attention and memory and functioned in a conflict-free zone, not a battleground (Cooper, 1998). In this view, the ego helps to adapt to the environment rather than just tolerating it.

Hartmann was concerned with the mutuality between the ego and the environment. His contributions to psychoanalytic theory help clarify that an

individual lives his or her life selectively (Mahoney, 1991). He believed that defenses were an adaptive resource, and he tried to explicate the more dynamic and complex properties of the ego (Cooper, 1989). In this view, adaptation is an ongoing process concerned with conflict situations and the goal of conflict-free existence. Adaptation is not an attempt at an either/or relationship to a situation but a creative amalgam with it (Vaillant, 1995b).

Hartmann's view of the ego and the adaptive function of defenses pioneered the evolving notion of the self. Hartmann pointed out that defenses, while allowing for adaptive purposes in a given situation, can also become permanent behavior and applied more generally (Safyer & Hauser, 1995; Vaillant, 1995b), thus becoming part of the self-system. He did not agree with Freud and Anna Freud that the ego was born out of the id as a child developed; he believed that the ego was an original and independent part of psychological structure. This perspective de-emphasized the id and fed the notion of a self-system (Mahoney, 1991). Where classic psychoanalytic theory viewed defenses as reacting to internal pressures, and object relations theory viewed defenses as reacting to interpersonal distresses, Hartmann's theory viewed defenses as a means of adaptation to the experienced world (Cramer, 2006).

Hartmann's work punctuates the end of early defense theory. His work allowed psychoanalysis to be viewed as a general theory of human development (Safyer & Hauser, 1995). His work also marks the beginning of the early contemporary era of ego psychology and the study of defenses in pathology as

well as in normative processes of human function (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994; Safyer & Hauser, 1995).

Early Contemporary Development

Freud's structural model of the psyche paved the way for theory development, Anna Freud offered a taxonomy of defenses and further focus on intrapsychic function within ego psychology theory, Klein developed thoughts about the interpersonal nature of psychological function and defense use with object relations theory, and Hartmann advanced ego psychology with his thoughts about the ego's role in adaptation. Hartmann's signature book, *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*, was originally published in German in 1939, but the need to translate it delayed its release in English until 1958, and this influenced the historical unfolding of defense theories in the West. Hartmann's work is recognized as the basis of contemporary ego psychology, which was variously known as *psychoanalytic developmental psychology* and *developmental object relations theory*, and eventually became simply known as *ego psychology* (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994).

Ego psychology and ego defense theory were the dominant approach to understanding human behavior in the West, especially after World War II with the inflow of European psychoanalysts and the postwar traumatized veterans (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994; Hartmann, 1956). Contemporary theorists and practitioners understand more varied psychological cases than did Freud (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994). Where Freud focused on psychologically impaired people, it was left to his successors to understand the influences of early life

experiences, the roles of defenses in behavior and development, and the study of people with healthy ego function, all of which helped to further differentiate defenses (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994; Vaillant, 1992b).

Contemporary defense theory expands the narrow focus of intrapsychic conflict, anxiety, and viewing the ego as an adaptive agent to a broader focus on the self as the core of subjective experience and the adaptor to those experiences (Draguns, 2004). Defenses are viewed from various references points (e.g., impulse control, object loss, experiential self) and are seen as protecting one's self-esteem rather than just shielding one from unwanted awareness (Cooper, 1989, 1998; Draguns, 2004).

At the heart of early contemporary ego defense theory is the joining together of ego psychology and object relations theory. This blend helps in understanding (a) the processes and stages of development in self-other relationships and behavior, (b) the value of contexts in addition to psychological maturation in the choice of defenses, (c) the psychological significance of relating to other people for intrinsic value and not just serving as extrinsic occurrences, (d) defenses as communicative and relational patterns and not simply impulse control, and (e) the reciprocal processes by which people affect one another and how that influences the perspectives on defense and resistance (Cooper, 1998; Kegan, 1982). The two key theorists that bridge classic theory to more current theories are Kernberg and Kohut, both of whom are discussed in turn in this section.

Kernberg

Kernberg is occasionally referred to as stitching together the split developments of ego psychology and object relations theory. He admits the influence that Erickson's developmental theory had on his work (Kernberg, 1992), but he is notably influenced by Klein's object relations theory. He extended her work to more clearly delineate drives and object representations (Cooper, 1989). Kernberg (1992, 2005) praises object relations theory for linking the id-ego-superego structure and its defenses with the structures and mechanisms of relational development, but he believes that Klein's focus on the first year of life and primitive defense operations is too narrow to provide clinical interpretive scope.

While Kernberg was influenced by Klein, he also maintains a theoretical connection to classic ego psychology. He speaks of defenses exclusively in intrapsychic terms (Cooper, 1989). His theory of motivation adheres to Freud's drive theory, but considers drives as indissolubly linked to and vested in object relations from the onset of interrelational life (Kernberg, 1992, 2005). Kernberg believes that affects are the primary motivation for action and that they are constitutionally determined and developmentally activated, eventually being integrated into core drive signals. He terms his theory *ego psychology-object relations theory*, where unconscious intrapsychic conflicts are always between contradictory self-object representations under the influence of a particular drive. The emphasis is on the opposition between internal representations, not on the

impulse-defense configuration (Kernberg, 1992). For Kernberg, impulse and defense are expressed through object relations (Cooper, 1989).

Kernberg is most known for his development of the diagnostic category of borderline personality disorder. He integrated Klein's primitive defenses—splitting, omnipotence, devaluation, idealization, and projective identification—into his model of psychological function, and relies heavily on Klein's work in his study of borderline disorders (Bauer & Rockland, 1995; Buckley, 1995).

Kernberg argues that these defenses are enduring, distinct defenses that are indicative of borderline disorders when one is over-dependent upon them (Cooper, 1989; Paulhus et al., 1997). He elaborates that these defenses do not limit awareness, as is presumed of other defenses, but effect a dissociation in consciousness between reality and the offensive thoughts (Paulhus et al., 1997).

The defenses adjust the inability to integrate positive and negative images of objects. It is the consciousness of the intolerable thoughts that differentiates Kernberg's theory from psychoanalytic theory. While he considers these defenses central to maintaining organized personalities and healthy interpersonal relationships, an overdependence on them can become pathological. His studies have proven conceptually useful in explaining borderline personalities (Buckley, 1995).

Kohut

Kohut played a prominent role in shaping contemporary psychodynamic thought. He is known as the developer of self psychology, which focuses on one's needs for a sense of personal worth. Kohut (1971) was concerned about

psychoanalytic theory's emphasis on the ego and intrapsychic anxiety, and believed that psychoanalytic theory neglected the sense of self that resides in a person. According to Kohut, the needs for self worth are met in relationships with others and not in the balancing of drives and conscience.

Kohut tried to respect his psychoanalytic heritage, but psychoanalytic theory viewed defenses as managing intrapsychic conflict and Kohut (1971) considered defenses as managing one's sense of self in relationships. He also distanced himself from Freud's emphasis on overcoming therapeutic resistance, because Kohut considered defenses not as resistances to be overcome but as functions that should be allowed to fully unfold. For Kohut, pathology rests on a sense of deficiency in the self, and defenses mitigate the emotions that rise up with perceived deficiencies of the self (Cooper, 1989; Mahoney, 1991). Kohut was concerned with self-healing versus the Freudian concern with conflict resolution (Mahoney, 1991).

According to Kohut, that which is being defended—the self—is not always defended based on instinctual drives but on other influences, such as failed object relations and challenges to the notion of self (Cooper, 1989). He believed that people are always conveying their personal needs in hopes of being ministered to via relationships, and he introduced the idea that defenses heal or manage the wounds of unmet needs (Cooper, 1998; Sarmallahti, 1995). In self psychology theory, defenses protect one's self-esteem and safeguard the self against disintegration (Cooper, 1998; Cramer, 2006). His focus shows how the loss of self occurs in the wake of insufficient emotional support by others (Zerbe,

1990). Kohut's focus on relationships looks similar to the focus of object relations theory, but he de-emphasized the internalized representations of others and emphasizes the internal representations of the self. He also believed that the development of self-object relations and their impact on well-being and personal development do not end in childhood but continue to develop into later years.

Kohut's work has its critics. Kernberg (1992) believes that Kohut's focus on the fragility of the self does not provide enough clinical interpretive scope. Kohut's work aligns with personality psychology and its emphasis on the self (Vaillant, 1995b), but he focuses too narrowly on the self and not on the broader concepts of personality development. Some feel that his concepts of defenses are too broad and do not clearly distinguish self-preservational ego functions from other adaptive ego functions (Cooper, 1989). Kohut focuses on the self and does not include more detailed discussions that occur elsewhere in defense theory, such as whether defenses are consciousness or unconsciousness.

Kohut may have had a narrow emphasis on the self, but his aim was to understand the subjective sense of self during one's lifetime. His work is important because he stresses how a strength in one's sense of self provides for the risks involved with stepping outside of one's defended worldview; this stepping-out is necessary for personal development (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Goldenberg, 2003). Kohut's focus on the self informs later contemporary theorists by emphasizing the influence of self-reference in behavior choices.

Contemporary Defense Mechanism Theories

The trend in contemporary ego defense theory is toward viewing defenses less as isolated phenomena and more as related to broader domains (Conte & Plutchik, 1995). These more modern theories still strain to fully frame defenses, yet their focus on ego development and the role that defenses play in achieving psychological balance sparks research (Conte & Plutchik, 1995; Kegan 1982). The following sections present multiple viewpoints: the three most prominent theories in the literature are by Vaillant, Plutchik, and Cramer, but others are mentioned in order to display the range of thoughts concerning ego defenses and the many angles from which they are studied.

Vaillant

Vaillant is a pioneer in the empirical study of ego defenses. He is noted for his longitudinal studies and the emphasis he places on scientifically studying that which cannot be seen. He focuses on adult populations and is known for his hierarchical model of defenses.

Vaillant (1977) presented his early thoughts about ego defenses in his book, *Adaptation to Life*. In the book, he extended the research of The Grant Study, a Harvard study performed between 1939 and 1942 to research adult development and the ways in which healthy men cope. By studying and advancing that research, Vaillant developed his theory and hierarchical model of ego defenses and the individual and maturational differences in coping capacities.

Vaillant's early work was often criticized for focusing only on the privileged group of financially and educationally well-off men contained in The

Grant Study. In the ensuing years, he studied the life courses of underprivileged, inner-city men and a group of gifted women. His later findings confirmed his early ones—that maturity of defenses is important to mental health—but he also added that maturity of defenses does not appear to be the product of social class, education, or gender (Vaillant, 1995a).

Vaillant argues that invisible human capacities are worthy of sound, empirical study. He insists that it is possible to understand the ego and its defenses within a psychobiological lens that honors a scientific approach and the subjective content of experience (Vaillant, 1995b). His work is psychological because it focuses on the functions of the ego, its creativity, and its development. His work is biological in that defense mechanisms are the holographic products of a creative central nervous system and affect health in the same respect as does the central nervous system.

In his book, *The Wisdom of the Ego*, Vaillant (1995b) references the work of Cannon (1932), who wrote *The Wisdom of the Body*. Cannon explained how the body's central nervous system aims at homeostasis and provides invisible responses when the body is in distress. Similarly, Vaillant believes that the ego and its creative defenses are the invisible responses of the mind to distress and are as healing and stabilizing to overall health as the biological workings of the central nervous system. Where Cannon used X rays to see the invisibles that he studied, Vaillant used long-term clinical observation and biography of normal individuals to see invisible defenses.

Vaillant (1995a, 1995b) claims that defenses have seven properties: they (a) reflect the creative synthesis of perception, (b) are relatively unconscious and relatively involuntary, (c) distort reality through selective filtering, (d) distort relationships between self and other, (e) can be either healthy or pathological, (f) can appear odd to others, and (g) mature over time. He further explains that the ego transmutes psychological pains arising from four sources of conflict, which he calls *lodestars*. The four lodestars of conflict are (a) conscience, or cultural taboos and norms; (b) desire, represented by instincts, drives, passions, and emotions; (c) people, especially people that are considered important; and (d) reality, represented by one's environment and situations. Additionally, it is the sudden and unexpected changes that can occur in one's environment that are particularly conflictual.

While these lodestars signify Vaillant's model, it is the developmental and hierarchical design of his model that is most recognized. Vaillant (1995b) believes that the ego develops in relation to three factors: (a) a broadly optimistic temperament, (b) the capacity to tolerate paradox, and (c) the ability to be playful in circumstances. The ego develops with age, and along with its age-related maturity comes the capacity to integrate and manage the four lodestars.

Vaillant is guided by the work of Erikson's (1963) maturational developmental theory. Vaillant identifies and defines 18 different defenses that he divides between four maturational groups: (a) psychotic, (b) immature, (c) neurotic, and (d) mature. He believes that the hierarchical design provides a system of classification for defenses and represents a continuum of both

development and pathology (Vaillant, 1971, 1995b). Vaillant points out that if the hierarchical structure is valid, then there would be a correlation between dominant defense choices and overall adjustment in life, and his studies bear this out; the use of mature defenses is associated with mental health and can be predictive of subjective happiness, occupational success, quality and stability of relationships, marital satisfaction, psychosocial maturity, and the absence of pathology. Vaillant points to this predictive capacity to validate his model as a continuum of pathology (1971, 1995b, 2000, 2003, 2007).

Psychotic defenses profoundly reorganize the perception of reality, and are common in healthy people before age five and in adult dreams and fantasies. Psychotic defenses keep people sane in insane places, sometimes called forth by biological aberrations and sometimes by intact brains that strive to deal with an unbearable reality (Vaillant, 1995b). *Immature defenses* are common in healthy people between the ages of 3 and 15 , and in adults with affective disorders. They represent defense more than coping, and are the building blocks of personality disorders if overused. *Neurotic defenses* are common in all age ranges in efforts to adapt to stress, while overuse or inappropriate use can lead to neurosis. *Mature defenses* are common in healthy people from adolescence onward and are more coping in nature than defensive in character. Mature defenses synthesize rather than deny sources of conflict.

Vaillant (1995b) describes recognizable differences between the four categories. Psychotic defenses are experienced as madness to others. Immature defenses are experienced as irritating to others while benign to the user. Neurotic

defenses are more private in nature, which means that the impact is more noticeable to the user and not to the observer. Mature defenses are viewed as character strengths by others.

Vaillant (1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2007) elaborates on the differences between immature and mature defenses. Immature defenses (a) tend to locate the source of conflict outside of oneself; (b) are deployed to secure a sense of loving relationship with others but are perceived as gripping in nature, invading other people's psychological domains, and repellent in nature; and (c) are more often associated with childhood and generally considered maladaptive in adulthood. Mature defenses (a) tend to integrate all sources of conflict along with the thoughts and emotions they represent, (b) do not negate conflicts but aim to recognize and manage them, (c) are not perceived as invasive and are more magnetic in nature, (d) make the psyche supple and build psychological resilience, and (e) are not only important to mental health but can help to predict mental health and successful aging. Mature defenses result from ego maturity, which is sometimes called wisdom, and can be evidenced by an increased capacity to tolerate paradox. Mature defenses are moral in character and usually require loving intercession or identification with another person in order for them to develop.

Vaillant (1995b) admits his biases and that his model does not represent consensual agreement within the field of psychology. While the common criticism of his having only studied an elite group of privileged men has been addressed by his continued studies, there are other concerns. For instance, Kline

(2004) takes issue with Vaillant's mature defenses, suggesting that they cannot be considered defenses at all, at least not in the classical sense, because Vaillant blends defenses with character traits, which are categorically different. Baruch-Runyon (2006) believes that Vaillant focuses too heavily on the hierarchical conceptualization of defenses and does not adequately address the role of integration. Baruch-Runyon explains that integration is multidimensional and difficult to measure, and that one would have to look not only at the maturity of a defense but also at how a defense is involved in integrating the meaning that is achieved with its use.

A separate concern is whether Vaillant's (e.g., 1995b) mature defenses represent the cap to maturity or ego development. Vaillant does not refer to any further upside potential for development. It is also not clear whether mature defenses only synthesize information and mental content or whether they also assist in gaining new knowledge. Costa, Zonderman, and McCrae (1991) similarly question whether mature defenses only reflect psychological adjustment versus actual development.

Vaillant (1995b) expresses the same frustration as his critics in that no model for conceptualizing defenses or lifespan development has achieved consensus. Vaillant's model does resemble a creative integration of Erikson's psychosocial model of human development, Piaget's cognitive development model, Kohlberg's model of moral development, and Loevinger's ego development. However, Vaillant stresses his distinction, pointing out that his levels of maturation represent functional development, not simply invariant

sequences of development. His model also integrates affects rather than cognitions and reflects actual performance rather than mere capacity.

Vaillant (2000) believes that the boundaries between defenses are not always clear but that they develop toward maturity under facilitating conditions. When such healthy development falls short, he suggests that development and well-being can be facilitated by the use of social support programs; the enhancement of biological health through such efforts as rest, nutrition, and sobriety; and the utilization of integrative psychotherapies to catalyze the change that is necessary.

Plutchik

Plutchik's (1995, 1998, 2000) psychoevolutionary theory incorporates ego defenses as one aspect of a more general theory of emotions. Evolutionary theory assumes that environmental influences and changes create problems that organisms overcome in order to survive. Emotions are a late development in human evolution that represents advanced patterns of subjective feelings; these patterns are adaptive and involve approach-avoidance reactions as well as attachment-loss reactions. Where ego defenses are usually considered mental functions independent of emotions, clinical work implies a strong connection between defenses and emotions. According to Plutchik, emotions are intimately involved in the ego's system of conceptualization and response, and defenses are derivatives of emotions.

Plutchik's (1995) theory has three major aspects. First is the sequential aspect, which suggests that emotions result from cognitive evaluation of stimuli.

Second is the structural aspect, which presents a limited number of basic, primary emotions and their interrelatedness. Third is the derivatives aspect, which specifies the relationship between emotions and other conceptual domains such as personality, ego defenses, and diagnoses. Plutchik's theory views emotions as evolving to deal with emergencies, serving to communicate intentions from one individual to another, and supporting behavior that increases one's chances for long-term survival. In this way, emotions are adaptive and defenses function for survival.

Emotions are described by subjective terms that are associated with classes of behaviors and ultimately with character traits (Plutchik, 1995, 2000). For instance, emotional sadness may present a cry for help that has a gloomy character, or emotional joy may present cooperative behavior viewed as a sociable character. The link between emotions, defenses, and character is represented by the link between subjective experiences, the behaviors that are expressed, and the traits that are inferred from the behavior. For Plutchik, defenses are unconscious, rigid, and more maladaptive in impact as compared to coping styles, which are conscious, flexible, and present-moment adaptive.

According to Plutchik (1995, 2000), the complexity in ego defense theories and concepts results from the subtle ways in which basic defenses can be combined, and hence multiple theories try to name what is essentially the blending of eight basic defenses that result from eight basic emotions. Plutchik focuses on eight core emotions that he believes span human experience, and he relates them to corresponding defenses and coping styles. He sees this core list as

having immense value in clinical practices by providing a basic reference list for therapists to use rather than trying to manage cumbersome lists of individual defenses. He suggests that identifying the basic defenses in a person may provide insights into the kinds of affects to which they are sensitized and find troublesome. According to Plutchik (1998, 2000), a given emotion can elicit a defense or a coping response. Plutchik's eight basic emotions and their corresponding defenses and coping styles are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Plutchik's Eight Basic Emotions and Corresponding Defenses and Coping Styles

| Emotion | Defense | Coping style |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Fear | Repression | Avoidance |
| Anger | Displacement | Substitution |
| Joy | Reaction formation | Reversal |
| Sadness | Compensation | Replacement |
| Acceptance | Denial | Minimization |
| Disgust | Projection | Fault finding |
| Expectation | Intellectualization | Mapping |
| Surprise | Regression | Help seeking |

Note. Author's table; data from Plutchik (1995, 2000).

Plutchik's (1998, 2000) actual model—versus this simple table—plots each emotion in one of eight equal wedges of a pie form: a circumplex model. Plutchik refers to two implications in ego defense literature to create this design:

(a) Defenses overlap and vary in their degree of similarity to one another, and (b) defenses can be seen as having polar opposites. His circumplex model has implications for theory development and clinical application. This format shows the relationship between the core emotions and provides the capacity to grade the intensity of each emotion in a given stimulus event, or as evaluating the state of a person's personality at a given time and the weighted influence of all eight emotions. This might compare, in accounting terms, to a balance sheet, which takes a snapshot of one's emotional inventory at a given time.

Plutchik (2000) partially bases his theory on Freud's inconsistent presentation of anxiety, where Freud variously suggested that anxiety results from (a) an inability to cope with overwhelming stress, (b) the repression versus expression of emotions (anxiety is the result of repression), or (c) the ego's evaluation of presumed danger that alerts a person to be ready to respond (anxiety is the reason for repression). It is the last version to which Plutchik attaches his theory and adds that, in addition to the ego's evaluation of presumed danger, the ego judges experiences and affects emotional responses.

Plutchik (1995) states that each ego defense has a basic underlying structure comprised of four components: (a) personality traits (e.g., passivity, aggression, possessiveness), (b) a social need (e.g., withdrawal, control), (c) a characteristic method (e.g., forgetting, exaggerating, blaming), and (d) a purpose (e.g., safely expressing anger, maintaining relationships, decreasing feelings of inferiority).

Plutchik (1995, 2000) does not propose a chronology or developmental path of defenses, and he defers to other theorists, such as Vaillant, on this point. He does comment, though, that infants and youth use primitive responses to feelings of anxiety, and that these responses are the early prototypes of ego defenses. This viewpoint reveals an alignment between Plutchik's theory and Vaillant's. Vaillant (2000) states that mature mental health always involves recognition of emotions, but he emphasizes the developmental trajectory of ego defense use. Plutchik implies a developmental path by his mention of early defense prototypes in infants and youth, but he emphasizes the role of emotions in ego defense use, an evolutionary trajectory, and defenses as deriving from emotions to support behavior that increases one's chances for long-term survival. They both emphasize the adaptive function that defenses play in human psychology.

For Plutchik (1995), defenses reflect early mental development and are considered immature at any age, whereas coping reflects mature methods of problem solving. Primitive defenses evolve into coping strategies. Where defenses are rigid, coping is flexible and has the emergent properties that make coping strategies evolutionary within a person's lifespan (Plutchik, 1998). Where Vaillant (e.g., 1995b) presents defenses as developmental, Plutchik presents them more as rigid platforms from which one evolves coping capacities.

Cramer

Cramer works in the field of personality psychology. Her 1991 book, *The Development of Defense Mechanisms: Theory, Research, and Assessment*,

presents her theory that defense mechanisms develop during specific ages, with certain defenses predominating during various periods of development. The years following that publication allowed for empirical research that continued to validate her theory. In her 2006 book, *Protecting the Self*, Cramer admits that her thinking has changed little while the research literature on defenses has burgeoned. Cramer's theory respects that defenses have a biological basis but does not posit that they are biologically produced; rather, innate reflexes evolve into unconscious defenses during age related experiential development.

Cramer (1991, 2006) focuses on the age groups from childhood through young adulthood and has considerable empirical evidence to support her findings. Cramer notes that protective responses develop early in life with a child's endless reminders of being small, weak, and incapable. Not every attempt at meeting challenges is successful, so children experience disappointment, rejection, and the sense of failure. This all prompts natural efforts to survive with a sense of capacity and a sense of self. Cramer focuses on the role of defenses in maintaining psychological equilibrium and protecting self-esteem, and the role of coping as a conscious means of controlling emotional expression and becoming socialized; as one develops, control can be gained over innate urges and gradually come under conscious control in the form of coping strategies.

Cramer (1991, 2006) focuses on the three defenses of denial, projection, and identification—chosen because they represent, theoretically, different degrees of complexity and maturity of thoughts, emotions, and perceptions. She used factor analyses of multiple defense measurement scales that consistently indicated

the presence of three underlying dimensions that are conceptually represented by these defenses.

According to Cramer (1991, 2006), denial changes reality by providing the failure to see or understand a given stimulus in order to avoid its anxiety-ridden recognition. Denial shows consistent patterning as a defense in childhood with decline in use around the age of seven. Projection is a defense that changes reality by attributing one's own sense of unacceptable qualities onto others. Projection increases in use as a child grows and becomes prominent throughout late childhood and early adolescence. Identification changes one's internal understandings by taking on as one's own aspects of identity those that are admired in others. Identification increases slowly in use across childhood and early adolescence, becoming prominent in late adolescence and declining thereafter.

There are two critical tenets of Cramer's (1991, 2006) theory. First, different defenses emerge into predominance at different ages. The timing is determined in part by cognitive capacities that are age-appropriately developed. Second, there is a pattern to the emergence and decline of the defenses. Simplified, the pattern starts with reflex-like reactions to stimuli, which then develop more fully into defense mechanisms, and then decline in value and use as cognition develops with age and the associated defenses become understood consciously.

Cramer's work empirically tests six premises directly related to defenses:

(a) use of defenses changes with age; (b) use of defenses increases under

experience of stress and anxiety; (c) use of defenses reduces the sense of anxiety; (d) defenses are effective because they function unconsciously, and awareness of them renders them ineffective; (e) excessive use of defenses is associated with pathology; and (f) age-inappropriate use of defenses is associated with pathology. She also studies three indirect issues: (a) whether different stressors elicit different defenses, (b) whether different defenses are associated with different personalities, and (c) whether there are gender differences in defense selection and use.

The design of Cramer's research uses three different measures of defenses; two are observational and one is self-report. The Defense Mechanism Manual (Cramer, 1991) assesses defense use by coding narrative material. The Defense Mechanism Rating Scale (Perry, 1990, 1992) assesses defense use by coding clinical interview data. The Defense Style Questionnaire (Bond, 1992) is a series of structured questions posed to individuals for self-report response.

Cramer (2006) questions some of Vaillant's work and his presentation of a continuum of defenses that represents both development and pathology. She believes that Vaillant's (1977, 1995b) theory about adulthood and maturation of defense use needs further study before being presented as conclusively as he does. She shares Costa et al.'s (1991) concern that mature defenses might actually reflect psychological adjustment to experiences and not necessarily continued psychological development.

Where Vaillant's (1995a) work evidenced no influence of gender on the maturation of defenses, Cramer's (2006) work demonstrates gender differences in

defense choices and different implications in using the same defenses. This exhibits one of the difficulties in comparing defense theories: aspects sound similar but are framed differently and are therefore difficult to cross-compare. Additionally, Vaillant uses longitudinal studies and Cramer uses cohort studies, which exhibits another difficulty in trying to draw any developmental conclusions from cross-studies.

Cramer (2004, 2006) finds that defense use can help predict personality and behavior in early adulthood and adulthood, which in turn predicts psychological adjustment. For instance, adult reliance on immature defenses can limit identity change. She also finds that the intensity and type of defenses that are used relate to degrees of pathology. She states that it is still unclear whether the presence of pathology produces the use of certain defenses, or whether maladaptive use of defenses eventually results in pathology. She stresses the need for long-term studies of multiple cohort groups to further understand defenses for clinical application. While there is some evidence that a patient's defenses influence therapeutic outcomes, research is inconclusive about the changes in defense use before and after therapy because of variances in assessment methods and diagnostic groups.

Cramer's research continues to focus on the three defenses of denial, projection, and identification, and creatively integrates additional foci in her work. For instance, in addition to gender differences, she also studies defenses with regard to IQ, sexual orientation, stress, and personalities (Cramer, 2006, 2007). She points out that research is showing the relationship between defenses

and biological correlates to physical well-being (Cramer, 2003). The main points of her theory are that (a) different defenses dominate at different ages, (b) defenses emerge and decline in recognizable patterns, (c) defenses only work if they function from the unconscious level because awareness of them makes them ineffective, (d) developmental control over the urges that produce defenses in youth gradually shifts into coping strategies, and (e) excessive or age-inappropriate use of defenses is associated with pathology.

Others

The theories and literature reviewed in this section do not represent the entirety of the remaining considerations about ego defenses; they were chosen as representing the wide range from which defenses are viewed and from which they can be studied. This range also exhibits further difficulties in achieving consensus regarding defenses: the variances in theoretical perspectives.

Lee. Lee (1979) offers a unique twist to understanding defense function. He presents a hierarchical model within a stimulus-response framework. He describes a stimulus as that which produces dystonic affect: a disturbing affective state that can range in intensity. He suggests that there are three levels of defense responses; each successive level is utilized if the prior level is unsuccessful in calming anxiety within the situation.

The first or primary level of defenses is unconscious and deals with intrapsychic disturbance. He compares this level to the classic psychoanalytic understanding of ego defenses. The secondary level provides reinforcement for failed primary defenses and, while still addressing intrapsychic disturbance, is of

a conscious nature. He describes these as coping efforts that accrue through learned experiences. Tertiary defenses represent the highest order of ego function. They function as preparation to continue to engage dystonic situations when secondary defenses might prove ineffective. In this case, one consciously and intentionally places oneself in a state of readiness to adapt further. Although Lee does not provide a list of defenses for any of the levels, he posits that the more secondary and tertiary defenses that one has in one's psychological repertoire, the more likely one is to succeed in adapting to stressful situations.

Lee's (1979) article is a small blip on the radar screen of ego defense literature. He cites only a handful of authors and is reciprocally not cited by others. It is interesting that his concept of progressive tiers of defenses has not gained more discussion. Most other theories suggest that a defense or multiple defenses are employed in a given instance, but they do not suggest the successive deployment of alternative defenses within a given situation—as does Lee—when a choice proves unsuccessful. As such, Lee's perspective adds another dimension in attempting to further understand the processes involved with defense function.

Lee's (1979) model has a reverse similarity to Haan's (1977) differentiation between defenses and coping. They both present ego responses to conflict in three-tier formats. Lee's model suggests that one starts with a defensive response to conflict and progresses toward more refined coping responses within a given situation. Haan suggests that one may initially be defensive but should aim for the reverse; one should cope if one can, defend if one must, and violate reality if forced to do so. Haan does not elaborate as to

whether, in a given situation, this is a progressive sequence of responses or whether one opts for a singular response of coping or defending or violating reality. The cross-comparison between Lee and Haan's work is sketchy at best, but the similarity with which they present a three-tier image of ego responses invites further discussion.

Lee's (1979) model can be described as a backup scheme model. His theory is undeveloped and lost in the literature, yet its unique design may be worth further inspection.

Benjamin. Benjamin (1995) submits a social model of defenses. She challenges the view that defenses keep people from the awareness of their own thoughts and behaviors that result from conflicts and anxieties. Benjamin believes that it is normal to function in ways that enhance relationships—either by improving friendliness or by diminishing hostile behavior—and that defenses are consistent with the desires and behaviors for attachment with others. She believes that it is not healthy to function in ways that antagonize relationships, because without friendly attachment there is pathology. She admits that, in some contexts, hostile behavior may be normal.

Benjamin (1995) states that defenses are necessary to preserve attachment with people, and it is the context that helps to discern whether defenses are normal or abnormal. She believes that defenses may or may not be unconscious because the wishes and fears that effect defenses may or may not be in one's awareness. Defenses' main purpose is to satisfy the wishes and fears that arise in relationships with others or with one's own self-image.

According to classic defense theory, pathology arises from internal conflict poorly managed by defenses, and that therapy breaks down defenses and releases unconscious material, thereby diminishing pathology. Unfortunately, awareness and insight alone do not necessarily effect cure, so contemporary psychoanalysts seek to help clients examine and work through insights. Yet, Benjamin (1995) points out that this approach is still based on drive theory and may be inadequate. She explains that the goal of breaking down defenses is misguided and imposes the notion that defenses are inherently pathological. In Benjamin's theory, defenses function not just as intrapsychic managers but also as interpersonal methods of communication during social learning experiences and the refining of one's self-concept. Therefore, therapy should be a social learning experience to help clients learn to recognize their interpersonal patterns of behavior and alter those that are destructive in nature.

Benjamin (1995) deviates from Freudian theory by demoting the value of making the unconscious conscious, and she also considers defenses as adaptive and not inherently pathological. According to Benjamin, defenses serve to distort perceptions, block awareness, or distort responses, all with the goal of sustaining relationships. Those defenses that organize affects, cognitions, and behavior and that enhance healthy relationships are generally of a normal nature. Defenses that support unhealthy relationships or function to negatively affect healthy relationships are generally abnormal. Benjamin states that, in the long run, attachments are best served if there are no distortions of awareness and are

sustained by clarity and integrity in perceptions, processing, and responding, but that defenses do serve normative value and psychological well-being.

Dahl. Dahl's (1995) theory of defenses can be described as an information-feedback theory. His is a unified theory of motivation that includes emotions, wishes, and beliefs. Dahl explains that the vast amount of knowledge that one has about one's self, one's goals, the interpreted behavior of others, and common sense in general is based on emotions. For Dahl, emotions motivate behavior. It is common sense that permits the identification of emotions and defenses, but there is not a sense of common understanding about their internal functioning processes.

Dahl's (1995) theory suggests that emotions constitute a basic information processing system. He describes a three-dimensional classification of emotions comprised of orientation of self or other, valence or the interactive capacities of attraction and repulsion, and activity in the way of action or passivity. Emotional states that are considered negative are more often followed by defenses than other emotional states. The intensity of an emotion influences the choice of defense, and high negative emotions produce dominant defensive postures aimed at protecting the sense or image of self. This differs from Plutchik's (1995, 2000) theory in that Plutchik does not classify emotions as necessarily negative or positive with regard to triggering defenses. According to Plutchik, all of the eight basic emotions are followed by defenses, which can evolve into coping strategies.

For Dahl (1995), emotions are situational information-feedback. They may trigger defenses in order to restrict awareness of the experience of an emotion and

the knowledge of one's underlying wishes and beliefs, thereby inhibiting disturbing thoughts and actions. His theory also hypothesizes that a central task of growing up is to develop mature defenses that are not part of one's automatic responses, and to enhance the ability to control emotional responses.

Horowitz and Stinson. Horowitz and Stinson (1995) offer a control process and personal schema theory of defenses, stemming from therapeutic observations. Clinical observations revealed that defenses are often combined, and they inquired as to how multiple processes of control act together as a behavioral communication. Their control process theory is an amalgam of defense theory, personal schema theory, and cognitive processing theory.

They explain that personal *schemas* are internal structures of meaning that integrate physical, psychological, and social knowledge and form the structures of interpersonal relationships. Schemas contain the components of behavior, such as traits, role descriptions, wishes, fears, and goals. The motivating capacities of schemas can be activated by biological, social, or psychological needs. When motivations trigger emotional responses, processes of defensive control are brought into play. Horowitz and Stinson (1995) describe defenses as control processes that affect personal schemas and organize one's state of mind. Defenses modify a person's thoughts and consequential communication/behavior to avoid states of unwanted emotions. Defenses may be as simple as refocusing attention or action planning. Defenses are adaptive when an outcome is appraised as useful in solving the perceived problem, and maladaptive when an outcome is appraised as costly to the person in some way.

In essence, this theory looks at the ways in which people integrate internalized images of their selves with their environment, and how those schemas motivate certain behavior. It suggests that people use defenses as control processes to modify or ward off overwhelming states of mind triggered by conflict and stress within those schemas. The goal of defenses is to avoid unwanted emotions.

Schemas help to explain rigidity in behavioral patterns. When people do not change schemas according to new situations, they respond from unexamined attitudes about self and others and habituated schematic responses. With this view, therapy then becomes the microanalysis of defense formation with the goal of making incremental, achievable changes in personal schemas.

Slavin and Greif, Slavin and Greif (1995) provide a biological evolutionary theory of defenses that is a blend of classic theory and relational theory. Their view is that classic theory focuses too much on drives, while relational theories downplay inner conflict too much. According to classic theory, defenses regulate intrapsychic conflicts born of impulses, and defenses are interpreted as being situational, intrapsychic tactics. According to relational theories, defenses provide for temporary tolerance of disturbing situations or affects and serve to protect parts of the self in relations with others; conflict is thus an intrinsic feature of interpersonal interactions. Slavin and Greif believe that classic theory needs to be broadened to view defenses not as situationally tactical but as strategic long-range measures. They also believe that relational theories

need to more fully expand on the nature of relationships, and that relationships can be conflictual as well as harmonious.

Slavin and Greif's (1995) theory is based on the biological evolution principle: life-forms do that which enhances their survival and replication. Basic drives are shaped by evolution and social influences. At the same time, relational dynamics are influenced by drives. The motives of behavior reside in relationships and the striving to survive, and defenses are mutually rooted in biology and sociology. The evolutionary perspective views individuals as unique and in competition with one another, driven to survive through relationships that may be conflictual but can also be harmonious.

In this view, defenses provide for individual identity while safeguarding inclusive fitness. They protect the self to enable future growth. Where psychological maturation is only a shift in one's relation to self and important others, biological maturation influences one's relationship to a broader range of people. As such, biological development is a progressive negotiation of provisional identities designed to provoke reciprocity from others and ensure one's longevity. Human psychic structure and defenses are ultimately explainable as a deep, adaptational structure that has been shaped over evolutionary time to regulate those thoughts and behaviors that conflict with survival.

There is alignment between Slavin and Greif's (1995) theory and Plutchik's (1995, 1998), as they are both evolutionary theories. Yet, Slavin and Greif emphasize relationships and survival whereas Plutchik emphasizes the emotional component of relationships toward survival.

Paulhus and John. Paulhus and John (1998) do not offer a theory but do address the role of defensive processes in character formation, stating that some, if not all, important personality traits are influenced by defense mechanisms. They point to the tension between the ego's attempts at behavioral control and service to the id, and the influences of the superego. They speak from the field of personality psychology and refer to defenses in two different self-serving tendencies: the egoistic bias and the moralistic bias.

Paulhus and John (1998) explain that the two biases are self-deceptive and can be traced to the two values of agency and communion, which effectively point to the impulsive ego and the superego. They also explain that these values impel the corresponding motives of power and approval, again relating to the id-ego and the ego-superego. The *egoistic bias* functions from agency and power, resulting in self-deceptions of narcissistic qualities that exaggerate one's perceived status along with unrealistic positive self-perceptions. The *moralistic bias* functions from communal goals and approval needs, tending to squash socially unacceptable impulses and yet claiming a self-deceptive, saintly perception of self.

Their work highlights the role that defenses play in not only molding personality but also influencing how those personalities then have defensive biases. Those biases intrude on self-perception and elicit defenses that either promote or protect one's self-image. Either extreme of ego function, whether extreme id-narcissistic function or extreme superego-sanctimonious function, falls out of range of balanced psychological well-being.

Westerlundh. Westerlundh (2004) presents a percept-genesis theory on defenses. Percept-genesis is a term introduced by Kragh and Smith (as cited in Westerlundh, 2004) in their book, *Percept-Genetic Analysis*. Percept-genesis refers to the microdevelopment of perceptions, and the theory suggests that one's conscious perception of something is not an immediate reflection of reality. The microdevelopmental stages of cognition start with a stimulus that triggers a global mental configuration of meaning that becomes successively differentiated, with the more subjective components being excluded in favor of the intersubjective meaning of the stimulus. The process is characterized by successive transformation and determination of perception. In percept-genesis, both stimulus and response are considered hypothetical determinants that influence but do not create the contents of perception. This perspective emphasizes the meaning ascribed to stimuli rather than to the reality of the stimuli.

Percept-genesis has its starting point in classical psychoanalytic theory of defenses where a forbidden impulse gives rise to anxiety signals. Where classical theory looks to the mental representations of an impulse or drive, the microgenetic view sees those images as incomplete fantasies in a more detailed stream of cognitions. Also, classic defense theory may perceive defenses as pathological, whereas percept-genetic theory states that the only basis for classifying a behavior as a defense is its function. Finally, where classic theory only considered intrapsychic conflict, percept-genetic theory incorporates object relations theory and appreciates the value of the mental contents that are in conflict: the images of self and others.

Westerlundh (2004) suggests that recent empirical study of defense processes may be based on psychoanalytic theory, but what is actually studied may be removed from that theory. In percept-genesis studies, it is the relationship of the operationalizations of defenses to the theory of defense that is of interest. For instance, in psychoanalysis, repression refers to the exclusion of information from the contents of consciousness, whereas in percept-genesis studies, repression is identified when a stimulus is seen as rigid or lifeless.

Westerlundh (2004) understands that theorists and researchers might argue that empirical referents from the psychoanalytic view are different from the percept-genesis view, and that rigidity and lifelessness could simply indicate repression on a perceptual level. Yet, percept-genesis does study the perceptual level of function, and the principles of representation on that level must be studied in their own right. The overall goal is to study a deeper and more granular level of function with regard to defenses. Percept-genetic studies aim to understand the conditions that produce reports of defense rather than just inferring probabilistic interpretations about them.

Kreitler and Kreitler. S. Kreitler and H. Kreitler (2004) do not offer a theory; rather, they attempt to uncover the motivational determinants of defenses and their relation to belief systems. They use the framework of cognitive orientation theory to show the close relationship between defense mechanisms and cognitive strategies, and discuss the role of defenses in the input-output chain of behavior.

Kreitler and Kreitler (1976, 1982, 2004) explain that cognitive orientation theory aims at predicting and modifying overt human behavior. Its major thesis is that behavior is the product of motivational disposition and behavioral programming. Where other cognitive models of behavior confound cognition with rationality, cognitive orientation theory does not; instead, it specifies the underlying cognitive dynamics and how behavior proceeds from meanings and beliefs, not reason. Where psychoanalytic theory on defenses suggests a four stage input-output sequence for behavior as impulse, anxiety, defense, and aftermath, cognitive orientation theory describes its four stages in terms of questions: (a) what is it, (b) what does it mean to me, (c) what will I do, and (d) how will I do it. Kreitler and Kreitler stress that beliefs are pivotal in the sequential process, and three influences predict and change behavior: the meaning assigned to a situation, the beliefs concerning optional acts, and the availability of a cognitive program to perform the act.

Within this framework, defenses do more than resolve intrapsychic conflict; they are used in everyday life as strategies for successfully performing cognitive tasks. In this way, defenses are viewed as cognitive programs of a special kind. They resolve conflicts between competing beliefs by producing new behavioral intents, and then eliciting behavioral programs. The defense and its intent are considered separate from the behavior.

S. Kreitler and H. Kreitler (2004) also address how defenses are acquired. Classic theory points to instincts in how defenses are acquired, dynamic approaches point to infant-parent identification, learning approaches emphasize

learning from peers and adults, social theories point to sociocultural impacts, but cognitive orientation theory points to microcognitive determinants. They submit that each defense corresponds to a specific meaning attributed to a situation, and that the richer and more variegated an individual's meaning profiles, the more defenses a person can adopt and have within his or her defense-selection pool.

S. Kreitler and H. Kreitler (2004) shift the perspective away from which defenses are viewed and therefore how therapy is approached. Classic psychoanalytic therapy seeks to make conscious the unconscious that is cloaked by defenses. This is often met by resistance from the client. Cognitive orientation theory seeks to circumvent the defenses and look to identify and modify the beliefs that underlie them. The goal is to create sufficient support for beliefs that effect preferred outcomes. Beliefs give rise to motivational dispositions, defense choice, and in navigating toward daily life goals.

Finally, S. Kreitler and H. Kreitler (2004) question how long defenses will be necessary in societies and cultures that have already broken down multiple taboos, suggesting that soon there may not be any targets for defenses to defend. This assumes that the targets of defense are superego-banned wishes and drives. They suggest that the other objects worthy of defense, based on cognitive orientation theory, include beliefs: beliefs about oneself, about rules and norms, about the world and others. A person will always have beliefs and therefore will always have something to defend regardless of the existence of any cultural taboos. Defenses address the anxieties of the certainty that uncertainty is unavoidable. S. Kreitler and H. Kreitler summarize by stating that defenses

contribute to quality of life, but that it remains unclear whether people would be happier without defenses or whether that is even possible or desirable.

General Comments

The construct of defense mechanisms has prevailed since its inception (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). Freud, Anna Freud, Klein, and Hartmann laid the primary foundation for ego defense theory, roughly spanning 1900-1940 (Safyer & Hauser, 1995). These theorists collectively presented defenses as ego functions that manage intrapsychic conflict and are designed to sustain a sense of psychological stasis and connectedness with others. Early theory development was limited not only due to Freud's various research interests and underdeveloped thoughts, but also because World War II caused many European ego psychologists to escape Europe to the United States, and it took time to reestablish and resume their work (G. Blank & R. Blank, 1994; Hartmann, 1956).

The following decades spawned increasingly sophisticated theoretical and clinical contributions to defense discussions, but empirical research was challenged with lack of nomenclature and unreliable measurement methods (Safyer & Hauser, 1995). As a result of continued theoretical development, empirical studies took off again in the latter half of the 20th century (Sammallahti, 1995). In fact, empirical research has burgeoned, with more than two thousand empirical studies on defense mechanisms published between 1990 and 2006 (Cramer, 2006).

Early theories were more narrowly focused; over time, theories expanded to include broader or novel perspectives on defense function. The theoretical

understanding of defenses grew to include their role in healthy psychological development, and to view defense functions as growing in complexity as one matures. Defenses are also being discussed across the field of psychology (Cramer, 2000). Cognitive psychology now accepts the premise of unconscious mental processes and integrates that in its research on conscious cognitive processes. Social psychology continues to research the ways in which people deceive their selves and foster unrealistic illusions of selves. Developmental psychology has increased its interest in understanding defenses with regard to children's development. Personality psychology, a later-comer to defense research, is concentrating efforts to understand defenses with regard to identity development and trait theories. Clinical psychology, regardless of theoretical orientation, continues to appreciate the role of unconscious mental functions in treating clients for both mental and physical health issues.

Developments in defense theory show little resemblance to its original propositions, although still historically grounded in them (Kline, 2004). Old taboos of being associated with Freudian theory carry on, and some critics of defense theory prefer to describe and explain self-deceptive behavior in more contemporary social psychological terms such as dissonance reduction or scapegoating—regardless of the terms used, the concepts under scrutiny bear the same resemblance (Draguns, 2004). Post-Freudian theories reconceptualize the difficulties involved in personal change, development, and defenses in terms of adaptation, relations, and self psychology (Cramer, 2006; Eagle, 1999; Vaillant, 1995b). Where there is little resemblance on the surface, the core understanding

of defenses as serving to address psychological disturbances born of conflict, anxiety, and fears holds strong.

The common themes running through the literature about defenses concern development, adaptation, meaning-making, emotion, and community. These themes provide the opportunity to posit some raw generalizations about defenses.

While some theories are heavily focused on understanding defenses in the present moment, the dominant theories all integrate developmental trajectories, whether within a lifespan or with more evolutionary trajectories. They present the movement from inexperienced relationships with psychological conflict to more informed relationships with experiences of conflict. As such, there appears to be some agreement that defenses develop with recognizable patterns over the course of a lifetime and that one might also be able to discern historical patterns if one studied societal patterns over generations or eras.

There is repeated interpretation that defenses influence how one adapts to life—to situations, to others, and to one's own self—and that defense choice and use goes through periods of change and development. It is also generally agreed that there are age-appropriate defenses but that context is important in evaluating a defense as adaptive or not.

Meaning-making is not mentioned specifically in many of the theories, but the role of meaning and its influence on the appearance and experience of conflict are consistently alluded to. The appreciation of meaning-making illuminates a link between the psychology and the biology of defenses, since investigations of

brain processes support the theory that humans are biologically hardwired to seek meaning (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). Further discussion could offer insights into the relationship between lack of meaning, fear of the unknown, defenses, and the degree or type of meaning that is required to ward off defenses.

Defenses are generally associated with negative affect. Fear of the unknown is not often mentioned verbatim in defense theories, but it is heavily implied as involved with defense function and negative affect. Fear of the unknown tends to be mentioned in association with resistance; one resists the unknown. The underdeveloped conversation is whether not-knowing is an innate fear or a learned fear: whether not-knowing is socially permissible.

Finally, contemporary theories on defenses point to the strength of goals for communal belonging as being stronger than self-preservation goals. Evolutionary theories would say that meeting communal goals ensures self-preservation. The point is that relationships have more weight in the human psyche than pure selfish drives, and yet, paradoxically, some defenses repel people and thwart goals for interpersonal connectedness.

It is exciting that the hundred-year-old concept of defense mechanisms is robust enough to continue to stir research, and now at an accelerated pace (Perry & Kardos, 1995). Personal change and development is viewed differently with the more modern understandings of defenses. Change is viewed as difficult because life experiences create patterns of defense and behavior that can become rigid programs of beliefs running deep in the psyche and going unexamined. Resistance to change is based on a person's fears of the unknowns and the uncertainties

involved with examining beliefs and potential change (Benjamin, 1995; Cramer, 2006, 2007; Eagle, 1999; Horowitz & Stinson, 1995; Plutchik, 1995, 1998, 2000). These developed viewpoints provide a crisper backdrop against which to investigate and understand surrender.

While advancements in defense theory are helping to further assist people in attaining the changes and psychological well-being that they seek, further understanding of defenses is still necessary. Empirical research is burgeoning based on current theories, yet theories range across a spectrum of perspectives and make it difficult to generalize findings. Cooper (1989) questions the extent to which defense theories have become either needlessly or usefully diversified. Given this landscape, it is valuable to take a detailed look at the key issues of controversy in ego defense theories.

Key Issues

Looking with specificity at the key issues that riddle defense research and theory gives an entirely new angle from which to view the topic of defenses. This approach to the literature highlights where theories either mesh or conflict, and where consensus in theory might be attained: all assisting in the efforts to create a clearer, shared understanding of defenses, and further building a point of comparison for understanding surrender.

Despite general acceptance of the construct of defenses and the theoretical concepts that underlie them, there are multiple issues of controversy, even within contemporary agreements that emphasize developmental models of defenses (Bauer & Rockland, 1995). The issues influence theory development and result in

different frames of reference. Consequently, the various frameworks influence the studies that are undertaken, which then makes research comparisons difficult (Bond, 1995; Vaillant, 1994).

To understand and address defenses requires an appreciation of several grounding assumptions (Cramer, 2006; Vaillant, 1995b). One must believe in unconscious processes and content. One must have familiarity with the concept of the ego and the idea that it represents the mental processing designed to manage a complexity of influences that can come into mental conflict and cause psychological imbalance. One must understand that human behavior is not always driven by logic, mutual realities, or objectivity. One must accept that defenses are often unrecognizable to the user but can be very visible to observers. One must respect that context is important in understanding defense choice and use. Given that one accepts these assumptions, discussions about defenses can focus on recognized points of controversy; these issues fall into empirical and theoretical contexts.

Empirical Issues: Measurement and Research Design

The validity of the construct of ego defenses and the generally accepted tenets about them stands distinct from the capacity to study them empirically. Creative methods of research do exist and have been utilized in studying defenses, but that does not eliminate the continued need to refine research methods and designs. Defenses are as untouchable and elusive as rainbows where upon close inspection they disappear, but just like rainbows, they are equally recognizable and fascinating (Vaillant, 1995b, 1998). While detailed descriptions of defense

measurement tools are available (e.g., Conte & Plutchik, 1995; Cramer, 2006; Hentschel, Smith, et al., 2004; and Vaillant, 1992a), the discussion herein focuses on the general difficulties in studying defenses.

Defenses are theoretically intriguing but empirically problematic because they are generally understood to function outside of one's awareness (Cramer, 2000; Davidson & MacGregor, 1998). Empiricism does not imply that only measurable phenomena matter; it implies that what can be measured should be measured (van Praag, 1995). Measurement issues revolve around what is being measured, the reliability of measurement method, what is considered ideal in the form of measurement, and the consideration of broader conceptual domains such as self-esteem and stress (Conte & Plutchik, 1995).

Defenses are different than the processes that underlie them, so it is important to distinguish that which one aims to measure. Principles for classifying defenses have been developed, but this has not provided a means by which to reliably distinguish them in practicality (McCullough, 1992). One must also decide if one is trying to identify and measure the content of mind, which may be an individual defense, or whether one is trying to study the processes of mind that trigger a defense (Siegal, 1969). Since defenses result from creative processes that cannot be broken down into disconnected parts, those processes do not easily yield to measurement (Vaillant, 1994). Distinguishing between conscious and unconscious processes is essential, because it profoundly affects the approach to measurement, and precise measurement is critical for scientific investigation (Kline, 2004).

Observing defense phenomena provides a window into intrapsychic processes and helps to suggest links to behavior, but the surface behavior will never fully represent the complex, psychological processes that are at work and hidden from view (McCullough, 1992; Perry & Kardos, 1995). Behaviors that suggest defenses are heterogeneous and do not necessarily identify or explain underlying mental workings (McCullough, 1992). Since defense behavior lies on the surface of human conduct, it makes defenses observable without technical procedures (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004), but assessing behavior involves inference, which is a significant variable (McCullough, 1992; Perry & Kardos, 1995). One can observe or measure pre- and post-differences in behavior and symptoms, but observations and measurements do not inform researchers about the workings of the psyche and the nature of the mental processes that occurred (Cramer, 1998b; Siegal, 1969). However, because defenses underlie more measurable features such as affect, behavior, and cognitions, defenses are more open to study than other dynamic functions, such as intrapsychic conflict (Perry & Kardos, 1995).

In Freud's time, assessment and measurement of defenses was underdeveloped and could not tap the depth of the psyche where defenses reside (Draguns, 2004). Sophistication in research design and efforts continued in the first half of the 20th century, but the findings were criticized as not fully representing the phenomenon under study, and there was concern about trying to operationalize defenses for study and about the lack of unequivocal answers

(Cramer, 2006; Draguns, 2004). Clinicians forged ahead on their own with limited success in developing self-report measures of defenses (Cramer, 2006).

Self-report measures are consistently criticized as being unreliable because one cannot be expected to know or account for the contents or workings of one's unconscious mind (Cramer, 2006; Davidson & MacGregor, 1998; Vaillant, 1995b). Contemporary questionnaires have resolved some of the limitations of self-report measures by framing questions so that one can report about an unconscious mechanism without understanding its function. However, the question remains as to whether the reported data represent that which is meant to be researched or that which is observed by outsiders (Cramer, 2006). Self-reports avoid problems of observer inference, inter-rater reliability, and the time it takes for observational assessment, but carry the major disadvantage of the potential distortion of self-knowledge (Safyer & Hauser, 1995).

Clinicians can observe defenses, but experimental reproduction of defenses is limited. Since defenses result from uncomfortable psychological experiences, it is difficult to meet the ethical imperative to inflict no harm to clients while operationalizing defenses for study (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). Thus, operationalizing defenses has virtually ceased as a research method, but other types of controlled investigations have continued and even flourish, with concentrated focus on finding ways to measure defenses when they do occur and to understand how they operate (Draguns, 2004; Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004).

Contemporary theories have advanced observational methods for research. Observer measures are direct descendants of Freud's belief that an observer can

infer defensive operations in a person when the person is unaware of their existence (Perry & Ianni, 1998). While given behaviors cannot strictly imply defense processes, defenses are distinguishable by their behavioral expression and similarity in overt characteristics (Davidson & MacGregor, 1998; Plutchik, 1995). These include the impression of rigidity in psychological posture, the sense that the behavior might be out of a person's control, the appearance of anxiousness, and incongruities between a person's verbal communications and his or her body language.

The fact that defenses often guard against the expression of certain behaviors further complicates the discernment of defenses. Defenses can be especially creative at disguising inner workings of the mind and present behavior that would never suggest inner conflict. Therefore, observer measures rely on inference and advanced interpretive skills, often involving considerable training and practical experience (Cramer, 2006; Perry & Kardos, 1995; Vaillant, 1995b). The fact that such skills can be developed provides for some inter-rater reliability and the possibility of reaching consensus on findings, but does not eliminate the variables in individual interpretations (Cramer, 2006; Vaillant, 1995b).

Additional issues exist with observational measures; they are time consuming and labor-intensive to administer. Also, where observer measures generally provide stable findings for high incidence defenses, low incidence defenses leave too much room for interpretive measure (Cramer, 2006). Research has shown correlations between defenses and personality variables as well as particular psychiatric diagnoses, but it is cautioned that the presence of certain

symptoms cannot necessarily conclude the use of certain defenses (Ihilevich & Gleser, 1995). The lack of true comparison between studies as to what is being measured, compounded by the range of inference and interpretation, makes it difficult to reach disciplinary conclusions.

Projective tests, such as the infamous Rorschach ink blot test, are another measurement tool, but they largely prove disappointing as a measure of defenses. Projective tests use metaphor to attempt to reveal the secrets of the mind, so the range of client answers is too broad for generalizability and leaves too much room for interpretation (Vaillant, 1995b). There is limited support to believe that what is assessed by such tests actually represent defenses. Yet, in the wake of anything better, and with continued appreciation of defenses and the workings of the unconscious mind, clinicians continue to use these tests (Ritzier, 1995).

Context is also a variable. Clinical observations of defenses may not generalize to external contexts or across populations, yet, given research goals, those inferences and judgments that can be made are worth making in the effort to understand psychological health and choices for behavior (Cramer, 2006; Perry & Ianni, 1998; Vaillant, 2000). Research attempts to distinguish between the defensive postures observed in clinical therapy and in social contexts, but context influences the accuracy or applicability of measurement tools and defense choice and use (Draguns, 2004; Vaillant, 1995b). Also, different theoretical bases promote measures within different ranges of psychological development or ranges of psychological well-being (Cramer, 2006). The complex blend of context,

client, theory, and measurement tool creates multiple variations that challenge research.

Studies also show that patients differ from nonpatients in their use of defenses, generally showing greater use of immature defenses, but the degree to which this can substantiate diagnostic categories is less clear (Cramer, 2006). Approaches to therapy can be informed by assessment of defenses (Cramer, 2006), but methods of assessment produce different results for diagnostic purposes. The limits in measuring and assessing defenses have consequential limits for informing therapy.

Simply stated, there is an exchange rate between validity and reliability in defense measurements. Valid tests are not always reliable, and reliable tests are not always valid for given inquiries or clinical relevance (Vaillant, 1995b, 1998). Measures that are easily learned and reliable may not capture the dynamics of mental processes; reciprocally, measures that assess dynamic phenomena are more difficult to learn and often fail to be reliable (Perry & Kardos, 1995).

Despite the difficulties in measuring defenses, advancements have still been made in research design. In Freud's time, the laboratory was the fallible context of the psychoanalytic couch, dreams, free association, and fantasy; whereas, contemporary research now offers more creative contexts and less fallible findings about the unconscious and subjective phenomenon (Vaillant, 1995b). Advancement in defense assessment now includes clinical interviews, coding of narrative material, and systematized coding of free expression of thought (Cramer, 2000). Simple measures require minimal training and provide

ease of use, but care must be taken that measures are not so simplistic as to lose the essential unconscious nature of defenses (Kline, 2004). Comprehensive assessment of defenses at this time requires use of multiple measurement tools to gain the clearest interpretation (Davidson & MacGregor, 1998; Vaillant, 1995b). A comprehensive approach assists in better understanding a given client and providing generalizable understanding of defense processes and use. Additionally, research on defenses is enhanced by triangulated comparison of self-report measures with objective records and symptomatic expression over time (Vaillant, 1995b).

Researchers will need to find ways to study defenses with more naturalistic approaches and creative perspectives (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004; Vaillant, 1995b). One suggestion is independent assessment of videotaped sessions, which can neutralize the influences of intimate client knowledge (Cramer, 2006). Also, studies have shown meaningful mental activity dissociated from the consciousness of language and left-hemisphere brain activity (Vaillant, 1995b), which opens up opportunities to investigate the creativity of defense processes in relation to right-hemisphere brain activity. Studies have also shown relationships between emotions and physical measures of stress, such as blood pressure, and the complex interrelatedness of psychological function and overall health (MacGregor, 2000; Vaillant, 1995b), offering another perspective from which to investigate unconscious defense processes.

It remains that no available method for detecting or measuring defenses is deemed as fully reliable by the field of psychology or as covering all of the

aspects of the construct of defenses or their processes (Cramer, 1991; Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004; McCullough, 1992; Sammallahiti, 1995). Vaillant's work is the most thorough and systematic investigation of defense mechanisms undertaken to date, due to its combination of intricate design and longitudinal study (Draguns, 2004). Vaillant's work provides guidelines while respecting the continued need for improvement in defense measurement and research design.

Theoretical Issues

Contemporary defense theories are more inclusive of multiple sources of psychological conflict, including relationships, communal inclusion, sense of self, personal goals, and situational influences. Also, different theories emphasize different sources of conflict and different perspectives on the processes that address conflict. Collectively, this provides theoretical scope, but it also creates areas of key controversies between the theories, which then complicates an overall understanding about defenses. These controversies revolve around (a) nomenclature; (b) the issue of whether defenses are conscious or unconscious, and voluntary or involuntary; (c) the difference between defenses and coping, if any; (d) dialogues about defenses being dispositional, situational, or developmental; and (e) discussions about defenses being maladaptive or adaptive.

Nomenclature

Defenses are easier to talk about than they are to consensually define (Vaillant, 1971); although they have been defined and listed within the field of psychology, the worth of that information is open for debate. Defenses were excluded from the *DSMIII* because psychoanalysts could not agree on a

consensual definition of the term (Vaillant, 1998). Defenses were finally defined along with a glossary of defenses, both of which were provided in the *DSMIII-R*, but this list functions more in service of binary logic and classification for insurance companies (Vaillant, 1992c, 1998) than it does to fully ground theory and research.

Poor delimitation of documented experiences of defense produces lack of clarity and confounds the assumptions that are used to explain them or their behaviors (Sjoback, 2004). Lack of terminology invites this confusion. The term defense is used to refer not only to the construct but also to behaviors and psychological processes (Sjoback, 2004): the exact confusion against which Siegal (1969) cautioned. Without consensus on terms, progress toward understanding defenses and the paths of their development has been limited (Vaillant, 1992b).

Freud was more interested in the phenomenon of defenses than in semantics (Vaillant, 1992b). He studied neurotic patients, mostly in the form of case histories, resulting in the identification of nine loosely defined defenses (Bond, 1992; Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). He left it to his followers to refine the nomenclature and build on his work. Since then, even within relatively uniform literature, the lack of common language about defenses is striking (Vaillant, 1992d, 1998, 2000). Different people identify different numbers and styles of defenses. There are different understandings for the use of defenses. There is competing and nonoverlapping nomenclature, making for idiosyncratic terminology that cannot be cross-translated. There is a lack of consensual

definition for the term defense, despite the definition offered in the DSM III-R. Given all the literature, it is difficult to know which defenses are important and how to define them (Vaillant, 1998).

How many defenses are there? To date there is no consensual classification system of ego defenses (Sammallahti, 1995). Freud variously listed two to nine, depending on who is doing the interpreting (Vaillant, 1995b). Most conclude that Anna Freud listed ten, but Vaillant (1995b) claims to have counted over twenty defenses listed in her work. Klein and Kernberg focused on five but did not view them as exhaustive (Bond, 1992). Plutchik (1995, 2000) cites various authors who describe anywhere from 12 to 28 defenses. Conte and Apter (1995) cite authors who have listed up to 32 defenses. Cramer (2006) focuses on three but respects that there are more. Hentschel, Draguns, et al. (2004) mention that various researchers have named and defined 22, 26, 39, 44, and even more defenses, pointing to the creative methods by which people self-protect. Blackman (2004) lists 101 defenses, but one wonders about the theoretical worth of that number versus the retail marketing worth of that number. The inconsistent number of defenses identified exemplifies Vaillant's (1995b) claim that there are as many defenses as one has the imagination to catalogue. Vaillant (1992a) references the 1973 work of Hans Sjoback, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Defensive Processes*, in which Sjoback reviewed 12 authors who described 27 different defenses amongst them, with only seven having random repetition. Vaillant (1992a) also points to the 1988 work of Manfred Beutel entitled *Bewältigungsprozesse bei chronischen Erkrankungen*, in which Beutel reviewed

17 psychoanalytic authors and found 37 different defenses defined, with only 5 being cited by 15 of the authors and 14 cited by only five. Vaillant (1995a, 1995b) lists 18 in his theory, but his 18 are different than the 18 that finally ended up in the *DSMIII-R*, and Vaillant was on the committee that finalized the *DSMIII-R* list.

The inherent difficulty in identifying or defining a defense is that a defense in one context may not be a defense in another context (McCullough, 1992). Defenses have contextual distinction along with overlapping similarities, requiring that one make assumptions about a person's subjective state and motivations before identifying a defense (McCullough, 1992; Plutchik, 2000). Research is hampered not only by the lack of a consensual list of defenses, but also by the lack of consensual overall nomenclature (Cramer, 2006; Plutchik, 2000; Safyer & Hauser, 1995; Vaillant, 1992d, 1995b). A clearly understood nomenclature would support new research and provide further means of decoding irrational behavior (Vaillant, 1995b). Without clarified nomenclature, progress is halted (Vaillant, 1992d).

Unconscious/Conscious; Involuntary/Voluntary

Theoretically, conscious processes should be more flexible and amenable to change than unconscious processes (Norem, 1998), but whether defenses are unconscious or conscious is hotly contested (Cramer, 2001). This section presents a range of contemporary views that evidence many perspectives held about this controversial issue.

Cramer (2001) points out that the very issue of unconsciousness brought about the demise of studying defenses with early psychologists. The original argument in defense theory was that there was no such thing as unconscious mental processes. This has since been resolved but replaced with the new controversy as to whether defenses are unconscious processes. Cramer (1998b, 2001, 2006) firmly believes that defenses function at the unconscious level. She asserts that management of stress and anxiety both involve processes of adaptation, but one process is unconscious and the other is conscious. For Cramer, defenses are unconscious processes that are unintentional and coping is a conscious process that has intention.

Cramer (2001) cites Lazarus in support of her view. Lazarus (2000) states that unconsciousness and unintentionality are critical for defining and differentiating defense mechanisms from other adaptive mechanisms. Lazarus indicates that defenses cannot be effective if the defending person is fully aware of the use or the underlying motives of a defense. His use of the *word fully* offers an inexact understanding, suggesting that one can be partially aware of the use or motive of a defense. A strong argument from authors who do not insist on the unconscious nature of defenses is the issue of demarking consciousness from unconsciousness, and when one is fully conscious.

Cramer (2001) does not use Freud's work to validate her own, since Freud was inconsistent in his view of whether defenses are conscious or not. Instead, Cramer stands with Anna Freud and her belief that defenses were unconscious processes. For Cramer, there are inherently different mental processes that occur

when one unintentionally distorts thinking, compared to when one consciously and intentionally modifies one's thinking.

Cramer works within the field of personality psychology. It cannot be claimed that her voice speaks for the entire field, but several of her peers voice similar opinions. For instance, Davidson and MacGregor (1998) describe defenses as mental operations that function outside of awareness. Norem (1998) does not specify that defenses are unconscious but expresses the need to study defenses in order to better understand systemic relationship between unconscious and conscious processes.

Outside of the field of personality psychology, others are equally clear that defenses are unconscious. Conte and Apter (1995) state that defenses are unconscious and coping is conscious. Sammallahti (1995) asserts that the illusion of conscious control is the work of ego defenses, which are unconscious phenomena. Plutchik (1995, 2000) flatly states that defenses are unconscious.

Other theorists are less adamant that defenses are unconscious. Both Cramer and Vaillant are contemporary defense theorists who offer developmental models of defenses, but Vaillant (1995b, 1998) is less insistent about understanding defenses as unconscious. While he distinguishes between voluntary, learned methods of managing stress that he refers to as *coping*, and involuntary, unconscious methods of managing stress and anxiety, which he calls *defenses*, he appears to make these distinctions for general clarification and not for absolute distinction.

Vaillant (1995b, 1998) states that defenses are simultaneously conscious and unconscious. He refers to Freud's work and Freud's growing difficulty in witnessing behavior that seemed so purposeful. Freud began to question whether such purposeful behavior could result from wholly unconscious processes. Vaillant believes that research needs to circumvent the false dichotomy of unconsciousness and consciousness, because the line of distinction is not clear. He points to findings in cognitive psychology that show how memory can be unconscious and conscious at the same time, suggesting that defenses can be too.

Vaillant (1995b) offers several points to frame his thinking, using the lens of volition rather than consciousness. He explains that defenses modulate that which is outside of voluntary control; they can be inadvertent, yet conscious. He stresses the need to distinguish between ideas and feelings. Ideas are neutral, while feelings are the subjective meaning that becomes attached to ideas. As soon as ideas are infused with feelings, the capacity to reason with the idea is lost and defenses bring feelings into stasis. As such, the ego and its defenses involuntarily bring order out of chaotic feelings. According to Vaillant, the illusion that defenses are used on purpose is based on a cognitive understanding of brain mechanics, without account for the nonreasoned functions of emotions. Feelings do not occur on purpose. Defenses do not necessarily occur on purpose either, but they do have the purpose of bringing order to the confusions of emotions and can occur with consciousness. For Vaillant, the belief that the unconscious is unconscious depends upon one's perspective.

Others share Vaillant's perspective. According to Newman (2001), the criteria for distinguishing between coping and defending confound dimensions that do not always overlap; defenses are used to cope and coping can be used to defend. He questions whether the two can be fully separated and whether the attempt to insist on the unconsciousness or consciousness of either may hamper rather than facilitate efforts to understand self-protective mental processes. Erdelyi (2001) advocates being open to the idea that defenses can be conscious. Erdelyi stresses that the threshold between unconsciousness and consciousness is a scientific fiction, which may be useful in some cases but not as an absolute distinction in all cases. To define consciousness requires a contextual definition, and consciousness cannot be viewed in an either-or framework. Benjamin (1995) similarly reports that defenses may or may not be unconscious, since the wishes and fears that effect defenses may or may not be in one's awareness.

Siegel (1969) stressed that confusing the referents of defense mechanisms (mental content vs. mental aim vs. mental processes) hinders efforts to further understand defense functioning. Siegal stated that defense mechanisms are processes and that imprecise use of the term and its presumed referents only maintains logical chaos.

Whether authors are arguing for the unconsciousness or consciousness of content of mind, or for processes of mind is not very clear in the literature. It could be that there is consensus that the processes of defenses are unconscious and that the content of defenses can be either unconscious or conscious, but in the volume of disagreement and difficulty in comparing theories, this possibility goes

unmentioned. Controversy can easily thrive in such a theoretical environment, and the issue of consciousness overlaps into the discussions that compare defenses to coping.

Defense/Coping; Rigid/Flexible

Differentiating between defenses and coping is difficult due to conflicting nomenclature and different theoretical frameworks. For instance, Vaillant (1995a, 1995b) considers suppression as a mature defense that is a semiconscious choice, whereas Haan (1977) considers suppression as a conscious coping mechanism. Further confounding the issue, some research suggests that habituated coping processes are no longer intentional in nature and should not be considered as coping, but habituated coping cannot necessarily be defined as defenses either; rather, it is yet another means of adaptation (Cramer, 1998b). Kline (2004) highlights another issue: studies on coping have taken on such proportions as to define social behaviors (e.g., calling on friends for help) as a coping strategy. Kline insists that this degree of refinement complicates an already complex topic.

Haan is distinguished for differentiating defenses from coping. She had a huge influence on contemporary defense theory with her focus on coping and her reasoning that a classification of ego actions should include two parallel modes of expression: coping and defense (Paulhus et al., 1997). According to Haan (1977), the ego is a continual set of processes that assimilates new information about oneself and one's environment and accommodates to those assimilations through actions that aim toward dynamic psychological equilibrium. She describes coping as a flexible, purposeful choice focused on intersubjective reality and aimed at

engaging perceived problems with proportioned expression. Defenses, in contrast, are rigid, psychological reactions that distort intersubjective reality and are aimed at relieving anxiety by not engaging perceived problems. Both serve to manage life's problems. According to Haan, one will cope if one can, defend if one must, and violate reality if forced to do so.

Not surprisingly, Cramer (1998b, 2000, 2006) draws the same clear distinction between defenses and coping in her theory; this aligns with her clear depiction of defenses being unconscious and coping being conscious. Cramer specifies that defenses and coping are both strategies of adaptation, but they cannot be distinguished based on their perceived positive or negative character, their adaptive or maladaptive character, or their outcomes; rather, they can only be differentiated based on their psychological processes. The critical differences are that coping is conscious, intentional, and generally under one's control, whereas defenses are unconscious, unintentional, and are more reflexive and automatic. They can be further distinguished in three ways, but these are less critical in distinction and more a matter of emphasis: (a) situation versus disposition (coping is situational and defenses are dispositional), (b) gradation (coping is nonhierarchical and defenses are hierarchical), and (c) normality (coping is associated with normality whereas defenses are associated with pathology).

Cramer (1998b, 2006) specifies that coping is learned and is used to solve perceived problems by changing external reality, whereas defenses are unlearned, unfolding as part of normal development and used to protect psychological stasis

by changing internal reality. The use of a defense precedes the understanding of it; once it is perceived and understood, it no longer serves its adaptive function because it has shifted into consciousness and can be refined into a coping strategy. The nature of the motivation determines whether a behavior is coping or defense.

Cramer (1998b, 2006) believes that those who blur the line between coping and defenses deviate from the work done by coping researchers, the majority of whom see coping as occurring under conscious control. Coping and defenses are both aroused by situations involving psychological disturbance, serve adaptive purposes, aim at decreasing negative affect, and seek psychological equilibrium, but coping specifically seeks stasis via conscious problem-solving methods.

Others share many of Cramer's beliefs. Conte and Apter (1995) state that coping and defenses are distinguishable. McCullough (1992) asserts that defenses are intrapsychic coping mechanisms that manage anxiety, and that, in clinical practices, coping techniques are taught to clients to help them voluntarily manage anxiety. McCullough's emphasis on the learned aspect of coping and the innate function of defenses matches Cramer's theory.

Plutchik (1995, 1998, 2000) also distinguishes coping from defenses, but he emphasizes their respective rigidities. Plutchik insists that coping is conscious, flexible, and generally an adaptive means of problem solving. Coping is the result of primitive defenses evolving into conscious problem-solving options which, due to their emergent properties, makes them flexible, evolutionary in a person's lifespan, and of a less limited nature. In comparison, defenses are unconscious,

rigid, and of limited adaptive value to an immature ego. They reflect early mental development, are of limited variety, and are considered immature at any age. Defenses have a stronger emotional investment in situations than does coping, making them more rigid and difficult to modify.

The rigidity of defenses—in comparison to coping—strengthens their effectiveness in defending what is known and resisting what is unknown. Any situation that poses conflict and threat to one's way of knowing may be met with rigid defenses. Pyszczynski et al. (2003) stress that threats to the structures providing psychological protection excite the need to strengthen those structures.

Rigidity and resistance are key in discussing defenses, coping, and the process of personal development. The literature indicates that personal development, change, and maturation partially involve the process of massaging rigid, immature defenses and molding them into characters that are more interpersonally adaptive. Maturation would then involve the progressive development of the capacity to manage the tendencies to rigidify psychological structures and habituate responses of defense.

Just as Vaillant (1992d, 1994, 1995b, 2000) is open to viewing defenses as conscious, so too is he lenient in distinguishing between coping and defenses. Where Cramer describes coping and defenses as adaptive strategies, Vaillant describes defenses as coping strategies. This confounding of rhetoric complicates the ability to reach theoretical consensus. According to Vaillant, there are three distinct classes of coping: social, conscious, and unconscious. *Social coping* manages stress and anxiety through the help of clinics and specialized social

organizations. *Conscious coping* results from learned methods by which to manage stress and anxiety; this aligns with Cramer's comments. *Unconscious coping* is an involuntary method by which the psyche transmutes reality into manageable self-deceptions. This can sound contradictory to Vaillant's openness to viewing defenses as conscious; again, he appears to draw lines of distinction for the sake of discussion, not for absoluteness. On a theoretical level, he appreciates and integrates the ambiguities of defense processes.

Vaillant (1992d, 1994,1995b, 2000) sees defenses as coping of a very select kind. He stresses that coping, as opposed to defenses, allows one to experience reality fully, whereas defenses are necessary only when the perceived conflict is unbearable or when the change is too sudden to fully accommodate in the moment. Coping is a cognitive strategy that can break incoming information into manageable pieces, but such choice is not always available in the immediacy of circumstances. Vaillant distinguishes defenses from social or conscious coping in four ways: (a) they are relatively unconscious, (b) they are often the basis of pathology, (c) they create mental synthesis in service of psychological healing, and (d) they often result in behavior that is judged as odd or irrational to observers. He says that, if one uses defenses well, they are deemed healthy; if one uses them poorly, they are diagnosed as ill.

Vaillant's theory is complex in its inclusiveness, reflecting his appreciation for the ambiguities involved with psychological functioning. His descriptions of mature defenses sound more like his description of conscious coping, yet he lists them as defenses. Addressing this very point of confusion,

Vaillant explains that mature defenses are arguably more conscious and successful as coping strategies, but to force a distinction between defenses and coping proves arbitrary and unhelpful. For Vaillant (1992d, 1995b, 2000), defenses are the ego's range of adaptive mechanisms, whereas conscious coping falls more toward stress management.

Hentschel, Draguns, et al. (2004) and Hentschel, Smith, et al. (2004) suggest that, given a range of defenses, the lower end choices tend to distort reality, the higher end choices tend to integrate feelings and assist in interpersonal relationships, and the intermediate choices tend to massage disturbing feelings. Whether they regard the choices as defenses or coping is not clear, but they offer generalizing comments about coping and defenses that help round out this discussion. They admit that there is no consensus on the distinctions drawn between coping and defenses. Coping tends to be seen as a strategy and defense as a pure, unconscious response. The discussion is complicated by the inclusion of cognitive styles, which are the general tendencies that people have for processing situational information regardless of emotional content and which thus provide a form of predisposition for defensive reactions. Ideally, coping responses are the result of organizing and integrating a person's accumulated experiences and knowledge, and are attuned to given circumstances. Coping may or may not effect the desired results, but coping strategies include more situational elements than defenses, which function more narrowly in pure aim of reducing subjective distress. While distinctions can be made between coping and defenses, there is considerable overlap, especially in the range of more mature defenses.

Chronologically, coping is a construct that emerged half a century after the construct of defenses, and this timing has had mixed influences on defense theory. Finally, coping styles have similarities to defenses but, as a separate area of research, have been a less controversial concept than defenses, perhaps because their understanding is more reasoned and less attached to contested psychoanalytic theories.

Disposition, Situation, Developmental

Little is known about how defenses are acquired (Ihilevich & Gleser, 1995). There is interconnection between traits, age, stage of ego development, style of attachment, predispositions to psychological disorders, and defenses (Weinberger, 1998) that is not fully understood or represented by a given theory. Linking personality traits to defense mechanisms is difficult, because it has not been determined that given traits perform identically in all circumstances (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). While there is some consistency in defenses over time, which provides for some predictive value in a person's adaptive styles and maturational process, the inconsistencies that can occur may result from disposition or situation, and distinguishing them remains a challenge (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004). Generally, defenses are attributed to disposition and coping is thought of as a situational response, but empirical evidence is lacking (Cramer, 2006).

Whether given personalities incline toward certain defenses is a complex inquiry that has not yielded any conclusive findings in research to date (Vaillant, 1995b). Any conclusions will require longitudinal research of a chosen study

group with multiple observers looking for patterns of behavior, and multiple interpretations of those patterns relative to personality traits (Vaillant, 1995b). There is extensive research showing that personalities change in adulthood, and use of defense mechanisms shows a relationship to that change (Cramer & Jones, 2007), but personality change stands separate from linking personality traits to defense use.

Cramer (1998b) considers the debate between disposition and situation as a matter of emphasis in defense choice and use, and not a critical point of differentiation. She believes that defenses are likely to be dispositional because they are relatively stable and enduring, and coping is more a function of reacting to situations. Yet, she admits that there is little empirical evidence to fully support the assumption about defenses or the assumption that a given situation will consistently produce the same coping behavior in a given individual. For Cramer, the issue of traits versus situations is more a distinction of appearance and not reality at this point.

Defenses do tend to be stable over time, but they are susceptible to situational influences (Hentschel, Smith, et al., 2004). Vaillant (1995b) considers defenses as highly creative, nonspecific, and open to situational impact. Some defenses may or may not be specific to certain situations. Generally, immature defenses manage conflicts having to do with people, especially in circumstances of sudden and unexpected change (Vaillant, 1995b), but there is no consensus on this point.

Contemporary defense theories are less influenced by the issue of disposition versus situation and are more influenced by developmental perspectives. Freud did not organize defenses into categories. However, he posited that defenses allow the ego to transmute base instincts into noble virtues and that, over the course of one's lifetime, there is a possibility that motives shift from those born of drives to those born of wisdom (Vaillant, 1992b). Anna Freud admitted that, at the stage of her research, defense processes were too obscure to describe in detail, but she maintained that they could be associated with developmental periods (Plutchik, 1995, 2000; Safyer & Hauser, 1995).

Defending against one's innate drives presupposes the ability to imagine the experience of the drive and its potential satisfaction. Thus, the classical view of defenses as quelling drives does not account for developmental capacities that regulate drives and affects or the patterns of measurable distinction between developmental levels (Cramer, 2006; Ehlers, 2004). Contemporary defense theory and recent empirical studies confirm the developmental nature of defenses, finding that they are of less complex natures in youth and more complex natures in later life (Ihilevich & Gleser, 1995).

Lazarus (2000) is critical of the unchecked acceptance of hierarchical and developmental models of defenses, suggesting that they blend developmental maturity with adaptive capacity. He questions key theorists, such as Vaillant and Cramer, and their research regarding maturation and adaptation. Content from Vaillant's and Cramer's literature provides a response to Lazarus' critique. Vaillant (1995a) states that ego development is distinct from psychosocial

development, even if parallel to it. Ego development is more dependent on internal development, whereas psychosocial development results from step-wise negotiations with life experiences. Cramer (2000) adds that maturity and adaptiveness can be held distinct while addressing them together, noting that mature defenses are associated with adaptive functioning.

Vaillant and Cramer both have developmental models in their defense theories and argue for the value of such models in conceptualizing defenses. Cramer (2006) states that developmental theories of ego mechanisms of defense honor the process of overall human development and that there are age-appropriate behaviors and age-inappropriate behaviors. Vaillant (1995a, 1995b) adds that the capacity for defenses to soothe disturbing perceptions of reality evolves during one's lifetime; maturity is not a value-laden ideal and, to a certain degree, reflects biological development.

The developmental approach to ordering and understanding defenses can be arranged in two ways. One way is to link defense use and developmental constructs, such as age or cognitive abilities, and present a developmental continuum, as done by Cramer (Safyer & Hauser, 1995). The other way is to create a developmental hierarchy having to do with maturity or pathology, such as done by Vaillant. Cramer (2000) explains that understanding defense development from childhood through young adulthood benefits from a continuum model, with immature defenses appearing before mature ones; understanding adult defense use benefits from a hierarchical model because it shows levels of

defenses, with the more adaptive and mature defenses located on the top tiers and the less adaptive ones located on the bottom.

The key controversy in developmental theories is the degree to which a theory is ascribed to any one influence. The theories reviewed herein show various ascriptions to such influences as trait, situation, age, maturation, and ego development. Currently, there is no consensus on any sequence of development of defenses; there is only speculation on those that develop first rather than later, and on whether there is any universality to the sequence (Conte & Plutchik, 1995).

Safyer and Hauser (1995) provide three consolidating comments regarding developmental theories. First, defenses follow a developmental course in terms of their emergence and relation to ego functions. Second, there is increasing empirical evidence to support developmental models as useful in studying and understanding defenses, even though debates continue. Third, while the emergence of certain defenses does align with age, gender, and cognitive function, no confirming causal links can be claimed with absolute certainty.

Maladaptive/Adaptive

The literature on defenses does not compare the use of the terms *adaptation* versus *adaptive*. The term *adaptation* tends to refer to the creative engagement and integration of experience; it is not about an either/or integration, but rather the overall adjustment to situations. In comparison, the term *adaptive* has an either/or connotation as gauged against the term *maladaptive*. While it is not expressly stated in the literature, one can presumably be engaged in adaptive

processes and still employ defenses in a maladaptive manner. This clarification aids the following discussion.

The field of psychology has sometimes been reluctant to consider defenses as adaptive, and this has slowed the understanding of ego maturation and defense use (Vaillant, 1992b). Classic Freudian psychology considered defenses as purely pathological, crisis-driven, maladaptive distortions of reality (Cramer, 2006; Plutchik, 1995, 2000; Vaillant, 1998). Yet, Freud did come to consider that defenses could be part of normal development. Over time, this view has expanded, and contemporary theories include the normative and adaptive capacities of defense use (Cramer, 2006; Plutchik, 1995; Vaillant, 1995b).

Defenses are a basic and necessary aspect of human mental functioning (Conte & Plutchik, 1995). They are now studied in relationship to behaviors ranging from neurosis to psychosis, including borderline personality disorders, and with regard for their normative and creative role in human development (Mahoney, 1991; Vaillant, 1995b). Defenses can be observed as pathological, but they can also be observed in psychologically unimpaired and nondistressed people, evidencing their normative value in psychological function (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004).

Individuals are free to decide to tolerate negative affect in service of other goals, but the extent to which the motivation is unconscious, reflexive, and rigid versus conscious, calculated, and flexible may indicate the degree of adaptiveness in various contexts (Norem, 1998). Over-reliance on defenses and an imbalancing prevalence of defenses can make them pathological by reducing one's awareness

of self and environment. Consequently, reduced awareness impairs one's ability to respond with healthy spontaneity and flexibility to situations (Hentschel, Draguns, et al., 2004; Mahoney, 1991).

In addition to over-reliance on or prevalence of defenses, the context and age-appropriateness of defense use also determines whether defenses are maladaptive or adaptive. Different theorists have different thoughts on these matters. An overview of the more prevalent perspectives follows.

Cramer (1998b, 2000, 2006) clearly distinguishes between defenses and coping strategies, unconscious and conscious functions, and intentional versus unintentional behavior. Her certainty about the adaptive versus maladaptive use of defenses is less clear. She explains that conclusions cannot be made about defense use as healthy or pathological based purely upon age, situation, repetition of defense use, reliance on defenses, or the intensity of defense use. She questions whether conscious phenomena are necessarily more adaptive than unconscious or unintentional phenomena. She also states that normal psychological processes can become pathological and that the line of distinction is not always clear; it is the amount of use and the magnitude of a given defense application that differentiates normality from pathology. For Cramer, the continuum is more quantitative than qualitative, which is interesting considering the subjective nature of defense function. Cramer questions whether pathology results from the use of particular defenses or whether the use or continual use of defenses results from pathology. Cramer indicates that people with clinically assessable psychological symptoms tend to use immature defenses, and that consistent use of immature defenses

outside of childhood is associated with psychological disorders. Cramer asserts that defenses are pathological if they are overused or if they are used too intensely or age-inappropriately.

Plutchik (1995, 2000), who aligns with Cramer in distinguishing defenses from coping, is slightly less aligned with Cramer's view on the adaptive role of defenses. Where Cramer allows for defenses to have adaptive capacity, Plutchik clearly states that defenses are of limited adaptive value. He believes that defenses are primitive behavioral responses that are raw options for children and maladaptive choices for adults. For Plutchik, underdeveloped egos use defenses and more developed egos cope.

Vaillant (1995a, 1995b) is consistently lenient in his viewpoint. He states that defenses are associated with adaptive functioning, and that they can be creative and healthy approaches to situational experiences. To know whether a defense is adaptive or not, one must know the nature of the defense and the context in which it is used. Vaillant lists several determinants of adaptiveness: defenses should (a) meter, not remove, affects; (b) reduce pain rather than anesthetize one's pain; (c) channel feelings, not block them; (d) be oriented toward the long-term, not the short-term (this is a long-term eye on adaptive functioning, not a long-term *use* of defenses); (e) orient toward present and future pain relief not toward medicating past distress; (f) be as specific as possible in a given situation rather than broad, general, and sweeping in nature; and (g) attract rather than repel people.

According to Vaillant (1995a, 1995b), where mature defenses are perceived as virtuous and generally adaptive in nature, immature defenses are perceived as irritating and considered maladaptive if used in adulthood. Vaillant adds that contexts deem defense use as adaptive or not adaptive. For instance, virtues and behaviors considered valued in medical operating rooms may be considered antisocial in the public arena. He also points to cultural contexts and the fact that different defenses are not universally considered as adaptive or maladaptive. Vaillant admits that the interpretation of a defense as adaptive or maladaptive is often in the eye of the beholder.

Bond (1992) indicates that defenses can constrict psychological growth and development, yet they can also provide adaptive functions that enable healthy function and growth. Davidson and MacGregor (1998) state that defenses are maladaptive if (a) the manner in which they operate is considered dysfunctional, (b) the use of them is excessive or rigid, (c) they are developmentally inappropriate, (d) they are destructive to one's sense of self, or (e) they reduce the capacity for one to function interpersonally or intrapersonally. Benjamin's (1995) focus is on peoples' need to preserve attachments with people, in addition to the contexts in which defenses arise. She states that defenses can distort perceptions, block awareness, or distort responses, all with the goal of sustaining relationships. According to Benjamin, defenses that organize affects, cognitions, and behavior to enhance healthy relationships are generally of a normative nature; those defenses that support unhealthy relationships or function to negatively affect healthy relationships are generally abnormal in nature. She admits that, in the long

run, attachments are best served if there are no distortions of awareness and the attachments are sustained by clarity and integrity in perceptions, processing, and responding.

Frankel and Levitt (2006) state that resistance to change is universal and is greater and more debilitating in distressed people than in nondistressed people. They assert that resistance can be healthy and unhealthy, just as defenses can be adaptive or maladaptive. According to Frankel and Levitt, too much resistance to change causes one to become inflexible and unable to respond to normal changes in life, and too little resistance affords one to become formless and lose one's identity. Resistance has degrees of rigidity, just as defenses do. Rigid resistance is not healthy and limits personal development, yet resistance can be resilient and allow for stability and change. Based on Frankel and Levitt, it is the rigidity of defenses and resistance that makes them maladaptive.

Few psychological processes are inherently adaptive independent of their frequency of use and situational context; likewise defenses are adaptive not based on their use but on their appropriateness of use (Norem, 1998). Generally, defenses can be adaptive or maladaptive (Conte & Apter, 1995; Safyer & Hauser, 1995). Defenses can build pathology or healthy ego development, depending on their selection and use (Vaillant, 1992b). To capture the continuum and define defenses as adaptive versus maladaptive is difficult, since normalcy is an ideal fiction and a matter of degree in comparison to pathology (Davidson & MacGregor, 1998; Plutchik, 1995, 2000). The controversy is more concerned with

the context of defense use and whether they are considered age-appropriate and situationally normal (Cramer, 2000).

Overall, there is consensus that defenses can be either adaptive or maladaptive, and that consideration of age, maturity, culture, situation, intensity, reliance, habituation of use, and variations in objective interpretation of defense behavior all influence the degree to which defenses are considered adaptive or maladaptive. Most key is that defenses can serve an adaptive capacity and do have a role in healthy human development.

Consolidating Comments

The empirical and theoretical issues involved with studying and understanding defenses are significant. Progress toward further comprehending defenses and defense functions, and helping people realize the psychological change and development that they seek, will require attention to these key areas. Vaillant (1992d) believes that the controversial issues should be less about black-and-white distinctions than about appreciating the complexity of what the controversies represent. Depending on the design of a study, a defense can be demonstrated to be conscious or unconscious. Likewise, depending on situations and outcomes, defenses cope and coping defends; distinctions between internal and external conflicts and the perceived threats of their appraisal are not easy to discern.

The issues that riddle ego defense theory development and research have overlapping influences; it is difficult to discuss one issue in the absence of other issues. For example, whether defenses are conscious or unconscious includes the

discussion as to whether they are intentional or unintentional, which then overlaps into the discussions that differentiate defenses from coping strategies. Also, discussing defenses solely within psychoanalytic theory is strained and has come to bridge into psychological fields such as personality, cognitive, social, and other areas of specialization.

Since research is informed by theory, the current theoretical controversies limit the degree to which defense theories assist research. Fortunately, researchers have been creative in developing refined defense measurement tools and designing research projects that use multiple tools to triangulate and strengthen their findings. The lack of consensual nomenclature continues to blur the understanding of what is actually being studied and what therefore needs to be measured. Also, there is a noticeable gap between the theories with micro foci on defenses and those with more macro perspectives. Therefore, new theories are less necessary than building understanding between theories.

Treatments

Another angle from which to view and analyze defense literature is to see how defense theories inform therapy. Ego defense literature often discusses clinical application of theories, and a closer look at these discussions affords insights into professional approaches to helping people with the processes of change. This perspective grants a window into one of the environments in which surrender occurs.

When people feel threatened, defense mechanisms help them defend what is known and familiar to them. It is only in a sacred place, with conditions of

trust, that the psychological energies used to defend the known can be freed and allow one to divert defensive energies to the testing of new thoughts and behaviors (Eagle, 1999; Solomon, 1998; Vaillant, 1995b, 2007). Studying one's own defenses does not, initially, offer much self-help for personal change since defenses are often invisible to the user (Vaillant, 1995b). The therapeutic environment aims to create a sacred place, but therapists' attempts to create ideal environments and direct therapeutic efforts are made difficult with the abundance of therapeutic interventions and techniques, combined with the lack of unity in the theories that inform therapists about anxiety (Zerbe, 1990).

Classic defense theory says that pathology arises from internal conflict that is poorly managed by defenses, and therapy should identify one's defenses, repressed thoughts, and feelings, and interpret, eliminate, or modify them within the therapeutic situation (Benjamin, 1995; Cooper, 1998; S. Kreitler & H. Kreitler, 2004). With that theoretical base, the client is expected to work through his or her resistance and to interrelate with the therapist as an important person in his or her life, while the therapist remains neutral (Benjamin, 1995; S. Kreitler & H. Kreitler, 2004). This practice has revealed that resistance to change and fear of the unknown limit therapeutic efforts, that insight into the existence of defenses is only part of the necessary process to effect change, and that a neutral and detached therapist is less than ideal (Benjamin, 1995; Eagle, 1999; S. Kreitler & H. Kreitler, 2004; Zerbe, 1990).

Therapists that employ more contemporary theories seek to help clients examine and work through the insight of their defenses. This approach still seeks

to break down defenses and may be inadequate (Benjamin, 1995), because breaking down defenses may be misguided and may not always be helpful (Benjamin, 1995; Vaillant, 1995b). Defenses are not always inherently pathological; they also function for adaptation purposes. Therapy should be a social learning experience to help clients learn to recognize and explore their patterns of behavior and how those patterns might be habituated, and alter those that are destructive (Benjamin, 1995; Cooper, 1998). Modern approaches to therapy aim to help clients enhance their ego functions and treat the self with regard (Zerbe, 1990).

The nature of the client-therapist relationship has changed with contemporary therapies. The therapist is no longer neutral and detached. Therapists are invited to include self-disclosure and be personally involved in the therapeutic alliance (Cooper, 1998). The therapist can also act as a container for raw emotions expressed by clients as they unload anxious affect and engage the process of change (Zerbe, 1990).

Contemporary therapies have multiple approaches, some of which are based on psychoanalytic theory. These advance Freud's theory and guide therapists to help clients gain insights into the existence of their defenses and the situations that trigger the conflicts. This approach seeks to strengthen the ego and its choice for response, and sometimes even effects incremental changes within cognitive and behavioral interventions (Mahoney, 1991; Zerbe, 1990). Cognitive therapies focus on emotions and the underlying beliefs that generate the emotional responses to stimuli, as do developmental therapies (S. Kreitler & H. Kreitler,

2004; Mahoney, 1991). Behavioral therapies focus on self-control (Mahoney, 1991). Other modern therapies utilize object relations theory; these work with clients to differentiate the self from the painful, internalized representations that may be held about others (Zerbe, 1990). Therapies based on transpersonal theories focus on moving beyond the framework of the ego to more expansive awareness of self and individual function, but these approaches require that a client experience a stable sense of self before attempting to transcend the self (Mahoney, 1991).

Vaillant (1992e) asserts that mature defenses require admiration, not interpretation. He explains that psychotic defenses require no interpretation because the brain is not working well enough to accept or respond to intervention; a psychotic mental system is incapable of testing reality and therefore incapable of engaging a productive therapeutic relationship and curative course of action—psychotic clients need more extreme forms of therapy. Neurotic defenses do benefit from interpretation, because people who use them know they are suffering from their choices and seek insights and cures. Clients with personality disorders require management, not interpretation. For such clients, defenses are a part of their concrete character and interpretation of their defenses is viewed as an attack on their personality. Where a neurotic person suffers from his or her own defenses, a person with personality disorder views his or her defenses as helpful, and it is the recipients of their defense use who suffer. Such a client needs nonpsychoanalytic therapies and social supports outside of therapy.

Vaillant (2000) recommends integrative psychotherapies as facilitative in helping people shift out of maladaptive or less-than-adaptive use of defenses. Vaillant does not elaborate on integrative psychotherapies, but Strieker and Gold (2005) distinguish between integrative therapies and integrative approaches to therapy. For them, the latter is preferable. An integrative approach is a process of learning and being open to all therapies, where the approach guides therapy rather than having exclusive loyalty to one therapeutic model. In their view, an integrative therapy risks becoming yet another contained model, whereas an integrative approach guides therapy in an open format. They explain that integrative psychotherapies attempt to synthesize theoretical constructs and clinical interventions from two or more traditional schools of psychotherapy (e.g., Gestalt therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and psychoanalysis), whereas integrative approaches do not synthesize but instead utilize various therapies without strict adherence to any given selection.

Strieker and Gold (2005) indicate that integrative psychotherapies and integrative approaches have both become widely accepted in the last fifteen to twenty years due to the failure of any one model to prove clearly superior to others. They state that other factors—such as new generations of psychiatric drugs and new requirements to demonstrate the effectiveness of therapies to insurance companies—have also effected this change. Likewise, with new generations of therapists, there are new ideas about crossing boundaries and assimilating therapeutic ideas.

According to Strieker and Gold (2005), the uniqueness of integrative approaches is in the breadth of the process rather than in specific theoretical or technical aspects of treatment. Most integrative approaches stress some combination of (a) increasing clients' awareness of conscious and unconscious psychological processes, (b) exposing them to anxiety-generating stimuli, (c) having clients learn new behavioral skills, (d) restructuring clients' deep structures of meaning, (e) enhancing client capacities to symbolize experience, (f) encouraging clients to experience their emotions, and (g) helping clients to change destructive patterns of interpersonal relatedness. All of these aspects of therapy address elements of defense function.

Frankel and Levitt (2006) review several psychotherapies with specific focus on client resistance to change. They show that contemporary therapies have unique conceptualizations of resistance, and consequently, different strategies for therapy. The six different therapies they review are psychoanalytic, constructivist, systemic, cognitive, client-centered, and gestalt. They offer a spectrum that represents the various therapies: at one end are problem-solving strategies, and at the other are self-revolution strategies. Problem-solving therapies tend toward a micro view of resistant behavior and emphasize localized or specific change; self-revolution therapies have more macro views of resistance, focusing on generalized change and maximizing clients' potential. One is not better than the other; they are just different strategies for meeting and treating specific resistant behaviors.

Frankel and Levitt (2006) state that early approaches to therapy were less sensitive to clients' phenomenological experiences with regard to change, whereas later therapies integrate more of the clients' subjective relationships to their issues and the unique needs for problem solution or self-revolution. Self-revolutionary therapies view people as being in constant states of flux and working to balance the need for connectedness and stability with the desire for growth. Problem-solution therapies seem oriented to preservational defense use, whereas self-revolution therapies address growth motives.

Common to both Freudian and contemporary theories of defense is the assumption that therapy involves the recognition of a client's resistance to change (Eagle, 1999). Therapy guides a client to experiment with new patterns of thought and behavior in attempting to balance continuity with change (Cooper, 1998). No single method is definitive for treatment (Hyland, Namnum, & Simpson, 1986; Strieker & Gold, 2005). All contemporary psychotherapies can benefit from (a) incorporating sensitivities to client tendencies of resistance rather than dismissing the resistances, (b) sustaining compassionate conceptualizations about change rather than pursuing change at all costs, (c) basing therapy on relationships rather than more technical or impersonal methods, (d) appreciating that reason alone will be largely ineffective, (e) being prepared to offer coping options since defenses may simply evolve into other defenses, and (f) realizing that identifying a defense only brings it into the light and does not mean that people will necessarily give it up (Frankel & Levitt, 2006; Vaillant, 1995b).

Improvement in interpersonal skills is considered crucial at every level of psychological development. It is often the case that change is first experienced in the therapeutic relationship and then generalizes to relationships outside of the clinical environment (Strieker & Gold, 2005). While the content of change in therapy and personal development is highly individualized, the experience of psychological change is fundamentally the same, whether in or out of a therapeutic context (Mahoney, 1991). Resistance to change comes from fear of the unknown and the threat of loss of self, so the therapeutic goal is not simply to change oneself or improve interrelationships, but to appreciate the phenomenology of change and work through a client's fears of and resistance to change (Eagle, 1999; Loevinger, 1987; Mahoney, 1991).

Given the psychological difficulties involved with change, continued efforts to comprehend defenses and resistance to change are sought. It is helpful to look at the direction for such efforts, as proposed by defense theorists.

Future Considerations

While immense progress has been made over the last century to better understand defenses, mysteries still surround a full comprehension of them and of the phenomenology of psychological change (Cooper, 1989; Mahoney, 1991). The field of psychology looks for defense theory to transcend the confines of its original framework and conceptualize the phenomena from other perspectives while still honoring its historical roots (Hentschel, Smith, et al., 2004). It is therefore surprising that the topic is still conceptualized from the resistance side of change and in terms of defense assessment, as can be seen in the following

recommendations for future efforts as put forth within defense literature; there is no mention of looking at defenses from the nonresistant side of change or of looking at the actual experience of change itself.

Vaillant (1998) stresses the need to demonstrate the reliability of assessing defenses. He offers six suggestions to improve assessment reliability: (a) videotape clinical sessions for multiple rater reliability, (b) study that which is considered odd in personal narratives, (c) tackle family studies to explore genetic links in defense choice, (d) create more sophisticated self-report instruments, (e) convene to reach consensus on nomenclature, and (f) gather competing theories and models for continued refinement.

Hentschel, Draguns, et al. (2004) believe that developing a model that integrates the various current methods of measurement is desirable. They recommend that such a model use simple variables rather than statistically complex weights of regressions and coefficients, and they appreciate the difficulty of this task. Organizing observational data to formulate prospective hypotheses about defenses rather than retrospective explanations would also be worthwhile. They further urge that research study defenses in the context of their occurrence outside of clinical settings to provide new insights.

Vaillant (1971) states that, in order to understand defenses, they need to be clarified in at least four ways: (a) consensually validating defenses with discrete definitions, (b) appreciating the contextual influences in the manifestation of defenses, (c) clarifying the clinical diagnostic and prognostic implications of defense choice, and (d) identifying the critical points in overall human

development when given defenses become evident or abandoned. Based on the literature since 1971, progress has been made on appreciating the contextual influences of defense use. Also, Cramer (e.g., 2006) has done significant work on three chosen defenses to study the critical points in youth development when defenses arise or disappear. Vaillant studies adults, but his research focuses on maturity of defenses and not on the critical points at which defenses arise or are abandoned. Vaillant's other two points still need progress: consensual validation and definition of defenses, and clarifying diagnostic and prognostic implications of defense choice.

The focus of Cramer's (2005, 2006) future work is on the relationships between IQ and gender with defenses. She believes that longitudinal studies are necessary to further understand (a) the relationships between defenses and changes in defenses over time, (b) the potential changes in the relationship between defense use and pathology over time, and (c) the relationship between defenses and personality changes over time.

Perry and Kardos (1995) see worth in studying the relationship between coping and physical illness. They also believe that it would be valuable to further develop measures of defenses in order to better evaluate the progression of therapeutic interventions. Whether they promote the development of entirely new measures, refinements in given measures, or blends of existing measures is not clear. What is clear is the common expression to improve measures of defenses.

Draguns (2004) recommends finding more correlations between personality traits and defense use, and making inroads into psychophysiological

recording as a means of studying defenses. Draguns also suggests that future efforts build the capacity to move from theory and explanation to prediction. He stresses the need to build bridges between current measurement tools. He explains that the multiplicity of current assessment instruments risks fragmented findings; new measures are not needed, just connectedness between those that currently exist. Draguns suggests a macro study of the sequence of defense operations. He points out that the manifestations of defenses have been the traditional focus of research and that more research is needed to study defenses from the imposition of threat through anxiety and defense to the aftermath of defense use.

Vaillant (2003) promotes the need to further understand defenses. He explains that, since 1970, the field of psychology has been attempting research to conceptualize mental health. Vaillant points to the findings and propositions from the burgeoning field of positive psychology—such as the work done by Seligman (2002)—to explain that recently emerged theoretical underpinnings conceptualize mental health as (a) above normal, (b) positive and actualizing, (c) mature, (d) emotionally intelligent, (e) the subjective experience of happiness, and (f) a state of mental resilience.

Given the framework for mental health, Vaillant (1995b, 2000, 2003) advocates the study of the role of defenses therein. He stresses that average is not the same as healthy and that the acceptance of mental health as an antonym of mental illness underestimates human potential. The field of positive psychology expressly states that mental health is not the absence of mental illness and that well-being and happiness are based on referents that do not necessarily overlap

with those of mental illness (Linley & Joseph, 2004; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2002).

Vaillant (1995b, 1998) presses for a poetic science that can better study defenses and mental health in general, and states that psychology needs to understand how to better facilitate the shift away from less adaptive defenses. Nonetheless, the research recommendations continue to look at defenses and resistance, rather than looking at the nature of the shift itself or the motivators that could provide for such shifts. Mahoney (1991) believes that those shifts and changes can be highly individualized, but that the essential experience of psychological change is fundamentally the same for everyone, whether in or out of a therapeutic context. Mahoney points out that modern appreciation for phenomenology—which could be considered a poetic science—provides for studying the specifics of change as well as the general experience of change, and this methodology can richly inform the field of psychology.

Advances in research and theory have been made, but research findings are not easily comparable due to variances in research paradigms; in addition, as Cooper (1989) points out, the diversification of defense theories may hinder rather than help in understanding defenses. The issues surrounding ego defense discussions and research point less to deficiencies in theories than to the need to reconcile and integrate theories through research and clinical observations (Cooper, 1989). Furthermore, contemporary theories strain to fully frame defenses (Conte & Plutchik, 1995). Studying defenses from the resistance side of psychological well-being does not conceptualize defenses or the phenomenon of

change from the transcended perspective that is sought by the field of psychology; it misses that which can be learned about defenses by looking at them from the nonresistant side of mental health. Ironically, hidden within defense literature are a few topics with which to reconceptualize defenses, discussed in the next section.

Uncommon Topics

This section addresses three topics that are underdeveloped yet identifiable in the literature: positive emotions, culture, and transformation. These topics can be easily overlooked, but focused consideration of them provides insights into defense function and potential areas for defense theory development, as well as a broader backdrop against which to understand psychological surrender.

Positive Emotions

There are similarities between some of the terminology in ego defense literature and that found in literature on identity, positive emotions, and positive psychology. These similarities provide an opportunity to distinguish the terms, and these distinctions raise intriguing questions that extend the current understanding of ego defenses. Because the similarities are not exact, it is helpful to consider three separate lines of discussion—ego defenses, identity and positive emotions, and positive psychology—and how they occasionally merge.

Within ego defense literature, Plutchik's (1995, 1998) theory emphasizes the role of emotions in defense function. The emotion of surprise is one of Plutchik's eight basic emotions. According to Plutchik, surprise results from the inferred cognition of "what is it" when one encounters the unexpected. Plutchik

explains that surprise is disorienting and prompts one to behaviorally stop in the presence of the unexpected.

Surprise is a term used by Reik (1933, 1948, 1956), an early Freudian psychotherapist. Reik's works and his 1936 book *Surprise and the Psychoanalyst* are reviewed by Arnold (2007). Reik used the term *surprise* to describe the chaotic feeling that emerges in therapy as one tries to defend against the awareness of repressed knowledge. Reik calls this repressed knowledge the *unknown self*. Defense literature explains that one fears and resists the unknown, and according to Reik, the unknown that is feared is actually one's own self; one's unknown self becomes revealed and is quickly shunned due to unfamiliarity, but surprise indicates that the unknown self is not unknown but rather the forgotten made anew. Where Plutchik (1995, 1998) says that surprise causes one to stop, Reik asserts that one simply experiences surprise, almost as a form of awe, as the forgotten is made anew.

Dictionaries reflect a relationship between surprise, awe, and wonder, with one term being defined through the others (e.g., wonder defined as "that which arouses awe, astonishment, surprise, or admiration," Morris, 1975, p. 1472). Similarly, Reik's use of surprise and awe is not dissimilar to Vaillant's use of wonder in relation to mature defenses. According to Vaillant (1995b), mature defenses evolve from the brain's capacity to assimilate experience, which includes the capacity for wonder.

Is wonder the same or similar to the cognition of "what is it"? Is there a qualitative difference between immature inquiries of "what is it" and mature

wonder? Does surprise cause one to psychologically stop with the use of immature defenses but allows for wonder and awe with the use of mature defenses? What happens to the childlike wonder of youth in the process of psychological development? Is childlike wonder lost in the initial stages of psychological development while maturation renews the capacity for wonder?

Vaillant (1995b) believes that wonder is transformative, and that it develops and is facilitated in environments that provide for imagination and dreams. He calls these environments *sacred places*, which allow for play and the integration of ideas and emotions. Vaillant (2007) asserts that play provides a magical relationship to experience that permits the maintenance of self-esteem while shedding self-importance. The implication is that play and wonder provide a creative openness to experience. Vaillant (1995b) explains that sacred places allow for paradox to be sustained and wonderment to prevail. Such places can also link emotions with reason; the irrational and the rational can coexist. His ideas describe the therapeutic context: a sacred place where trust holds the ego, thus allowing for safe play rather than danger. Wonderment appears to honor the desire to inquire and works through or transcends any resistance to inquiry, providing for play.

Vaillant's (1995b, 2007) view of wonder and Reik's (1933, 1948, 1956, all as cited in Arnold, 2007) view of surprise have more positive tones than Plutchik's (1995) view of surprise. Plutchik presents surprise, and even such presumably positive emotions as joy, framed with very practical functions and derivative defenses all in service of long-term chances for survival. Plutchik's

view of emotions is very reasoned and rational; it does not provide for the irrational that can be held in the sacred place of wonderment, nor does his model highlight the more positive aspects of emotions.

The foregoing discussion flows from ego defense literature; the next line of discussion flows from literature associated with self, identity, and positive emotions. Pyszczynski et al. (2003) address defenses in terms of freedom versus fear and the expansion of the self. They explain that growing evidence shows that positive and negative emotions are separate dimensions of human experience, rather than opposing ends of an affective spectrum. They further explain that positive and negative emotions are driven by distinct motivational systems with unique evolutionary pressures. On the one side are emotions that serve the preservation of the self and on the other side are those that serve the desires for personal growth. For instance, interest is an emotion found to promote exploration by engaging new information and novel experiences and thus stimulating personal growth. Pyszczynski et al. submit that positive emotions stimulate growth. In comparison, Plutchik's (1995) model is based purely on survival, where even such positive emotions as joy are associated with preservation and procreation, not personal growth.

Fredrickson (1998) reports that positive emotions have not been a focus in psychological research, consequently the models that explain emotions are prototypically oriented toward negative emotions and do not necessarily apply to positive emotions. Where negative emotions narrow a person's momentary thought-action repertoire, positive emotions broaden it and provide for a wider

range of stimulus responses. In addition to the broadening nature of positive emotions, selected emotions have specific benefits. Fredrickson points to the four emotions of joy, interest, contentment, and love. Joy can have the effect of building a person's physical, intellectual, and social skills. Interest builds a person's base of knowledge that becomes a durable resource. Contentment effects the urge to savor events and creates a new sense of self and revised worldviews. Love not only builds and strengthens social bonds but also helps those bonds serve for attachment and social supports. Importantly, positive emotions build resources that are more durable than the transient emotional states that lead to their acquisition. Positive emotions are more than preservational; they are developmental.

Fredrickson's (1998) perspective suggests that positive emotions provide more breadth before one responds. It is not clear whether that is a breadth of behavioral responses, a breadth in time—a pause—before one responds, or both. In that breadth, especially if there is a pause, could be the wonderment of which Vaillant (1995b) speaks, the surprise of which Reik (1933, 1948, 1956, all as cited in Arnold, 2007) spoke, and potentially even the experience of change that Mahoney (1991) notes as an area worth further research. Fredrickson stresses that positive emotions are undertheorized, understudied, and underappreciated. She also posits that tapping positive emotions can promote individual and collective well-being.

The third line of discussion comes from the literature from positive psychology. The field of positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004;

Seligman, 2002) lists wonder in relationship with the character strength of appreciation of beauty, which is under the virtue of transcendence. Peterson and Seligman define *transcendence* as the connection to something larger than oneself. Where Vaillant presents wonder as a mature mental capacity, positive psychology presents wonder in relationship to transcendence. Are mature ego defenses born of character strengths or are they the same as character strengths? Can a mature ego have responses that move one psychologically beyond the ego itself?

Positive psychology also addresses openness to experience and interest. Where Vaillant (2007) depicts wonder and play as creative openness to experience that allows for self-esteem without self-importance, and Fredrickson (1998) presents interest as a positive emotion that is developmental and builds one's durable base of knowledge, positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2002) lists openness to experience and interest in relation to the character strength of curiosity, which is listed under the virtue of wisdom. Being curious and open to experience is then a response born of wisdom. Does wisdom only result from maturation? Is there wisdom in youth that gets lost or overridden in the process of psychological development and then becomes refined and renewed with maturation?

The terms *surprise*, *wonder*, *interest*, and *curiosity* have significant overlap. Are positive emotions the same as character strengths? Are mature defenses the same as character strengths? It is difficult to conclude distinctions between positive emotions and character strengths based on Fredrickson's (1998)

and Seligman's (2002) work. Seligman offers some help, but his comments about emotions are more supportive of his own work and based on the research of others. Seligman describes emotions as having four components: feeling (such as aversion versus attraction), sensation, thinking, and action. He explains that a stimulus effects a feeling, which intrudes on consciousness as a sensory alarm, instigating thinking to discern the necessary action. This is similar to S. Kreitler and H. Kreitler's (2004) four-stage sequence of the motivational determinants of defenses: what is it, what does it mean to me, what will I do, and how will I do it. Classic defense theory presents anxiety as the sensory alarm that indicates psychological conflict. Anxiety does not necessitate defensive responses; it only indicates a need to address rising psychological tension. Are surprise, wonder, interest, or curiosity alternative responses to the unknowns that challenge one's certainties, rather than responding with defenses?

Seligman (2002) indicates that negative emotions alarm one to a win-lose situation, which triggers aversive actions; this similarly describes defense processes. Alternatively, positive emotions alert one to a win-win opportunity for growth and development. Positive feelings activate expansive, tolerant, and creative mindsets that maximize social, intellectual, and physical benefits. Seligman explains that character strengths are positive, enduring moral dispositions. Positive psychology indicates that character strengths can be learned. Character strengths involve the choice to use them, to build them up, or even to acquire them in the first place. The extension of thought is that one's choice of defenses can be dispositionally modified via specialized learning, not just via

biological maturation, ego development, or simply via therapy. Hence, given the same stimuli, attending to negative emotions effects defensive, preservational responses, while attending to or generating positive emotions effects responses that move toward growth and positive moral dispositions. One can learn to interpret stimuli with positive regard and build character. Are surprise, wonder, interest, or curiosity the virtuous regard of stimuli that effect positive emotions and movement toward growth?

What causes one to have a positive response to stimuli versus a negative response? Some psychotherapies suggest that strength of ego is necessary to form more positive responses to certain stimuli and that weaker egos are more prone to negative responses. Developmental theories of ego defenses indicate that ego development progressively inclines one toward more mature, flexible responses to stimuli. Based on the literature from the field of positive psychology, are weak or immature egos lacking strengths of character?

Hentschel, Smith, et al. (2004) state that the field of psychology looks for defense theory to transcend its framework and conceptualize the phenomena from other perspectives. Fredrickson (1998) claims that positive emotions are understudied. The field of positive psychology is in it infancy—having started in the late 1990s (Seligman, 2002)—and offers new content to evaluate defense theories. This discussion about positive emotions illuminates common ground between these three fields, revealing ample room for cross-conversation and discussion with regard to defenses, resistance to change, and psychological development.

Culture

Cultural psychology is a developing field, evidenced by exponential growth of the topic in psychological literature in the last fifty years, but culture is a less prevalent topic in ego defense literature. Defense literature addresses social influences on defense function, but culture is only mentioned periodically in defense literature. Because the topic of culture is gaining presence in psychological literature, an opportunity exists to focus on the thoughts about culture's influence on defense function. Also, given that today's global society is effecting cultural pluralism that has yet to be addressed by defense literature, the discussion herein is more narrowly focused on Western culture, and at times narrows down to U.S. culture specifically.

Culture and society are tightly interwoven. Culture is the totality of beliefs, thoughts, and behavior patterns that characterize a population, and society is the structure and working design through which culture is transmitted (Morris, 1975). Invisible cultural beliefs underlie the manifestation of those beliefs that can be found in social norms and institutions. As cultural beliefs trickle into social norms, and social norms affect the psychological structures of individuals, cultural beliefs slip invisibly into the belief systems and worldviews of cultural members.

It is the sociocultural context in which defenses are formed and applied, since adaptation is inherently social, yet information is lacking with regard to the interplay between cultural variations and defenses (Draguns, 2004). Cramer (2006) explains that Western culture values rationality and that understanding

defenses can help to find rationality in otherwise irrational behavior, but she does not expand on how a cultural emphasis on rationality affects defense function.

Psychoanalytically derived theories all suffer, to some degree, from too much focus on internal psychological systems and not enough on the systems of which one is a part (Kegan, 1982). Object relations theory emphasizes that interpersonal relationships are stronger drives than the drives of the id, so interpersonal needs and accommodating sociocultural norms strongly influence defense function. Social psychology, cognitive psychology, and personality psychology look more closely at social influences on psychological make-up and behavior, with little specific focus on cultural influences.

Current defense theories highlight how people adapt and attempt to thrive in social settings, but they do not surface an understanding of how cultural values affect defense function. Norem (1998) explains that culture influences the image, structure, and concepts of self that one tries to attain and sustain with defenses. While defense literature states that defenses defend one's self—one's beliefs—Norem stresses the need for defense theory to be more precise about what is actually being defended and why. Norem promotes the worth in understanding the extent to which different cultures encourage or require more or less defense of self structures and the extent to which there might be universal defenses.

S. Kreitler and H. Kreitler (2004) question the relationship between the need for defenses and cultural taboos. They wonder if defenses are still necessary when a large portion of cultural taboos become accepted as broken. Such a consideration assumes that broken taboos are not replaced by new ones. They

note that defense theories—especially cognitively-based theories—say that one defends one's beliefs; in lieu of cultural taboos, one will still have personal beliefs to defend.

Vaillant (1995b, 2003) states that mental health is related to culture and place in time, and that mental health is more a value judgment than a pure science. He also adds that maturation involves the continued internalization of one's environment. He explains that this is more than pure cognition and necessarily includes cultural influences and the contexts of experiences. Draguns (2004) adds that culture, rather than maturity, will influence defense style.

Reid (1999) looks at the role of culture in the context of the therapeutic relationship. He points out that unconscious cultural values influence how a client and a therapist engage the therapeutic process. He notes that cultural impact can be compounded if the client and the therapist function from different cultural viewpoints. Reid distinguishes between consciously learned values and unconsciously embedded cultural values that get conveyed and owned by people. He does not suggest that becoming culturally homogenous is the answer, but that heightened awareness about cultural influences in the therapeutic process is recommended. Reid stresses that no therapy is culturally neutral.

Reid (1999) zeros in on U.S. culture and offers a grid that displays U.S. values having to do with time, activities, relationships, and human nature. On this grid, Americans are shown as preferring activities geared toward doing things rather than becoming—meant in its philosophical sense—and human nature is viewed as dominant rather than harmonious. Reid also points out that each culture

has a preferred choice of a value orientation and that, in the United States, the normative value orientation is that of a white, urban, middle class male. One might argue against Reid's view, but his specific description presents a U.S. cultural orientation that might affect defense function.

Reid (1999) further points out that, while the dominant U.S. value for the male gender is individuality, the dominant value for the female gender is of a collateral nature, meaning that women are the repositories of concern for nuclear and extended families. Vaillant (1995a) states that gender is independent of defense maturation, but Cramer (2006) reveals that gender does influence defense choices and the implications of their use. Cramer further explains that gender identity is a greater determinant of defense use than biological gender. Given the influence of gender on defenses, the implication is that U.S. cultural values about gender influence defense function.

Smith and Hentschel (2004) dissect the defense process into micro pieces and suggest that identifying with an idealized image is part of defense selection. The idealized image, based on Reid's (1999) work, is the image of the white, urban, middle class male, but Smith and Hentschel call the idealized image a hero. They do not provide a definition of the term *hero*, but its unusual presence in the literature stands out, and its specialized use implies a connotative understanding. Further discussion surrounding the term and what it means culturally could offer insights into defense function. Since Vaillant (1995b) states that mature defenses, such as humor and altruism, are to be admired, one could infer that these are heroic measures, but further discussion is warranted.

The discussion about culture and defenses largely takes place in the context of maintaining psychological stasis as opposed to psychological growth. Pyszczynski et al. (2003) explain that humans have two basic organismic strivings—one for preservation and one for expansion—and behavior is based on the dominant function. Organismic needs for growth are thwarted by rigid defensive postures (Fredrickson, 1998; Pyszczynski et al., 2003; Vaillant, 1995b, 2007), and growth is beneficial for psychological well-being, evidenced in part by the correlation between mature defense use and measures of successful adult outcomes (Vaillant, 1995b). Given that psychological growth is worthwhile and that culture likely influences defense function, culture may also influence the dominance of strivings for preservation versus growth.

Researchers and theorists tend to focus on preservation or expansion and rarely on the interplay of the two (Pyszczynski et al., 2003). For example, terror management theory (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991) views the self as a defensive construction, motivated by preservation. The theory suggests that culture provides the context for preservational meaning; the degree to which one feels tied to one's culture provides for self-esteem, and higher self-esteem lowers the propensity for defensive responses. Meeting cultural standards provides a form of psychological security.

Pyszczynski et al. (2003) state that growing evidence shows that motives for preservation and expansion are respectively fueled by negative and positive emotions, and negative and positive emotions are distinct motivational systems with unique evolutionary pressures. Pyszczynski et al. explain that preservational

motives have a mandatory character, whereas expansive motives are more elective in nature; where the absence of positive affect is boring, the presence of negative affect is intolerable. They state that one is unable to be open to the new information or experiences that are necessary for growth if one does not sense the approval of others.

According to Pyszczynski et al. (2003), the factors that inhibit expansive efforts—that press upon people's contexts of safety—are anxiety, the desire to belong and meet cultural standards, and cultural complexity and change. They explain that cultural complexity makes it difficult to find meaning and that the globalization of cultures magnifies the inability to feel securely situated; this inclines one toward motives of preservation, not expansion. They state that growth only occurs when sufficient security is provided by both the cultural context and the strength in one's worldview to allow the risk of examining cherished beliefs and integrating new information; or, growth and change occur when so little security is sensed in one's worldview that alternative conceptions simply develop with little or no internal integration of new information. When anxiety is adequately managed, new information can be integrated in a self-determined manner, but integrative processing is minimal when one is unable to fully manage one's existential anxiety—anxiety that can be born from lack of feeling culturally situated. Self-determined growth becomes more self-determined over time, but it only occurs when core needs are met first (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Pyszczynski et al. (2003) maintain that cultural frameworks that are broad and abstract support the valuing of intrinsic aspects of self, but such breadth and

abstraction offer less information about how to meet cultural standards. Cultural breadth creates a realm of ambiguity that is susceptible to self-deception and defense. Growth is further restricted if self-expansive pursuits lead to new defensive concerns that can undermine growth. In the end, when basic needs are adequately satisfied, people can pursue desires for growth, but clarification is still necessary to understand how culture may influence individual efforts to pursue growth.

Defense literature states that the need to connect with and be accepted by others is stronger than the need for self-expansion, and that the desire to avoid negative affect is stronger than the desire to pursue positive affect. Yet, growth is an intrinsic motive that can be pursued in contexts that feel safe. While human propensities for preservation and expansion are adaptive and exist simultaneously, behavior is based on the dominant function (Pyszczynski et al., 2003). Psychological development is influenced by one's determination and the dominance of one's preservation versus expansive motives. Since culture influences the determinants of normative stasis and social norms, it may also influence the likelihood that cultural members preserve stasis or pursue growth.

Transformation

When the transformative capacity of defenses is discussed in the literature, it is more in reference to transforming the elements of an experience rather than actually transforming a person. Siegal (1969) posits that the mental processes of defenses produce movements, changes, and transformations in the contents of mental life, such as one's thoughts, feelings, impulses, perceptions, beliefs, and

memories. Where Siegal speaks about the transformative capacity of the processes of defenses, Vaillant (1992e, 1995b, 2000) appears to speak more about the outcomes of defenses. Vaillant claims that mature defenses have transformational and alchemical qualities in their ability to transmute difficult situations into tolerable ones and transmute psychological pain into a restored self. Unlike immature or less adaptive defenses, mature defenses synthesize rather than deny conflicting information and soften rather than distort information. He also states that immature and maladaptive defenses can evolve into mature defenses and character virtues, and that this process is an alchemical transition, but he does not elaborate on the nature of this process.

According to Vaillant (2000), mature defenses that are deployed in conflictual or charged situations take on transformative capacities, whereas mature defenses deployed in nonconflictual situations are more adaptive in nature. He explains that mature defenses can seem to be conscious and voluntary in nonconflictual situations, but that they are involuntary. The implication is that the use of mature defenses in charged situations is voluntary. An example of this is when a person counts to 10 before reacting to triggering moments. It remains that Vaillant does not address whether mature defenses actually transform an individual, simply transform the elements of a situation into tolerable form, or, as Costa et al. (1991) pose, only reflect psychological adjustment and not necessarily psychological development. Creatively softening and synthesizing information into tolerable form is not transformation.

Transformation is the reformation of one's psychological meaning-making structures; it is a change in how one knows what one knows (Kegan, 1982, 2000; Mezirow, 2000). Transformation is an epistemological change. Such change risks changing everything that one knows, since reformed structures call all content into question (Daloz, 2000). This is an enormous challenge that can be exhilarating or traumatic and overwhelming (Daloz, 2000). Defense literature explains that it is often the latter; people resist the very change that they seek because examining habits of mind risks the need to change, and change involves unknowns and uncertainties, and defenses guard against this.

Transformative learning is the process by which one comes to examine one's habits of mind (Kegan, 2000; Mezirow, 2000). Defense literature explains that this process tends to occur in therapy, and transformative learning theory explains this process as a form of adult education, but Kegan (2000) insists that transformation is not the province of adulthood. Transformative learning theory is aimed at adults based on the assumption that cumulative lifelong experiences assist in the transformative process and that age-related brain development is necessary to provide for self-reflection and self-examination of beliefs, but change in how one knows what one knows is part of psychological development across all age ranges (Kegan, 1982, 2000; Mezirow, 2000). Transformation is the successive emergence of reformed mental structures, progressively evolving one's scope of consciousness, and this is not an age-dependent phenomenon (Kegan, 1982,2000).

Transformative learning theory arises from the field of education, not psychology, but it compliments ego defense theory. Transformative learning theory teaches that transformation occurs when one comes to know things more inclusively via critical assessment of one's beliefs. What needs to transform is one's tendency for automatic responses of judgment and certainty (Gozawa, 2005); automating responses converts mental processes into preprogrammed operations. This automation results from patterns of defense that become rigid programs of beliefs running deep in the psyche and going unexamined (Benjamin, 1995; Cramer, 2006, 2007; Eagle, 1999; Horowitz & Stinson, 1995; Plutchik, 1995,1998,2000).

Transformative learning theory delineates 10 phases to the transformational process (Mezirow, 2000):

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame
3. A critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective (p. 22)

The first phase—a disorienting dilemma—initiates the process. The disorienting dilemma equates to the psychological conflict and anxiety discussed in ego defense theories. Defenses halt the transformative process as one resists moving into phases two and three: the self-examination of personal feelings,

beliefs, and assumptions. According to Pyszczynski et al. (2003), growth is an elective psychological option that is often neglected whereas defense is psychologically mandatory in nature. Most people are not inclined to pursue self-examination due to the fears of the unknowns and uncertainties involved with potential change (Benjamin, 1995; Cramer, 2006; Hawkins, 2002; Horowitz & Stinson, 1995; Pyszczynski et al., 2003). Solomon (1998) stresses that, for any change to occur, a sacrifice of defenses must take place to allow entry of new information into interiorized psychological space. This sacrifice occurs at the very core of the self and arouses the very anxieties that trigger defenses. Solomon affirms that transformation of the self is central to any analytic endeavor, and as much as one seeks to change and grow, defenses prevent it, even if the sustained state is one of turmoil. As a result, transformation tends to be a reluctant consequence of crisis and assisted by therapy rather than a proactive, voluntary choice outside of therapeutic environments.

Kegan (1982) explains that developmental processes tend to involve crisis, but not necessarily in the form of insurmountable problems—rather, as problems that require new ways of thinking and new ways of being involved in the world. He sees crisis as the transformation of one's meanings and not the transformation of circumstantial content. Pyszczynski et al. (2003) state that transformation may result from crisis and as a last resort when familiar psychological options no longer serve preservation, but if the dominant psychological function is one of expansion rather than defensive preservation, then a proactive shift in the dynamics between self and other can occur and provide for transformation.

Transformation need not be via crisis or epochal in nature; it can be incremental (Mezirow, 2000) and pursued deliberately.

Transformation is not about isolated events of magnitude that are viewed as conversion experiences. Transformation can look epochal, but it is the accumulation of incremental changes that culminates in the transformation of the psychological structures that make meaning of experiences (Daloz, 2000; Kegan, 2000; Mezirow, 2000). While single events can catalyze and dramatize transformation, it is generally prepared for over time, and the idea of profound change occurring out of the blue contradicts what is known about human development (Daloz, 2000). Since resistance to change is great, one tends to need repeated exposures to a given crisis or challenge to effect personal change (Kegan, 1982). Kegan adds that defenses can postpone change, but postponement can help to sustain psychological integrity while one prepares to change. Kegan's viewpoint is a type of blend of Vaillant's (1992e, 1995b, 2000) and Siegal's (1969), and describes how defenses provide the outcome of buying time by transmuting conflict into tolerable limits, during which psychological structures and related processes can change.

Being open to relating to others and circumstances is where growth and transformation of self occur, but being open is contrary to the defensive posture that seeks complete control (Solomon, 1998). Solomon states that, once the resources to defend the self are exhausted, it becomes a matter of urgency to seek out more resources and these are found in experiences of mutual relatedness with others. The irony is that conflict, anxiety, and defenses are triggered by

experiences with others and yet, it is others to whom one turns for psychological replenishment.

Pyszczynski et al. (2003) explain that motives for psychological expansion are transformational and fuel the pursuit of growth by optimally engaging new information and new experiences, but such pursuits can only take place when one senses the approval of others. Connection with others has a mysterious balance between attraction and repulsion that is addressed in very dualistic, either/or terms. Defense theories tend to amplify this dualistic focus. This is easy to do, given that defenses sustain the divided nature of the desire to keep the familiar and the desire to inquire of the unknown (Solomon, 1998). Pyszczynski et al. recommend that further understanding the oppositional drives of preservation and expansion may hold keys to further understand human development overall.

Conflict, anxiety, and disorienting dilemmas present opportunities for growth and transformation, not guarantees of it. Given that the outcomes of the processes of change cannot be known and thereby reinforce defenses (Solomon, 1998), Pyszczynski et al. (2003) recommend integrative activities to provide a bridge between preservational and expansive behaviors. Integrative activities emphasize the process of activity rather than the pursuit of outcomes, and generate the motivation for growth. Whether Siegal's (1969) focus on the processes of defenses aligns with the processes involved with integrative activities is open for debate, but the shared emphasis on processes (versus content and outcomes) stresses the role of mental processes in transformation. Given this similarity, some defense literature states the same claims as transformative

learning theory: that transformation is a change in *how* one knows what one knows, that it occurs by the process of transforming one's mental processes, and that this process can be learned, even if defenses inhibit the process.

Pyszczynski et al. (2003) describe the nature of integrative activities as engaging a person at a level that is just beyond his or her current knowledge or capacity without being overwhelming. This parallels the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1997) and his research on the phenomenon of flow. Csikszentmihalyi states that flow is a psychological state associated with a task but has little to do with the outcome of the task; it has to do with total psychic engagement with an activity with no awareness of space or time. Since the degree of overwhelm influences defense function, and since the degree of overwhelm influences the bridging capacity of integrative activities, one can state that the magnitude of perceived overwhelm influences the likelihood that one functions in preservational modes versus expansive modes.

Transformation occurs in the openness of the unknown where new information or new ways of knowing can be engaged. The shadowy threshold of defenses, across which one moves in the process of personal development and transformation, can be described as alchemical. The term *alchemy* has a magical connotation that captures the nature of transformation. To discuss ego defenses purely in terms of preservation versus expansion or in terms of either/or responses to conflict can create an endless loop of comparisons. The alchemy of change cannot be fully understood or effectively discussed in the confines of dualistic perceptions of human function. To fully understand the alchemy and potentially

transformative capacities of ego defenses, ego defense theories will need to examine the beliefs and assumptions that currently contain them.

Discussion

The extensive review of ego defense literature provides multiple angles from which to view the topic and the necessary scope with which to grasp an overall understanding of the nature of defenses. This breadth is essential to the goals of this research in providing a comparative backdrop against which to understand psychological surrender and posit a relationship between surrender and defenses.

The historical review reveals the rollout of thoughts and foci on defenses over time. The discussion about empirical issues and theoretical controversies highlights the current challenges in studying or consensually understanding defenses. The look at treatments shows how powerfully theory informs therapists, how intimately the concept of defenses is tied to therapeutic efforts, and how worthwhile it is to further understand defenses. The suggestions for future efforts by defense theorists reveal the one-sided approach for further theory development and research; the framework may be broader, but the conceptualization of defenses remains the same. Elaborating on the uncommon topics identified in defense theories reveals new considerations for theory development and emphasizes links between fields of psychology; this emphasized focus can help to reconceptualize defenses.

The development of ego defense theory and research can be compared to a tree. The seed and base trunk of thought starts with Freud's classical ideas about

the ego acting in service of psychological protection and managing intrapsychic conflict. Then, theories branch off rather promptly in several directions: Anna Freud's ego psychology, Klein's object relations theory, and Hartmann's focus on the adaptational role that defenses play in psychological well-being. Kernberg extended the trunk theory by creatively blending the work of his predecessors. Kernberg also developed a branch of thought around personality disorders, while Kohut grew theory around defenses and self-psychology. Thereafter, contemporary developmental theories become the dominant trunk of thought, while specialized theories branch off in multiple directions, such as social models of defenses, information-feedback theory, or control process theory. The developmental theories broaden the framework of traditional theory and frame defenses in terms of one's experience or inexperience with psychological conflict and the maturity with which one responds to anxiety. Hindsight shows a complexity of thought that increasingly grew around a seed theory.

As a construct, defenses have stood the test of time, rooted in over a hundred years of robust discussion and research on the topic. The multiple theories create a canopy of thoughts that also create areas of controversy. At the same time, and importantly, theorists generally agree on several grounding concepts about defenses: (a) defenses are a crucial part of healthy psychological function, psychological development, and interpersonal connectedness; (b) anxiety is recognized as the indicator emotion that psychological distress is mounting; (c) anxiety arises when one's beliefs are uncomfortably challenged; (d) defenses are the ego's response to ease anxiety by protecting one's beliefs and

resisting the unknowns that challenge those beliefs; (e) defenses are hub functions of the ego that can be misused and become problematic; and (f) defenses tend to be understood as unconscious functions, even though strong discussion surrounds the belief that they can function more consciously with maturity. The developmental defense theories add the concepts that (a) defenses have a developmental pattern of emergence, predominance, and decline in youth; (b) development in adulthood is less certain or predictable, and is not necessarily a consequence of aging; and (c) defense functions grow in complexity as one progressively matures. The construct of defenses thrives and continues to intrigue and inspire researchers to find new ways to further understand human resistance to change, and to assist people in the processes of psychological development and well-being.

While advancements in theories and research findings have continuously provided more information about defenses, no one theory fully represents a consensual understanding of the overall nature of defenses. Several theorists express the need to establish more links between existing theories before creating new ones. Given that a consolidated meta theory of the nature of defenses does not currently exist, it is worthwhile to create one, and the extent of the defense literature review herein provides for that possibility. Such a consolidation not only helps to integrate existing theories, but also provides a crisp backdrop against which to view psychological surrender, which is a primary goal of this research.

Consolidating Ego Defense Theory

Based on keen analysis of the literature, ego defenses can interpretively be described as developmental, contextual, evolutionary, creative, relational, and communicative. Each of these descriptors is discussed more fully in this section. This consolidated description supplies a meta framework within which to view defenses, captures the key essences of thought in defense theories, integrates extensions of thought, and offers clarity in broadly conceptualizing the overall nature of defenses.

Describing defenses as developmental refers to the development of one's psychological structures and content over the course of one's lifetime. The developmental factors that influence perceptions and defense choice are generally agreed to include chronological age, age-related experiences, biology, and early childhood care, as well as lifetime interpersonal experiences, innate or developed personality predispositions, ego development, the use of mental capacities (not just the existence of capacities), socialization, and acculturation.

The series of spectra shown in Table 2 depict the developmental nature of defenses. Several key points frame this depiction. First, the spectra range from immature to mature defenses, respecting that psychotic defenses may fall outside of this continuum. Second, this perspective looks at the macro development of defenses and respects that, on a micro level, stages of development have their own smaller spans, which may overlap with adjacent spans. Third, some of the descriptors may appear to duplicate others, yet there are nuances between the descriptors that add subtle and deeper understanding about the nature of defenses.

Table 2

Comparative Descriptors of the Developmental Nature of Defenses

| Immature defenses | Mature defenses |
|---|--|
| Primitive..... | Evolved |
| Core, innate pool of responses..... | Enlarged pool of responsive choices |
| Drive motivated..... | Wisdom motivated |
| Inexperienced..... | Experienced |
| Impulsive..... | Calculated |
| Reactive..... | Proactive |
| Raw emotions..... | Managed emotions |
| Anxious..... | Composed |
| Negative affective state..... | Positive affective state |
| Suspicious interpretation of stimuli..... | Open interpretation of stimuli |
| Processes are unconscious..... | Processes are somewhat opaque |
| Content is unconscious..... | Content is more conscious |
| Simple processes and content..... | Complex processes and content |
| Victim mentality; externalized blame..... | Participant; internalized responsibility |
| Change internal reality..... | Change external reality |
| Battleground imagery..... | Conflict free zone imagery |
| Deny conflict..... | Synthesize conflict |
| Disengage from problems..... | Engage with problems |
| Distort reality..... | Minimal distortion of reality |
| Tolerate..... | Adapt |
| Disapproved of by others..... | Admired by others |
| Repellent to others..... | Inviting to others |
| Gripping in nature..... | Relaxed in nature |
| Rigid mindset..... | Supple mindset |
| Broad, generalized response..... | Specific, situational application |
| Shallow, narrow context..... | Deeper, broader context |
| Past/future referents..... | Present moment referent |
| Defense..... | Defense, coping, or other ego functions |

Note. Similar descriptors are clustered together. Author's table.

Similar descriptors are clustered together to enhance the comparison. Fourth, a person does not fall on one spot on one spectrum and on another spot on another spectrum; the multiple spectra equate to a drop-down menu that collectively describe the nature of immature defenses as compared to mature defenses. Generally, a person will function at one point on the overall continuum between immaturity and maturity, and development is considered a forward progress along the continuum. Finally, it is assumed that this macro generalization will contradict some aspects of some defense theories. Given the lack of theory consensus, it is unlikely that one macro view can successfully integrate all points of controversy. Consequently, another benefit of this macro view is an alternative perspective from which theorists can view their own theories.

The comparative descriptors used in Table 2 reveal the qualitative change in defense character as one matures. Generally speaking, immature defenses are more primal, reactive, and antagonistic in nature. Alternatively, mature defenses are more evolved, managed, and peaceable in nature.

While one is generally located at a given point along the immature-mature continuum, one's general mode of function may shift in the face of severe or unexpectedly disorienting stimuli. In such a case, one will likely shift to a more underdeveloped position of defense function for that particular occasion. Also, one can assume that personally charged issues would result in the same. For instance, if one has a pattern of difficulty in engaging a particular person or gets emotionally charged by that person, one might function maturely in general but be

vulnerable to shifting into less mature or more rigid defensive postures in the polarizing presence of that person.

The spectrum that highlights the move from simple processes and content to complex processes and content descriptively captures the framework in which many of the specialized theories of defenses can be understood. As brain biology grows more intricate with age, and the process of socialization and acculturation loads one's considerations for behavior, defense function becomes ever more complex. These complexities are addressed by defense theories and discussions that have specialized foci, such as microanalysis of perceptions, emotions, personal schemas, moral obligations, and intricate cognitive processes. The spectra of simplicity to complexity represents how development and maturation of defense choice and use is not just about building skills in culling and synthesizing situational information, but also about sourcing, integrating, and synthesizing ever more broad and complex pools of intrapsychic information and experiential knowledge. The differences between the fantasies and realities of childhood magnify into adult mental complexities that juggle reason, nonreason, and sociocultural rules of engagement.

The developmental continuum also helps to frame some generalizations about the historical development of defense theory. Freud focused on the more immature and negative nature of defenses. Klein looked at the slightly more developed nature of defenses and their ability to relate to people rather than simply tolerate people. Hartman looked further up the continuum and focused on the more adaptive points of development. Contemporary theorists focus on

broader ranges of the developmental continuum; for instance, Cramer focuses on youth at the more immature and intermediate range of defenses, and Vaillant focuses on adults and the entire span of immature to mature defenses. It is questionable whether this continuum is broad enough to fully represent defense function or the span of human development. Is there a nature of defenses or psychological function that is before immaturity or beyond maturity?

The contextual nature of defenses simply refers to situational elements. The developmental spectra depict immature versus mature *general* perceptions of contexts (e.g., battleground—conflict-free zone spectra, narrow—broad contexts), which is different than the specifics of contexts. Defenses are contextual because the specifics of any given situation affect defense choice and use across the continuum of immaturity to maturity.

The evolutionary nature of defenses can be summed up by the preservational and expansive functions of defenses. Generalized defense theory views emotions as a late development in the evolution of humankind, with defenses being an emotional response aimed at securing long-term survival via preservation and procreation. The limited literature that discusses the expansive motive of human behavior implies that expansive efforts can be proactive and that one can actually direct evolution: evolution designed by conscious choice rather than pure unconscious consequence.

The creative nature of defenses points to their ability to distort and alter perceived reality via selective filtering and modification of psychological content.

Creativity ascribes new meaning to disorienting interpretations of stimuli and transmutes psychological content into tolerable or even pleasing perceptions.

The relational nature of defenses is a function of conflict. Conflict is born of opposition, and opposition requires more than one force. The relationship between the forces influences defense function. The relational forces are represented by *self* and *other*. *Self* is the collection and structure of one's familiarities and beliefs, and *other* is anything that is outside of that structure or left unrecognized/shunned within that structure. Other can be a person, a situation, an ideology, or even an aspect of one's self that shows up as contrary to a currently held belief about one's self. The relational nature of defenses is a function of the meeting between self and other-than-self. Is there a context that is larger than self-other where defenses change function or may not even be necessary?

Finally, defenses are communicative. They are a language expressed in the form of thoughts, words, and body language. If one extends Freud's ideas about psychic energies and combines that with the literature on emotions and the charge that emotions provide to human function, one can posit that defenses are even communicative at the energetic level. If so, even without the use of words or shifts in body language, a person can still communicate repellent messages at the immature ranges of development, and attractive and inviting messages at more mature ranges.

The adaptive and maladaptive aspects of defenses are not included in the developmental continuum or as descriptors of the nature of defenses. Defenses

can be adaptive and serve a role in human development, but they can also be maladaptive. Generally speaking, consensus states that defenses are maladaptive if they are overused, overly relied upon, rigid, habituated, age-inappropriate, or if the magnitude of application is overly extreme for a situation. The caveat is that appropriateness can change with context. There are too many variables and too much room for interpretation to claim that defenses are necessarily adaptive or maladaptive at certain points along the developmental continuum. Essentially, maladaptive use of defenses and pathology can occur anywhere along the developmental continuum.

In summary, defenses can be conceptually understood as developmental, contextual, evolutionary, creative, relational, and communicative. Adaptation or maladaptation of defenses is individually and situationally unique. The commonly held theoretical concepts about defenses underlie this meta theory, respecting that defenses (a) are necessary for psychological health, psychological growth, and interpersonal connectedness, although they can become problematic; (b) are the ego's responses to the conflict indicator emotion of anxiety, aiming at sustaining or achieving psychological stasis and connection with others; and (c) work to protect one's beliefs in the face of perceived challenges to those beliefs. This understanding of the nature of defenses provides a new lens through which to view and smooth the otherwise rocky landscape of ego defense literature. Importantly, this conceptualization provides the comparative backdrop against which to view the literature on psychological surrender.

Human Potential

Defenses can serve a healthy role in psychological development. The degree to which one develops may be influenced by the range of thought that frames one's concept of psychological development, and what is considered about one's potential. A look at what defense literature has to say about human potential offers more insights on how defenses are comprehended.

Vaillant (2003) and Seligman (2002) state that psychiatry tends to look at mental illness to the near neglect of mental health and that mental health as an antonym for mental illness underestimates human potential. Haan (1977) and Cramer (2006) believe that coping is a proactive, conscious alternative to defense that affords the opportunity to attain one's goals. Interest and wonder feed organismic motives toward growth (Fredrickson, 1998; Pyszczynski et al., 2003; Vaillant, 1995b, 2007), and wonder is a strength in connecting to something larger than oneself (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). All of these comments point to the upside potential of human capacity, yet they are still framed within the realm of normative psychology; they do not include a framework beyond normality.

Combining the dialogues on preservational versus expansive organismic motives and negative versus positive emotions, the potential influences that cultural applies on defense function, and Freud's concept of limited psychic energy provides rich content for discussing human potential. What is the upside potential of psychological capacity if psychic energy and the energy of positive emotions and their expansive influence are supported and encouraged in the direction of growth? Might mature or adaptive defenses limit one's growth by

synthesizing information rather than helping one seek further information for greater understanding and development?

S. L. Shapiro, Schwartz, and Santerre (2002), from the field of positive psychology, submit that normality can be a form of developmental arrest. This is a fairly radical claim within psychological literature; fortunately, it helps to broaden the context of defense theory beyond the normative range, which could reveal new insights. Given the developmental spectrum that shows defenses on the immature side and defenses-coping-other on the mature side, what behaviors or psychological potential lie beyond coping? Is there a level of psychological development that does not require defenses at all? What does human behavior look like in the absence of defenses?

Current defense theory falls within two contextual ranges, depicted in Figure 1.

pathology.....normality
immaturity.....maturity

Figure 1. The contextual ranges of current defense theory. Author's image.

What if the contexts were extended to the depictions shown in Figure 2?

???.....pathology.....normality.....???
gestation.....immaturity.....maturity.....???

Figure 2. The contextual ranges of current defense theory, extended. Author's image.

Since insight alone does not necessarily effect change or growth, likewise the awareness of upside potential does not actualize it. Vaillant (2000) stresses that psychology needs to better understand how to facilitate the shift from less adaptive defenses to more adaptive defenses. Given this need, and given that defense literature also highlights the need to expand the framework of defense theories, and given the weighted influence of ego development theories on key contemporary ego defense theories and the fair mention of ego strength in defense literature, select attention to literature about ego development and ego strength is warranted.

CHAPTER THREE:

LITERATURE REVIEW OF EGO DEVELOPMENT AND EGO STRENGTH

This chapter is intended to provide a theoretical framework within which to expand the current range of developmental defense theories, and to create a better grasp of how strength of ego might influence defense use and resistance to processes of change. Given that Vaillant (e.g., 1995b) and Cramer (e.g., 2006) are two of the most recognized current contemporary defense theorists, and that they both of have developmental model theories and incorporate ego development theory into their work, their statements about ego development lead this discussion.

Vaillant (1995b) states that, as the ego matures, so too does the nature of the defenses that are chosen. According to Vaillant, the ego develops in relation to three factors: (a) a broad, optimistic temperament; (b) the capacity to tolerate paradox; and (c) the ability to be playful. Vaillant agrees that, to a certain degree, ego development reflects age-related biological development, but he emphasizes that it is the functional use of one's capacities and not just the ownership of capacity that shapes the mode of one's adaptation and develops one's maturity and wisdom. Vaillant believes that ego development involves interrelated tasks, such as psychosocial tasks, moral tasks, and defense style. For some people, a fixed repertoire of defenses persists for decades while for others, choice of ego defenses evolves in alignment with overall maturation. Vaillant believes that his theory is less predispositional about ego development than the more sequential

models such as Loevinger's (1966, 1976), but his theory is informed by Loevinger's work.

Cramer (2006) believes that developmental theories of defenses honor human development overall and age-related behaviors. She explains that defenses may have a biological basis but that they are not biologically produced; there is a systemic relationship between biology and mental function. According to Cramer, innate reflexes evolve into unconscious defenses during age-appropriate socialization, and development is a process of moving into progressively more complex systems of function. She believes that there is a sequential path of development in youth and that, to understand adult defense use, a hierarchical model, such as Vaillant's (1995b), is more applicable; there is a more sequential nature to development in youth whereas, in adulthood, development is more a measure of one's level of adaptive function.

Cramer (2006) recognizes the relation between ego development and defense use, but she does not base her work solely on ego development theories. Cramer is informed by Loevinger's (e.g., 1966, 1976) work, but also by personality and identity theories. The similarity of Cramer's theory to Loevinger's is seen in the two tenets that Cramer views as critical to developmental theories: first, that different defenses are prominent at different ages; and second, that there is a recognizable and generalizeable pattern to the emergence and decline of those defenses, with each defense having its own developmental trajectory.

Ego Development

Loevinger tends to be the ego development theorist that is cited in defense theories. She is recognized as one of the few who uses empirical research as the basis of her work (Hewlett, 2004). Loevinger (1966,1976, 1987) stresses the importance of ego function in controlling the expression of impulses, and it is the manner of expression that represents the level of ego development. For Loevinger, ego development does not refer to all ego functions; it points to commonalities and characteristics that apply to definable stages of development that have distinct yet overlapping qualities and move toward ever-refined orientations of the self with the world. According to Loevinger (1966, 1976), ego development is the process by which the self progressively differentiates aspects of itself as object, becomes ever more refined in its orientation to the world, and builds capacity for impulse control.

Loevinger (1966, 1976) presents an eight-stage model of ego development housed within three levels of function based on impulse control: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. In the preconventional level, one learns to distinguish the self from the nonself, acts impulsively, and tends to externalize blame in agitated circumstances. In the conventional level, the self is largely defined by social and cultural norms and motivated by the need to belong. One is more self-aware and internalizes social rules that regulate impulsiveness, thereby supporting the goal of belonging. In the postconventional level, one can take as object one's own psychological system. One has established internal standards of conduct, is more self-reflective, and has increased ability to cope with conflicts

and tolerate paradox. Loevinger insists that it is a mistake to idealize any stage or level because each has its relative weaknesses, problems, paradoxes, and strengths, each with its potential for maladjustment or for growth. Research supports Loevinger's theory and its consistency with chronological development, but defenses correlate more with ego development than directly with age (Levit, 1993). Age may influence ego development, but the stage of ego development influences the choice of defenses more than age.

According to Loevinger (1966), ego development has two manifestations: milestone sequences and polar aspects. Milestone sequences are the observable measures of personality that develop dialectically—or by means of opposites—and tend to rise and fall in predominance as one matures. This aligns with Cramer's (2006) presentation of defense development in youth and adolescence. Polar aspects are manifestations of abilities that are inferred from patterns of behavior that tend to develop nondialectically through faithful expression. This aligns more with Vaillant's (1995b) appreciation for the use of one's capacities rather than just the ownership of capacity. Loevinger believes that ego development is an abstraction of sequence and characterology: an inner logic that is not based on reason, combined with an invariable sequence where each stage builds on, incorporates, and transmutes the previous stage.

Cook-Greuter (1999) expands Loevinger's (1966, 1976) model in several ways. First, she asserts that the underlying construct that actually develops in the process of ego development is the expanding perspective of the self, not just a refined orientation to the world. Second, she points out a distinctive pattern in the

emergence of successive stages; it is the alternation of emphasis between differentiating or separating oneself from others and integrating or connecting oneself with others. Third, and most notably, she presents two new stages of ego development—the construct-aware stage and the unitive stage—in exchange for Loevinger's final stage.

For Cook-Greuter (1999, 2000), conventional Western psychology views the development of a separate, individual identity as an important goal in healthy human development. In this view, adulthood is achieved when one can successfully use abstract reasoning to manage daily experiences, and one is independent, responsible, and goal-oriented. This process increasingly establishes more clearly defined boundaries between self and other. Cook-Greuter believes that societal definitions of adulthood constrain the worldviews of its members and that the Western definition is one of a linear, rational understanding of reality. She says that 10% of the general adult population functions within the preconventional level of ego development, and that 80% function in the conventional level, which is a level that forms a type of ceiling to development.

According to Cook-Greuter (1999, 2000), it is at the postconventional level that one starts to question the unconsciously held beliefs, norms, and assumptions that one acquires through socialization and schooling. In the first stages of this third level, one develops more of a systemic view of self; one is part of an interconnected whole rather than a singular part of an aggregate of separate parts. One becomes interested in how one knows what one knows: an

epistemological perspective. At the higher stages in this third level, one starts to reject systems thinking and see through one's own thoughts.

Loevinger (1966, 1976) represents this higher stage of the postconventional level as the *integrated stage* where one reconciles inner conflicts and renounces that which is deemed as unattainable. In exchange for the integrated stage, Cook-Greuter (1999, 2000) offers the *construct-aware* and *unitive stages*. In the construct-aware stage, one's ego becomes transparent to itself and one consciously experiences one's own defensive maneuvers. The process of self-awareness deepens and one gains access to intuition, archetypal images, and transpersonal material. Such awareness and self-examination can lead to moments of ego-transcendence, but these are short-lived; as one becomes conscious of the transcendence, the magic is broken and the ego functions to sustain the familiar mode of functioning. Transcendent moments can become more frequent depending on the degree of awareness and intent of self-examination.

Cook-Greuter (2000) explains that it is at the *unitive stage* that one can embrace opposites and comparatives and to accept reality "as is". This embracing occurs at both the cognitive level and the affective level. At this stage, one is more at ease with a fluid, open-ended self-identity and with not knowing things. Rationality is no longer a limitation against which one struggles but instead becomes a valued resource in a greater system of function. One can integrate and make use of one's transcendent experiences, and is awake to one's changing states of consciousness and the wonder of being in life.

Cook-Greuter (2000) compares her model to that of Alexander et al. (1990). Alexander et al.'s work has been supported in a series of cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. Alexander et al.'s model is not considered an ego development model; it is a life-span model that represents what they term *levels of mind*, and how these levels of mind account for the unfolding of phases of development, from ordinary phases to ultimate stages of higher consciousness. Their model includes a fourth level of development called ego-transcendence.

Given this fourth level, Cook-Greuter (2000) describes Alexander et al.'s (1990) model as a full spectrum developmental model of human consciousness, as compared to the narrower range and focus of ego development models. She points out that there are no equivalents to the ego-transcendent level in ego development theory. Ego development theory is situated in the personal, rational-symbolic domain of function and ranges over three of the four levels in Alexander et al.'s full-spectrum model. Alexander et al. not only present a broader spectrum, but they pay special attention to the dominant mode of mental processing—that they also refer to as one's *mode of knowing*—as an important element in mapping human development. Cook-Greuter explains that, at the transpersonal level, nonrational sources of input are openly integrated and the dominant mode of knowing shifts from the symbolic, language-mediated mode to that of direct, immediate knowing: the kind of knowing that can lead to enlightenment or true insight into human nature. The English language separates objects and creates a culturally hidden agreement to organize experiences in certain ways. Via direct knowing, there is no division of experiential parts or localizing of information,

there is just knowledge that becomes known; the bounded self is transcended and knowledge is simply apprehended.

Cook-Greuter (2000) further explains that access to the transpersonal realm is possible at all ages and levels of development, but contact with it is generally experienced as a brief state, not as a shift into a consistent stage. A *stage of consciousness* refers to one's routine approach to experiences. A *state of consciousness* is generally a brief experience of consciousness outside of one's ordinary stage and out of which one tends to quickly exit. Both *state* and *stage* are abstract psychological constructs and are terms of a dualistic nature. If one consistently functions ego-transcendently, it must be understood as something other than a state or a stage; it is the state beyond states or the ground that underlies all other stages. The transpersonal realm cannot be fully described symbolically through language; it can only be known by direct apprehension.

Alexander et al. (1990) add that a person who reaches the higher levels of consciousness need not be fully developed in the personal realm. It is the consistency with which one accesses the transcendent realm or functions from the transcendent realm that will accelerate one's growth along the personal development trajectory. Studies have shown that transcendent experiences appear to accelerate growth as measured by emotional maturity, happiness, and altruistic behavior. Such experiences also correlate strongly with flexible and original thinking. It is also theoretically possible that, based on the science of epigenetics, one can pass on one's level of consciousness to one's offspring through one's genetic makeup; the level of consciousness at which one functions becomes part

of one's gene code (Cloninger, 2004). Such a possibility implies that one's own heightened development can directly affect evolution by procreating one's higher level of consciousness through one's offspring; theoretically, such offspring would immediately function from that higher level of consciousness, rather than having to developmentally progress through prior levels.

The ego continues to function at the higher levels of consciousness, but it is a subsystem of a greater system of awareness and more inclusive processes, and no longer the sole executor of mental life (Alexander et al., 1990). Alexander et al. admit that one's level of ego development will have a huge influence on the likelihood that one accesses the transcendent realm, and will also influence one's interpretation of the experience. As such, the more mature one is, the more likely that one can attempt to reach ego-transcendence. As Hawkins (2002) and Cook-Greuter (2000) express, the path to enlightenment demands a dedication to which most are not willing to commit, yet continued development is possible with managed efforts to grow in wisdom and understanding of self and other.

Wilber (2000, 2001) is another voice in the discussion on ego development, and his work echoes that of Cook-Greuter's (1999, 2000) and Alexander et al's (1990). Wilber agrees with Cook-Greuter that the bulk of humankind functions in the conventional levels of ego development, which equate to Tier One in his two-tier model of consciousness. Wilber emphasizes the degree to which each level in Tier One may overcome problems of the prior level but has problems of its own and tends to believe that its worldview is solely correct. Each level can also revert to primary levels of function in states of duress. It is the

degree to which those in each level believe in the supremacy of their worldview that makes them respond as auto-immune to the others. Because of this, the strengths of each level can conflict with other levels rather than unite with them. No one level of function in Tier One can satisfactorily grasp the systemic whole of higher consciousness or healthily resolve the chaos that rumbles within Tier One.

Tier Two of Wilber's (2000, 2001) model is equivalently that of the ego-transcendent level in Alexander et al.'s (1990) model. According to Wilber, people who function in Tier Two think in terms of overall existence and not merely in reference to their own level. According to Wilber, only 1% of the population functions in Tier Two consciousness; Cook-Greuter (1999, 2000) similarly states that only 1% of the population functions at the ego-transcendent level. Tier Two, or ego-transcendence, is the leading edge of collective human evolution and faces enormous resistance from Tier One thinking and the respective defenses of each level therein.

Cook-Greuter (2000) states that the ability to reach the fourth level of ego-transcendence requires openness to life and conscious deconstruction of one's construction of self and other. She also stresses that, at present, growth to the fourth level of development, and even to the third level of development, is rare in part because such growth is not supported by Western society's prevailing mindsets, practices, and institutions. More often, one needs a teacher to reach the third level, and it is crucial to have a teacher for permanent evolution to transcendent consciousness. Likewise, a student or seeker must consciously

surrender to the teacher and one's chosen path of practice for such development to fully occur. Cook-Greuter also recommends further research to explore the phenomenological distinctions between the levels. Higher states/stages of consciousness do correlate with bodily measurements such as chemistry or brain activity, but empirical evidence to date is insufficient to determine whether one who functions at the postconventional level has actually reached the highest stages of consciousness.

The levels of ego development can represent the structures of mind. As such, ego processes function within a level of ego structure and respond to the flow of content of mind, including one's goals and desired outcomes, to effect behavior. In terms of ego development, when the structure of one's psyche can scaffold to a new level of function and build a permanent structure there, one has measurably developed or transformed; one functions from an entirely new systemic point of view.

An enhancement to understanding ego development and ego development theories is found in the recent work of Marko (2006). Marko performed discovery-stage research to explore the possibilities of facilitative agents existing at the junctures of ego development. A *facilitative agent* is a hypothetical construct that either provides the impetus for ego development to occur or signals the occurrence of ego development.

Marko (2006) explains that most models of ego development depict the buildup of persistent inconsistencies between one's worldview and one's lived experiences; these inconsistencies then become resolved with reconfigured

worldviews. Development is recognized when stage-related characteristics of behavior become predominant and one's personal story or personal myths have become modified. Rapid or radical growth may occur from extreme circumstances such as near-death experiences or from spiritual practices that advance one's consciousness, but Marko believes that most individuals who reach higher levels of development have not had such extreme experiences or have not followed regular spiritual practices. He asserts that there are facilitative agents having to do with a general sense of wonderment or discovery that push one beyond one's current worldview.

Marko (2006) points out that critical incidents function as facilitative agents of change. Critical incidents may effect ego development but they may also effect smaller shifts in conceptualizations that are related to ego growth; both constitute forms of breakthroughs in worldviews. One's concepts build to help change perceptions and provide gradual scaffolding that elevate and expand one's ego perceptions. This compliments Mezirow's (2000) claim that transformation can be epochal or incremental.

Marko's (2006) research evidenced the existence of facilitative agents existing at junctures in ego development. This allows for ego growth to be understood in terms of gradual unfolding rather than just threshold shifts in function. Marko suggests that stories of critical incidents can provide content to further investigate the existence and nature of facilitating agents in the process of personal development. Likewise, such incidents may provide clues to other types of consciousness that assist in ego growth and human development.

Ego Strength

Understanding ego strength, as compared to ego development, provides a matrix for understanding psychological function. Ego development can be depicted with a horizontal line across which one progresses in development during the course of one's lifetime. In comparison, ego strength can be depicted with a vertical line at one's given position on the ego development line. Regardless of one's developmental position, one's ego can be gauged vertically from weak to strong.

Ego strength is measured by different instruments. There is the Barron Ego-strength scale, which is one of the specialized indices of positive functioning used in the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) (Schuldberg, 1992). The MMPI is used widely in the field of psychology to measure multiple aspects of psychological function, and the Ego-strength scale is frequently used to help determine whether one will benefit from psychotherapy or profit from interventions and treatment programs (Clemens & Kahn, 1990; Clopton & Klein, 1978). High ego strength correlates with the likelihood of profiting from therapy and interventions.

There is also the Ego Strength Scale by Epstein, which has been used in psychological research studies (Pacini & Epstein, 1999). Epstein's scale measures the tendency that one has to behave in responsible and effective ways. This includes the capacity to resist impulsiveness and to confront challenging circumstances.

Brenner and Eagle (as cited in Bornstein, 2006) define ego strength as the degree to which the ego effectively tests reality and manages impulses. Higher ego strength is associated with healthy psychological function whereas lower ego strength is associated with difficulties in psychological function.

Ego strength has been shown to be positively related to self-esteem (Pacini & Epstein, 1999). Unstable self-esteem is linked to a greater tendency to be ego-involved and includes minimal self-determined behavior (Kernis & Goldman, 2003). Heightened ego-involvement tends to focus attention on self-evaluative information, interpret ambiguous events as personally relevant, and link one's self-worth to outcomes and events. Unstable self-esteem leaves one subject to poorly managing situational changes.

The literature that offers content about ego strength is largely focused on issues having to do with alcoholism, addictions, and substance abuse. The literature does not directly discuss the nature of ego strength at the moment an alcoholic or addict hits bottom and moves toward recovery, but there is consistency in representing the alcoholic or addicted person as having low ego strength, low self-esteem, and a tendency to overly distort reality, with post-treatment results indicating improvements in these measures (Ruderman, 1984; Sandahl, Lindberg, & Bergman, 1987; Valeithian, 1998; Vieten, 1998).

In hitting bottom and moving toward recovery, the level of ego strength may be low, but the actual level may be less important than the upward shift in one's level, toward higher ego strength. E. T. Fitzgerald (1966) provides a sketch of a person who is open to experience. Such a person has a relative lack of

repressive tendencies and spontaneously shifts to less regulated thinking. But, this person is neither more nor less anxious than people of lesser openness to experience, nor does this person necessarily differ in terms of ego strength. One can then understand the move toward recovery that results from hitting bottom as involving ego strength that is higher than one's typical level of function in addiction.

The information provided by ego development literature and ego strength literature provides a matrix for understanding psychological development, development of consciousness and awareness, and the role of ego strength at any given point in development. This matrix expands the framework within which to understand defenses and provides a greater context in which to explore the understanding of psychological surrender.

The What That Is Feared

It can be argued that the entire discussion about ego defenses circles around one issue, and that the ability to shift along one's path of ego development involves the same issue: fear of the unknown. The unknown acts like an on-button to start defense functions, which can limit or halt development. Fear excites the process, but the unknown triggers the process.

Resistance is understood as a type of defense, but it can be further interpreted as a reinforcement for the other defenses; defenses hold and contain the known while resistance applies a specialized oppositional force toward the unknown. It is posited that, while defenses defend, it is resistance that functions in

closest proximity to the unknown; psychologically, resistance is positioned on the border between the unknown and the other defenses.

Freud concentrated on resistance in the context of therapy (Buckley, 1995; Reid, 1999), and resistance is still depicted in the literature as a defense specific to therapy (Clark, 1998; Wachtel, 1999). However, therapy can be considered a formalized approach to personal development that is chosen when one needs help to successfully navigate a psychological boundary. Resistance does not just occur in therapy; it occurs anywhere when one meets the unknown or other-than-self. If the unknown is only marginally disorienting, one might not even register the occurrence of resistance. This lack of recognition suggests that, in such cases, the unknown either has aspects of familiarity, which allow it to pass through one's resistant boundary, or one is well enough along the developmental continuum that one can opt for a more mature and synthesizing response to the unknown. Yet, it has been questioned whether mature defenses still limit psychological development, albeit at a healthier level of ego function. The point is that, if the nature of resistance is rigid and fortified, the opportunity for growth presented by the unknown is walled off; if resistance is supple enough to flex in relationship to the unknown, the opportunity for growth might be actualized.

Accepting that resistance is the psychological landmark where one meets the unknown and that the unknown is feared, what else can be said about the unknown or about this landmark? Without openly engaging the unknown, any conclusions about it are based on assumptions and only provide for provisional truths. Without openly engaging the unknown, one gains synthesized truths at best

via mature defenses. Could it be that it is not the unknown that is feared, but rather functioning without resistance and defenses in the face of the unknown? Is the *what* that is feared psychological nakedness? What alternative psychological clothing is there?

Vaillant (2000) stresses that psychology needs to better understand how to facilitate the shift from less adaptive defenses to more adaptive defenses. This is a narrow focus on the shift from one defense to a presumably better defense.

Mahoney (1991) reports that the experience of psychological change is fundamentally the same, whether in or out of a therapeutic context, and a better understanding of that experience is necessary. Mahoney's focus is a broader perspective that views change not just as a shift from one defense to another but as potential shift to something other than a defense. Since the opportunity to experience change occurs in the meeting with the unknown, what transacts between the known and the unknown? Could it be that what is truly unknown is the knowledge of how to effectively meet other-than-self? Is the *what* that is feared in fact the experience of functioning without proper psychological etiquette? In lieu of knowing such etiquette, and to avoid risking clumsy engagement, are defenses the default response?

Defense theories do not explain the nature of psychological shifts, only that they are generally associated with varying degrees of psychological discomfort. Ego development theories do not explain the nature of the shifts, other than to state that higher levels of development transcend and include the prior levels and that the dominant current level of egoic function is particularly difficult

to transcend. Ego strength influences the ability to shift, but ego strength literature also does not address the nature of psychological shifts.

Is there a psychological skill that functions as the etiquette of meeting other-than-self? Occasionally, a term is slipped into the literature that implies the experience of functioning without defenses or attempts to name the psychological phenomenon that engages change; that term is *surrender*. It is never fully described or defined; it is used more connotatively in relation to defenses and the process of change and growth. For instance, Solomon (1998) states that defenses and resistance to change must be released, and surrendering to the process of change and its perceived risks must occur if growth is to be realized; Cook-Greuter (2000) states that a student or seeker of higher development must consciously surrender to his or her chosen teacher and path of practice for such development to fully occur. What is surrender?

Given that defense theories are rife with controversies and pose challenges for empirical study, and given the recognized gap between the blur of defense theories and the multitude of variously successful therapies that try to help people move past resistance, and given that egoic thinking creates a rationalized ceiling to psychological development, this research takes a new approach toward understanding defenses, resistance to change, and the process of psychological development: researching the phenomenon of psychological surrender.

CHAPTER FOUR: LITERATURE REVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SURRENDER

While the literature on ego defenses is daunting in volume and easy to find, the literature on surrender is otherwise. A broad sweep of literature reveals three categories of discussion about surrender that can be described as political and military, spiritual, and psychological. Since the focus of this research is on psychological surrender and human resistance to change in the process of psychological development, the conversations in the political and military literature are too unrelated to include in this review. The spiritual literature is well seeded with the subject of surrender, but it is a phenomenon that is promoted, rather than a phenomenon that is explained or analyzed, and therefore sheds little light on the inquiry of this research. Comparatively, the psychological literature does approach the topic in a more analytic manner. While there is a relative dearth of this literature, significant insights are found.

Generally speaking, the literature on surrender constitutes descriptive accounts offered by psychological professionals who write about what they notice in their clients during the therapeutic process and what they intuit about the surrender experience. Starting in the 1990s, qualitative studies that focused specifically on the phenomenon of surrender can be found in doctoral dissertations. While there is no established theory of surrender, this research allows for a deduced "understanding in use" that represents how professionals and researchers think about the phenomenon. Overall, based on a thorough review of the literature, *surrender* is understood as (a) a necessary part of psychological

healing and growth, (b) an exercise in psychological success versus defeat, (c) a point at which the limits of the ego and one's perceived control are realized, (d) a letting-go or dropping of the defenses—which can be voluntary or involuntary—that protects one's certainties or hides one's deep longing to heal and grow, (e) a vulnerable psychological opening that can occur safely in a protected environment, and (f) a psychological movement that cannot be forced but can be facilitated.

Surrender tends to be discussed in the literature relative to pathology, with mild mention of its potential role in normative development. Therefore, the understanding in use describes surrender in terms of psychological healing from places of crisis or anguish; the literature does not supply a broad enough framework within which to deduce any commonly held understanding of surrender as a choice for psychological growth that is sought out eagerly. Since normality can be considered a form of developmental arrest (S. L. Shapiro et al., 2002), the role of surrender as a desired or proactive form of psychological development past normality is a constant consideration in this review.

The Nature of Surrender

This section presents the literature on surrender in two formats—historical and thematic—along with helpful definitions. The historical format highlights the development of the subject over time, but is insufficient to exhaust the topic. The thematic format explores recurring concepts in the literature, which also enables a focus on the nature of surrender itself and helps to connect the currently disconnected literature.

Historical and Disciplinary Review

This section is organized by the identified concentrations of discussion about surrender, which are alcoholism and addiction therapy, sociology, psychotherapy, trauma therapy, related material, and doctoral dissertations. The first four categories are presented as they appeared historically in the literature. Within each of the six categories, the literature is discussed in chronological order. Since the grit for understanding surrender is most clearly revealed with the thematic review, this section does not present the granular thoughts expressed by the authors cited herein; rather, this section highlights the key authors who contributed to the arc of historical development of the topic. The value in this approach is to show the topic unfolding over time, the lack of any strong pattern to its development, and the critical lack of cross-referencing in literature.

Alcoholism and Addiction Therapy

The first noteworthy literature on surrender is written by Tiebout (1949, 1953, 1954, 1961). Tiebout is distinguished for investigating the philosophy and principles of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) within the science of psychiatry. He refined the definition of surrender and suggests its function in releasing the grip of the ego toward the acceptance of powers greater than oneself. Tiebout believed strongly in valuing spirituality and the role of surrender to a higher power as key in alcohol recovery. His reports on surrender are grounded in his application of AA principles within his psychiatric practices.

More than fifteen years later, White (1979) discussed alcohol recovery with a transpersonal focus. White focused more on spiritual awakening than on surrender specifically, though he did reference Tiebout in his work.

The next most significant work on surrender and alcoholism is May's (1982, 1988, 1991). May is a psychiatrist and spiritual counselor, specializing in addictions. Without referring to Tiebout's work, he addresses surrender in terms of unitive psychological experiences. He focuses on personal development through spiritual development: the investigation of mysteries beyond egoic boundaries of thought. May's work is grounded in psychological theory and observations in his practice. Both Tiebout and May address surrender specifically, within the field of addictions and alcoholism, and with the emphasis on higher powers, yet May does not reference Tiebout. This lack of reference exemplifies one of the weaknesses found in the literature: authors inconsistently cite one another.

Chronologically, Vaughn and Long (1999) and Piedmont (2004) provide the most recent literature in this category on alcoholism. Vaughn and Long (1999) cite Tiebout in their work on alcoholism and surrender and stress the role of surrender in recovery. Piedmont (2004) focuses specifically on addictions, substance abuse, and spiritual transcendence. Piedmont does not reference Tiebout, but his goal is to argue for spirituality as a sixth dimension of personality and not to promote the discussion of surrender. Yet, mention of Tiebout would still seem appropriate since the subject of surrender and addiction is historically grounded in Tiebout's work. Lack of citing Tiebout continues to exemplify the

spotty development of the subject of surrender and the inconsistent citing of relevant precedent. Discussion of the subject lacks a sense of home base or purposeful development.

Sociology

Wolff (1974) was a sociologist, and his work stands apart from the literature in psychology; however, he addressed the subject of surrender with specificity. His article was more of a seminal effort in his personal quest to analyze and describe the phenomenon of surrender, and he admitted his own struggle to understand and articulate it.

Psychotherapy

Hidas (1981) is the first to mention surrender specifically in relationship to psychotherapy in general as opposed to psychotherapy related to addictions. Hidas integrates psychotherapy with transpersonal psychology, and he distinguishes the role of surrender at the deepest levels of psychological and spiritual work.

Kaplan (1984), Knoblauch and Falconer (1986), Ghent (1990), Viorst (1998), Hart (2000), and LaMothe (2005) all refer to surrender in their work within the broad framework of psychotherapy, though not necessarily focusing directly on it. They either focus on the tension between ego grasping tendencies for control and the value and capacity for letting go, or on the nuances of interpersonal and transpersonal dynamics. Kaplan (1984) compares empathy to a pathological form of surrender called altruistic surrender. Knoblauch and Falconer (1986) ground their work in strategic comparison of Eastern spiritual traditions to

quantitative measures of ego traits and tendencies. Ghent (1990) addresses surrender and submission as compared to masochism. Viorst (1998) is more an author than a scientist, but she is recognized for her work on psychological writings by notable institutions, including the American Psychiatric Association. She focuses on relationships, losses, and capacity for control. Hart (2000) advances theories on transformation with specific discussion about the ego, attachment, and letting go. LaMothe (2005) is interested in the dynamics of personal space.

At first blush, this looks like a relatively large pool of literature on surrender, but surrender is not necessarily the primary focus of these authors. Noteworthy is their specific use of the term *surrender* within their work: a term that has rare presence in psychological literature.

Trauma Therapy

Branscomb (1991, 1993) and Atwood, Orange, and Stolorow (2002) can easily be included in the psychotherapy category, as can be the authors in the addictions category, but just as alcoholism and addictions have a specialized focus within psychotherapy, so too does trauma. Branscomb (1991, 1993) is a practicing psychologist focusing on trauma therapy. She specifically addresses the phenomenon of surrender and views it as the voluntary giving up of defenses, which she states is key in psychotherapeutic healing. Branscomb uniquely binds psychotherapy, trauma therapy, and surrender with comparison to the universal myth of the hero's journey and tribal rites of passage. Atwood et al. (2002) speak about therapeutic efforts in dealing with personal annihilation: the experience of

having one's intersubjective reality shattered at core psychological levels. They note the role of surrender in the therapeutic process, and indicate that clients who have a sense of nonbeing must be acknowledged before they can surrender to any attributions of being. The impression from all of these authors is that trauma and personal annihilation puncture deep wounds in the psyche that can heal with the balm of surrender.

Relevant Material

Levitt is associated with several articles that do not mention surrender specifically but evidence a relationship to it (Levitt, 1999; Levitt, Butler, & Hill, 2006; Levitt et al, 2004; Levitt, Stanley, Frankel, & Raina, 2005). Levitt's work with her colleagues is grounded in primary research. Levitt et al. integrates conversations across fields of psychology—cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, humanistic, and constructivist—to speak about personal transformation and that which helps clients in therapeutic relationships. Her work has themes that parallel those in the articles on surrender. Her work does not yet include the term *surrender*, but she alludes to it in discussions about fear, resistance, and relinquishing control. Levitt and her colleagues are included in this review because of the unexpected link seen in the conversations about surrender and their veins of research. With minimal literature that addresses surrender specifically, especially in relation to transformation and personal development, this link provides creative and interpretive parallels that build the story about the subject of surrender.

Doctoral Dissertations

Doctoral dissertations on surrender begin surfacing in 1993. These are held as a distinct category to display the researched focus on surrender. Whereas the other literature on surrender tends to be the expression of therapeutic observations, this pool of literature results from intentional inquiry into the topic. Chronologically, the authors found who specifically studied surrender and their focuses of inquiry are: Parlee (1993), the guru-disciple relationship; Jones (1994), recovery from substance dependence; Wallace (2001), theoretical research that blends spiritual traditions with emphasis on Jungian psychology; Lechner (2003), the psychological anthropology of surrender in Alcohol Anonymous members; Rutledge (2004), the physical experience of surrender via proactive initiation of it through the use of exercise balls; and Ferendo (2005), future-oriented discussion in transpersonal psychology and the use of surrender in cultivating transformation and personal development.

The fact that these dissertations are all published within the last 15 years suggests a budding nature to the topic. The publication dates also show a pattern of momentum: the focus of research evolves from the spiritual camp through pathology and into proactive surrender.

Generalized Review

In reviewing all of the literature, one discerns a struggle to be articulate about the phenomenon of surrender. The earliest authors, especially those in the domain of alcohol and addiction therapy, tend to include content from spiritual traditions. Later authors utilize analogies to better understand and explain the

phenomenon of surrender and the points they want to make. For instance, some use mythical and indigenous cultural analogies (Branscomb, 1991, 1993; Grant, 1996; Palmer & Braud, 2002; S. I. Shapiro & Soidla, 2004; Soidla, 2002), while others use Eastern conversations about the present moment (Tolle, 1999) and mindful expression (Masters, 2000). While the use of analogies may be specifically purposeful for the various authors, it can also be indicative of a lack of vocabulary with which to fully discuss surrender and its functional role in psychological processes.

This historical review provides some order to the patchwork of surrender literature. This section does not cite every author in the literature, but highlights the most pronounced ones. There are veins of literature on addiction recovery, psychotherapy, trauma, or therapeutic practices. There is some mention of surrender with regard to identity development and object attachment, but insignificantly so. There is growing discussion in the field of transpersonal psychology, but with limited mention of the role of surrender specifically.

Aside from a few authors, the vast majority of those cited throughout this review ground their comments and conclusions in psychological theories and observation. The observations are more within professional encounters with clients than they are contextualized within formal research efforts, but this does not diminish their value. It is clear that the subject of surrender is organically surfacing within the field of psychology and may be reaching its own threshold of visibility. These notable practitioners are recognizing the significance of the role of surrender in psychological well-being and change, and are expressing their

observations in published form. This public expression is foundational in creating groundwork for theory development and formalized research.

This historical review identifies concentrations of discussion about surrender and also a lack of connection within the literature. It remains that the subject of surrender has not become a strong focus of research within the field of psychology. In addition, there is no current binding study that weaves the random threads of discussion about surrender, leaving the literature loose and the phenomenon minimally understood in the form of a publicized and shared concept within the broad field of psychology.

Several authors stress their concern about the lack of research on surrender, and they state or imply the considerable value of attempting to better understand surrender, especially in the interest of helping people in therapy and their efforts for personal development therein. Historically, the expressions unfold as follows. Hidas (1981) expresses the positive implications of the concept of surrender for use in psychotherapy. S. B. Shapiro and L. F. Fitzgerald (1989) promote transpersonal psychology as the fourth force in the field of psychology—built upon humanistic, behavioral, and psychoanalytic—and the need to research mystical phenomena. The phenomenon of surrender can be considered within this perspective. Ghent (1990) describes surrender as a detail in psychological discussions, which dominantly focus on resistance without equal consideration of the healing process, the longing to grow, and the urge to surrender. Branscomb (1993) states that therapists can be very effective at helping clients gain the trust that is necessary to surrender to the telling of their personal stories and

experiencing all of the related emotions, but that it is more difficult to help clients move into the deeper surrenders that can reframe their worldviews and restore their faith in people and the world. Jones (1994) highlights that, in lieu of the benefits of surrender as noted in the work of AA, scientific and psychological literature has done little to describe or validate the surrender experience. Levitt et al. (2004) and Levitt et al. (2005) assert that transformational moments can be understood by perspectives other than depth psychology, and that the purpose of any therapy—cognitive, behavioral, humanistic, or otherwise—is to help clients change. Change involves surrender. So, while many are voicing their respect and value for the subject of surrender, it remains a largely neglected topic.

A final consideration is that, overall, there is an increasing frequency of literature written about surrender, which may indicate a movement toward a critical mass on the subject that is bringing it closer to its own limelight. In contribution, the goal for the remainder of this review is to completely reshuffle the literature on surrender and present the common themes embedded in it. The light is shined squarely on the subject of surrender, not merely on the ground around it.

Helpful Definitions

The term *surrender* is strategically defined later in this chapter. At this time, four terms are helpful to define: ego, narcissism, other, and transformation.

ego Versus Ego

Tiebout (1954) speaks about the ambiguity of the term *ego* and how it has become known in layperson terms as representing a prideful, arrogant, inflated

self. Tiebout's approach of distinguishing the term *ego* (using a lowercase e) from *Ego* (using a capitalized E) is borrowed and used in this review. The term *ego* represents the ego defined in the defense review: the mental form through which flow impulses, cultural norms, interpersonal needs, personal goals, and environmental content, and which acts to achieve psychological balance when the blend of content is too disturbing to tolerate. In comparison, the term *Ego* represents the prideful, arrogant, self-inflated mental processor that selfishly and fearfully motivates behavior. The *Ego* is very narcissistic.

Narcissism

Narcissism exaggerates one's perceived status and feeds unrealistically positive self-perceptions (Paulhus & John, 1998). Narcissism is the childish need for excessive attention and admiration; it is marked by insecurity and immature, manipulative behaviors designed to produce and promote evidence of one's presumed importance (Rhodewalt & Sorrow, 2003). Narcissistic, immature traits include (a) omnipotence, where one has a sense of exceptional rights well beyond the rights of others; (b) ease of frustration, which shows up as intolerance; (c) impatience, which desires immediate gratification and has no appreciation for the delay of gratification; and (d) a me-attitude, which considers the self first and foremost with a near disregard for others (Tiebout, 1954). Narcissism is characteristic in children during early development, but it is considered maladaptive or pathological in adulthood. In the context of this writing, the term *narcissism* refers to the excessive admiration of oneself, where one functions with very childish, infantile, and immature tendencies.

other Versus Other

In the manner that ego is typographically distinguished from Ego, so too is other (using a lowercase o) typographically distinguished from Other (using a capitalized O). The term *other* represents the neutral distinction between one's self as separate from an other. The term *Other* is not neutral; it has a charge about it. Other is all that threatens one's familiarities and taken-for-granted beliefs. Other can be represented by a specific person, groups of people, cultures, lifestyles, things, ideologies, mannerisms, and anything that triggers a threat or contradiction to that which one knows. Other triggers defenses.

The protective response that is elicited when one encounters Other can range from minimal to catastrophic, as discussed in the defense literature. Other tends to be resisted by the degree to which one feels challenged. If one functions from immature or unconscious habits-of-mind rather than from mindful awareness and nonjudgment, one tends to respond to Other with forms of fear and resistance.

Other provides the resistance necessary for personal growth (Gyatso & Cutler, 1998) and landmarks the psychological geography where surrender occurs. The term *Other* represents everything that one discerns to be not-me and against which one responds with resistance.

Transformation

Transformation is a term used by many authors in the surrender literature that goes largely undefined and is used connotatively in terms of significant psychological change or growth. Using the content from the defense literature

discussion on transformation, in the context of this writing, *transformation* is the reformation of one's meaning-making structures and effects a change in how one knows what one knows (Kegan, 1982, 2000; Mezirow, 2000). The change in structure calls all content into question and often results in renovation in one's beliefs and reformed relationships with one's general knowledge, and allows for openness to new knowledge (Daloz, 2000; Ghent, 1990; Mezirow, 2000).

Themes of Surrender

This section presents the themes of surrender identified in the literature. These themes show up with sufficient frequency to warrant their distinction as critical aspects of surrender. The themes focus on culture, defining surrender, types of surrender, consciousness, responsibility, benefits of surrender, enablers of surrender, the unknown, the present moment, paradox, and the ego's involvement with surrender. These themes create cross-conversation within the literature, and supply collective details and descriptions about surrender with which to more fully conceptualize the phenomenon.

Cultural Distinctions About Surrender

Basic distinctions can be made between Eastern, Indigenous, and Western cultural understandings of Ego, surrender, and transformation. These distinctions are generalized in nature for the sake of broadly contextualizing the concept of surrender within a global perspective, not with the intent of making judgmental comparisons of cultural differences or denying cultural similarities. This broader context assists in framing and understanding surrender more fully.

Eastern culture considers that the ego represents an illusion of one's identity, that surrender has to do with transcendence and liberation, not defeat, and that the goal of development is transformation and is usually pursued deliberately (Ghent, 1990; Levitt, 1999). Such proactive pursuit may involve cathartic experiences, but also allows for more incremental and less shattering transformational experiences as well. Eastern cultures focus more on community than individuality and fosters spiritual development in addition to practical personal development (Aronson, 2004; Levitt, 1999; Miller, 2003).

Indigenous societies are not known as discussing the ego or the Ego. They do, however, enthusiastically embrace the notion of surrender and actually sanction it in their cultural rituals (Branscomb, 1993; Ghent, 1990; Halifax, 1999; Houston, 1985). Their rites of passage value the attainment of wisdom and are geared for adolescents and young adults. They do not wait hopefully for wisdom to develop as a consequence of age but pursue it as a proactive quest in youth. They valorize personal development through instigated processes of change that take initiates away from their familiarities to enter into unknowns that challenge their capacities. Initiates enter into unknown geography, unknown psychological functioning, and unknown methods of learning. Rites of passage inflict sacred wounding for the purpose of personal growth, the awakening of one's adulthood, and transformation (Branscomb, 1993; Campbell, 2004; Houston, 1985). The goal is to gain knowledge through experiential discovery and new ways of knowing, and to then return to the community with the wisdom gained (Branscomb, 1993;

Halifax, 1999). Knowledge is considered wisdom gained through surrender of sensual and intellectual realities in order to see and experience spiritual realities.

Paths of development such as Indigenous rites of passage are mythical. Myth helps one have a sense of gratefulness and awe in the face of the monstrous mystery that is life. Shared myths underlie social systems and psychologically carry one through stages of life, but the myths must balance with one's social order and the awe of life's mysteries (Campbell, 2004). The hero or heroine of mythical journeys engages challenge, is wounded, perseveres, gains new insights, and returns to the community (Campbell, 2004; Houston, 1985; Grant, 1996). This is a process of disorientation, surrender, discovery, reflection, and return, which is parallel to the 10-phase process of transformative learning theory. Mythical paths necessarily include acts of surrender (Branscomb, 1993). The aim is to bring out one's unrealized and underutilized potential, but in actuality, mythical paths of development recover one's potential and reintroduce that potential to the world through one's transformed way of living (Campbell, 2004).

There is a universal longing for the experience of surrender: a longing to know others and to be known by others (Ghent, 1990). Both Eastern and Indigenous cultures understand the limits to intellectual knowledge and believe in the requirement to go beyond those limits to seek answers to the deep questions of life and the process of knowing self and other (May, 1982). They integrate surrender as a natural and expected act in human development. The journey of life is a journey of surrender (May, 1982). They enfold this longing to surrender and

to be known in their cultural focus on community and their beliefs and methods about personal development (Ghent, 1990).

In the West, the longing to surrender and be known becomes buried or consciously rejected in the push for independence and individuality (Ghent, 1990). Ego has been exacerbated by the West's promotion of individuality and the belief that one can have absolute mastery over one's life. The notion of mastery creates an inner contradiction with the desire for surrender (May, 1982) and surfaces as pathological behaviors (Ghent, 1990).

Western culture objectifies other as being not-me (Gozawa, 2005) and thus rigidities the division between self and other. The same other that is longed to be known becomes the Other that is judged and resisted. Jungian depth psychology is a Western psychotherapy that seeks to understand Other by investigating the shadow side of oneself, which represents Other within oneself, and addresses some of the pathologies that arise from unrealized surrender (Branscomb, 1991). Where therapies based on Eastern culture emphasize transformation and presume that the transformative experience is the cure and thereafter provides insights, therapies based on Western culture emphasize the gathering of information and presume that intellectual insights provide cures (Ghent, 1990). The different emphases—transformation versus the gathering of information—shift the role of surrender.

In addition, Western society promotes a consumer mentality that thrives on—and yet is overwhelmed with choices for—immediate gratification (Easterbrook, 2003; Myers, 2001; Schwartz, 2004). Gratification of this nature is

in direct conflict to the act of surrender or any delay in gratification. The consumer mentality feeds selfish desires and weakens the influence of moral values, morphing the ego into the Ego. Egoic thinking is a hallmark of current Western collective consciousness.

The sacred wounds of Indigenous paths of development show up in Western culture as trauma (Houston, 1985) and failed logic perceived as crisis (Hidas, 1981; Kearney, 2003). In the West, the heroic image is that of a conqueror who is already wise and accomplished as he enters battle and returns proven, as opposed to Indigenous images of man entering the mythical unknown, becoming wounded, persevering through to gain wisdom, and returning to humbly share the learning (Branscomb, 1991). There is no room for surrender in the image of a conquering hero. Unexpected disorientation shatters the psyche and results in fragmented Egos and harbored dread (Ghent, 1990) rather than wisdom gained.

Basically, Western culture suggests that the Ego represents strength and is unconsciously reinforced through confrontational attitudes and behavior, that surrender means defeat, and that the goal of development is the accumulation of facts (Ghent, 1990; Halifax, 1999). Information is revered over wisdom.

Transformation is accidental, not pursued. Psychological literature consensually agrees that insights can prompt therapeutic change, yet there is little agreement about how such events can be realized (Levitt et al., 2004). Ego defense literature explains that insight alone is insufficient to necessarily effect change; one must work through and integrate insights to realize change (Benjamin, 1995; Eagle, 1999; S. Kreitler & H. Kreitler, 2004). Western therapeutic practices may help

one gain insights, but they assist poorly in the integration phase that effects transformation. Branscomb (1993) stresses that therapists are better at helping one open one's wounds for inspection than they are at assisting one in transforming one's personality.

Western human development is more about collection of facts, not understanding tacit knowledge (Ghent, 1990). Western culture does not glorify spiritual development or ways of knowing other than logic. There are no Western cultural practices that valorize or support the walk through disorienting dilemmas, and hence they are avoided rather than embraced. Western society has ages and events that are culturally significant, such as turning the ages of 18 and 21, or graduating from high school or college, or getting married, but these do not necessarily impart wisdom or provide for transformation and growth. In today's world, cosmology and social order are managed by secular science and reason; awe is far removed from old traditions, and as for psychological myths, there is no pedagogy that brings children into maturity and agedness (Campbell, 2004).

Western culture focuses more on content of development versus the process, and tends to supply the content of reason to the neglect of intuitive knowledge. Western developmental models focus on stages of development, such as Piaget's cognitive-stage model of development or Erikson's psychosocial theory of development (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2004), but these describe development in terms of characteristics and not necessarily the processes that evolve the traits. Some of the existential and humanistic fields of psychology emphasize more spiritual aspects of development, such as Maslow's and Roger's

focus on self-actualization (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003). However, the existential and humanistic fields of psychology—which focus on actualizing one's potential and addressing the deep philosophical questions of life—are fairly undeveloped, largely because they are seen as having an overly optimistic impression of humankind that cannot be studied empirically; therefore, they go unfunded (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003).

Jung was the first theorist to present an adult development model (Papalia et al., 2004), but this is again a stage theory. Kohlberg advanced the work of Piaget and the aspects of moral development that Piaget addressed (Papalia et al., 2004), but Kohlberg's model of moral reasoning is still stage-related and sustains a normative focus rather than incorporating advanced development or transformation. Only in the more recent years have research efforts been purposefully focused on development models that incorporate dimensions of well-being other than stage-related criteria (Demick & Andreoletti, 2003; Papalia et al., 2004), but these too remain more scientific and normative, than spiritual and transpersonal. Such developmental models also tend to focus on adult development rather than on adolescents and young adults and how youth can also have developmental trajectories that are less defined and more inclusive of spiritual development. An attempt at promoting such discussion was available in a book titled *Higher Stages of Human Development* (Alexander & Langer, 1990), but the fact that it went out of print within years of its publication is a testimony to the current inability of Western culture to move beyond scientific and normative perspectives on human development.

Aside from the distinctions between the three cultures, similarities do exist. All three—East, Indigenous, and West—seek to move toward the inner essence of man. The East does this by dissociating from the worldly self and attachment to things (Levitt, 1999). Indigenous societies do this by instigating the development of wisdom (Halifax, 1999). The West does this by encouraging positive self-evaluation based more on subjective information than external judgments by others (Levitt, 1999). The East and West are also concerned with existential anxiety. The East seeks to educate people about the illusion of ego as self and to realize that existence is more than materially viewed, and the West attempts to help people feel more secure about themselves (Levitt, 1999). Either way, existential dread is reduced.

There is also a complimentary nature to Eastern, Indigenous, and Western approaches to human development. Eastern and Indigenous methods move toward the realization of the unity of humankind and surrendering to spiritual wills (Houston, 1985; May, 1982), while Western methods promote autonomy and the moving away from oppression, or avoiding the type of surrender that equates to submission to a person or a group (May, 1982). Western culture seeks to build up the individual and has done a tremendous job in that role. Western culture has keyed in on the value of differentiation in the process of human development, but currently does not have cultural rituals in place to support or encourage healthy surrender and evolve the integration phase of development. All of the cultures value the intangible and powerful functions of the human psyche; they differ in

their understanding and use of surrender in the process of psychological development.

Ages, events, or stages in human development might be considered transitional, but they are not necessarily transformational. Transformation is the shift not only in how one views and understands life, but in how one engages and lives life (Mezirow, 2000). Surrender is vital in the transformational paths of development in Eastern and Indigenous societies. It is considered essential in personal development, gaining wisdom, integrating knowledge, and optimizing human potential. This cultural perspective emphasizes that surrender needs a refreshed definition and reintroduction in Western culture.

Surrender Defined

Western culture shuns the notion of surrender and views it in terms of loss, not achievement. Western cultural myth holds individuals as conquerors, not as heroes or heroines, and allows only for glory, not surrender (Branscomb, 1991). The focus on individuality and materialism, along with ego-enhancement approaches to psychotherapy, results in mindsets that exacerbate egoic tendencies toward resistance. Egoic mindsets magnify dualistic perspectives and polarize the self from Other. Any degree of Ego release or leaning in toward an Other smacks of defeat. The goal of the Ego is to win, dominate, and be in control. Western cultural norms offer no possibility of constructive surrender (May, 1982).

The definitions of surrender that have taken precedence in Western culture are defeatist in nature (Branscomb, 1993). They include phrases such as: (a) to relinquish control to another based on demand; (b) to give up; (c) to abandon all

hope; (d) to resign oneself to something or someone; or (e) to give oneself up for capture by an enemy (Morris, 1975)

The alternative definition of surrender reads: "to give up in favor of another" (Morris, 1975, p. 1295). While this describes a giving up, it refreshes the meaning of surrender in terms of giving up for the sake of another. This is less the giving *up* with which people acquaint the term and is more about the giving *over* of something with willingness (Branscomb, 1993)—it refers to a healthy surrender. This definition has lost its familiarity in Western culture and its sciences. Surrender is a term seldom found in psychoanalytic literature and is obscure in meaning when it is used (Ghent, 1990).

Before defining what surrender is, it is helpful to describe what it is not. Some terms are used synonymously with surrender, but they have subtle shifts in definition that significantly alter their meaning and hence do not represent surrender. Those terms include *submission*, *resignation*, and *compliance*.

Submission entails a role of domination by one over another and is a perversion of surrender (LaMothe, 2005). It is an individual's conscious acceptance of reality but tainted with an unconscious un-acceptance that harbors the desire for eventual revenge (Tiebout, 1949). Submission sustains the tension between self and Other and houses distrust and a sense of betrayal (LaMothe, 2005; Tiebout, 1949). It is often a defense against hopelessness and the fear of the annihilation of one's sense of identity (LaMothe, 2005). Submission resembles surrender in its longing to know and be known, but cheats the process by sustaining a role of bondage and a sense of futility (Ghent, 1990).

Resignation holds an element of judgment (Tolle, 1999), which is contrary to the unconditional nature of healthy surrender. Resignation moves one into accordance with another, but not based on shared beliefs or trust and often as a result of exhausted failed efforts to negotiate a mutually satisfying interpersonal relationship. It often accompanies the role of submission (Ghent, 1990). Both submission and resignation have a resistant quality about them, which maintains an egoic position, not a state of surrender. To a certain degree, there is a sense of longevity to the roles of submission and resignation.

In comparison, compliance is more temporary. Like resignation, it entails a "going along with" attitude while not necessarily approving of that to which one resigns. However, compliance is about saying yes in the moment, more for the sake of convenience than for the sake of acceptance. Compliance contributes to a sense of guilt, inferiority, and shame for not standing up for oneself, and it also deceives all of those involved with the circumstance (Tiebout, 1953).

Authentic surrender has a resilient nature, not a resistant one. Resistance operates against growth or change and seeks to maintain the familiar, while surrender operates toward growth (Ghent, 1990). Rather than an Egotistical defeat, healthy surrender is a compassionate giving over that rests on trust (LaMothe, 2005). Additionally, such surrender involves commitment, openness, soulful motivation, and vibrancy.

The degree of commitment influences whether surrender is total or partial. Partial surrender results in submission, resignation, and compliance. Total surrender unconditionally yields to what is (Tolle, 1999) rather than what one

prefers or expects. Surrender is wholehearted acceptance of one's perception of reality and unreservedly yields to more than the Ego (Cohen, 2004; Jones, 1994; Tiebout, 1953). Judgments are suspended. One is involved in a code of integrity and unity with Other, and admits to not knowing the full meaning of an encounter, especially in the moment it occurs (Parlee, 1993; Wolff, 1974). This unreserved acceptance allows for openness of experience and fully embraces the unknown (May, 2004).

Surrender is liberation, expansion of self, and the letting down of defensive barriers (Ghent, 1990). It is something that takes place within one's self and is contingent upon an environment that empowers an inner trust, allowing oneself to let down the barriers that one alone puts up: to give up resistances, defenses, and self-preconceptions in service of healing, acceptance, and seeking to know Other (Branscomb, 1993; Jones, 1994; Tiebout, 1949). Surrender is an existential reality that does not objectify self or Other and instead identifies with limitlessness (May, 1982). Surrender need not be permanent; it can be a temporary relinquishment of control and suspension of beliefs (Hart, 2000). It leaves intellectual knowledge intact while releasing one to inquire further about truths (Rutledge, 2004) without an agenda for expected outcomes (Wolff, 1974). Surrender involves curiosity that is attracted to meaning, not oddity.

Surrender is a particular way of functioning, motivated by the longing for growth and connectedness (Ghent, 1990). Such willingness rests on and is motivated by trust, faith, hope, and heart-based desires for meaning; it appeals to that which dignifies and ennobles (Hawkins, 2002). Surrender is an act of faith

and a statement of hope based on trust (Hart, 2000). Surrender of this nature reacquaints one with one's humanness and innocence, not one's individuality, and enables one to see the good in Other and in the world (Branscomb, 1993; Wolff, 1974). It nourishes the needs of the soul and gently releases the wants of the Ego (Zukav, 1990).

An act of surrender is inevitably followed by a state of surrender (Tiebout, 1949), free of time and space (Hart, 2000). Surprisingly, surrender is vibrant, not passive. It is an intimate state of involvement (May, 1982) in which one actively constructs an experience while choosing to give in—to lean in toward—another (LaMothe, 2005). There is a dynamic flow of emergence and waning that actualizes the potential for enhanced meaning and communion with Other (LaMothe, 2005). One does not passively tolerate a situation nor cease personal action; instead, there is an awareness and reciprocity of responsiveness that is improvisational and un-controlling (Rutledge, 2004; Tolle, 1999).

There is not necessarily a linear relationship between trust, commitment, openness, soulful motivation, and vibrancy. The literature does not suggest anything in this regard; instead, the literature implies a simultaneous complexity and simplicity involved with surrender—it is highly alchemical. Alchemy is not a change of natural progression, but a magical transmutation that transforms one thing into another. Surrender seems alchemical.

Providing a definition of surrender risks concretizing it, and that is not the goal here. Surrender has elusive qualities that do not yield easily to definition. The definition is less important than grasping the totality of that which is being

defined. The goal of the definition provided here is to highlight the elusive traits of surrender and distinguish it from the connotations that view it as defeatist. For the sake of this dissertation, the following definition is offered.

Surrender is a trusting act to which one fully commits, releasing the perception of absolute control and certainty in order to engage a limitless unknown, allowing for the potential discovery of greater truths while being unattached to any expected outcomes.

Even more simply stated, surrender is a faithful gesture toward knowing Other and being known. In this case, faith does imply a trusting and believing in something without seeing it.

Types of Surrender

It is less necessary to define surrender in absolute terms, than it is to appreciate the essence of an act of surrender as more resilient in nature than resistant. For the remainder of this review, if the term *surrender* is used without any qualifying adjective, it is understood as the resilient form. Occasionally, later in this review, adjectives such as *authentic* are used to amplify the term *surrender*, but this does not change the core definition provided above. This distinction is specified because this section presents types of surrenders with their own qualifying adjectives. The adjectives used represent authors' attempts to describe surrender from their vantage points and do not represent standardized nomenclature. The individualized application of adjectives evidences the lack of vocabulary with which to commonly speak about the phenomenon of surrender.

The types of surrender are presented as revealed chronologically in the literature, a choice made for the sake of consistent organization rather than because it represents any historical development in conversation. The fact that these various types of surrender largely hail from authors within the field of psychology without cross-referencing one another is indicative of two things. First, the authors strive to address their observations of a psychological phenomenon that they collectively describe as surrender, but in ignorance of each others' similar observations. This evidences vacuums of information while also hinting at the bubbling nature of the subject. Second, surrender appears across domains of psychological function, which highlights the value of researching its overall role in psychological well-being and personal development.

Recovery surrenders. Tiebout (1949, 1953, 1954, 1961) was the first to blend psychiatric principles with the philosophy of AA and discuss the role of surrender in alcoholism and recovery. The term *surrender* became part of his psychiatric vocabulary when his clients first used the term to capture the essence of their recovery conversions. While he did not coin the term *recovery surrender*, it is applied here to distinguish the type of surrender(s) discussed in the literature on alcoholism and addictions.

The first three steps in the AA 12-step process specifically address the need to surrender, especially from tendencies of the Ego (Wallace, 2001). The qualities that exist in an alcoholic before surrender are defiance and grandiosity, both of which are exaggerated defenses of the Ego (Tiebout, 1949). Defiance and grandiosity resist help to the point of unreasonableness. The unconscious mind

rejects what the conscious mind perceives, and these defenses swallow up the anxieties that arise, rendering them useless in their role to effect healthy responses (Tiebout, 1949).

Due to the consuming nature of alcohol addiction, it is generally agreed that the initial surrender in recovery results from hitting bottom: realizing that all known options of functioning have failed and there is nowhere else to turn. Hitting bottom is the unconscious mind losing the rigidity of an Ego structure (Tiebout, 1953). At this point, the alcoholic decides to give up the battle with alcohol and surrender to the need for help (Tiebout, 1949).

Hitting bottom is only half the job; the other half is to stay there and gain humility via surrender (Tiebout, 1961). Reasoning cannot ensure humility or surrender; one must wholeheartedly accept one's limits (Tiebout, 1953). Surrender ceases the internal fight and the whole inner tone of one's psyche switches; one becomes wide open to reality and can listen and learn without conflict (Tiebout, 1949). Comparative adjectives that describe the before and after psyches of the hitting bottom/surrender experience are: tense-safe; nervous-composed; afraid-relaxed; and unstable-at peace (Tiebout, 1961).

While hitting bottom is a crisis moment and instigates surrender, it is only the first in a series of surrenders in the recovery process and is not fully transformative in-and-of itself. Giving-in may be sudden, but it is generally the start of a slower alteration in personality and subsequent behavior (Tiebout, 1949; White, 1979); it is not a cathartic, instantaneous recovery. For an alcoholic, surrender is a lifelong process that generally starts with crisis and continues in

varying forms, going progressively deeper in the psyche to more pervasive levels of influence (Jones, 1994). Recovery surrenders also become more and more intentional as well as spiritual over time (Jones, 1994).

Tiebout (1949, 1953, 1954, 1961) emphasizes the third step in the AA process: deciding to turn one's will over to a higher power. Surrender to a higher power instigates a conversion experience that profoundly alters one's attitudes, restructures the alcoholic's personality, and is essential in successful recovery efforts. AA considers the spiritual conversion step pivotal in reducing the Ego and achieving abstinence and preventing relapse (Jones, 1994; White, 1979). In AA, power is devalued. AA is not about self-empowerment but self-surrender to a power greater than oneself (Lechner, 2003).

While surrender to a higher power aligns with May's (1982) work in alcohol recovery, May does not stress the conversion as much as he stresses the need for the higher power to be a nonobjectified entity. When surrender is directed toward a limited or objectify-able form, the surrender is distorted and does not assist in the recovery process. Such surrender risks shifting the alcoholic's responsibilities for recovery onto the objectified entity. Surrender to a limitless higher power simultaneously acknowledges one's limitations and responsibilities.

The Ego's tendencies in alcoholic behavior trigger unconscious defensive postures that reject what alcoholics consciously perceive about their behavior. Because of this unconscious function, Tiebout (1949) believes that surrender is an unconscious event, though this is not consensus in the field of alcohol recovery.

Likewise, it is difficult to discern the degree to which recovery surrenders are resistant or resilient. The literature does not elaborate whether recovery surrenders are more begrudging in nature as opposed to more embracing.

In essence, recovery surrenders start with hitting bottom and the initial surrender that appeals for help. There is no consensus as to whether this surrender is unconscious or not. Thereafter, successive surrenders occur in varying forms that have progressively deeper effects on personal and spiritual development. Recovery surrenders also become more intentional, which implies that they are both conscious and proactive. The intentionality in these surrenders promotes proactive surrender as an effective tool for personal development, at least as evidenced in alcohol recovery.

Therapeutic surrender. *Therapeutic surrender* appears to be the lone term Hidas (1981) uses to describe a negative experience in psychotherapy in which a client's reality dissolves, bringing him or her into closer contact with unitive forces that provide foundation for a positive alteration of the self. He specifies this as a psychological experience, whereas recovery surrender is both psychological and spiritual (Jones, 1994). Hidas differentiates therapeutic surrender from acceptance and conversion, claiming that acceptance is a passive conversion and conversion is a lateral move within a system of perspectives. Therapeutic surrender is characterized by emptiness, whereas acceptance and conversion are not so hollow. Hidas views surrender as the vulnerable beginning to profound reorientation to life. He also states that therapeutic surrender has little value in

therapies such as treatment for weight control or vocational rehabilitation, and is more geared toward depth-oriented and transpersonal psychotherapy.

There is a ready clash in understanding surrender in the field of psychology. Hidas (1981) uses the term *surrender* in relationship to catharsis, whereas recovery surrender is not necessarily cathartic. Hidas also limits the role of therapeutic surrender; he invalidates any broader potential it may have by dismissing the value that it could play in subclinical cases. In contrast, recovery surrender takes on many forms and uses well into normative situations.

The fact that Hidas (1981) specifically references the terms of acceptance and conversion may suggest familiarity with the role of surrender in alcohol recovery, but his work does not reference Tiebout. Again, the lack of such reference evidences weak cross-conversation about surrender.

Altruistic and distorted surrender. Kaplan (1984) discusses altruistic surrender in comparison to empathy. She explains that altruistic surrender is a pathologized version of empathy, first described by Anna Freud. Returning to the ego defense literature, there is little mention of a defense called *altruistic surrender*. Buckley (1995) explains that Anna postulated a form of altruism under which lie types of projection and identification. Vaillant (1995b) claims that Anna invented a defense called altruistic surrender that represents the overcoming of narcissistic death by sacrificing one's sense of self for another. Anna Freud (1985) actually discusses a form of altruism witnessed in unique expressions of projection and identification; one surrenders instinctual wishes to an object that is deemed better qualified to fulfill them. This surrender is a blend of egoism and

altruism. Anna Freud cites this as a less conspicuous form of projection and applies the descriptor of *altruistic surrender* to the behavior. There is no obvious consensus that she presents the term as an actual type of defense as opposed to simply describing a form of projection.

Kaplan (1984) explains that empathy seeks to temporarily identify with others for the sake of understanding and sensitivity, whereas altruistic surrender carries this to an extreme, where the distinction between self and other is lost. This blending of self with other is of a pathological nature, not of the enlightened form where one recognizes oneself in collective unity; it is transference of self, not a collective heightening of selves. Altruistic surrender is a maladaptive preoccupation with another person resulting from faulty boundaries. Kaplan also points out that, due to culturally designed gender roles, this type of surrender occurs more often in women as they attempt to maximize their role of nurturance. Altruistic surrender is the manifest opposite of narcissism and is the extreme overcorrection away from narcissistic tendencies. It sacrifices one's own development for the advancement of another. Kaplan describes altruistic surrender as a defense utilized to manage emotional dependence on others.

May (1982) does not use the term altruistic surrender, but he does mention cases of what he terms *distorted surrender*. In these cases, a person surrenders to an objectify-able other, whether a person, a cause, or a group. Surrendering to another is self-preservational because one objectifies another and thereby reaffirms the self in comparison. Such surrender feels selfless, but it is not; this seems very similar to altruistic surrender. Comparatively, May also discusses *true*

surrender, which occurs without attachment to any self-definition or an objectifiable other. He stipulates that people, groups, or causes can be vehicles for surrender; it is just when they become the object of surrender that the act is distorted and dysfunctional.

S. I. Shapiro and Soidla (2004) do not directly address surrender when they discuss obsessed attention, but there is a correlation. They address the role of attention and one's capacity to hear inner wisdom, and they caution against becoming too obsessed about the exact direction of one's attention. They advise that productive attention is a kind of half-attention: the art of looking and not looking at the same time, or the art of having "soft eyes." This attention is open and receptive, and results in a state of effortlessness where nothing seems to happen and yet change is effected. Obsessed attention resembles altruistic surrender, and soft eyes resembles resilient surrender.

Together, Kaplan (1984), May (1982), and S. I. Shapiro and Soidla (2004) highlight the risk of overcorrecting narcissistic tendencies with obsessed objectification. Narcissism is pathologized selfishness; altruistic is pathologized selflessness. Either extreme is psychologically unhealthy.

Cathartic and primary surrender. Branscomb (1993) specializes in the psychology of trauma and explains that surrender occurs in the space after the psychological wound and before transformation. According to Branscomb, ego defenses are protective but they barricade and separate one from others, whereas surrender recaptures the possibility of innocence and being trusting. She identifies and defines two types of surrender: cathartic surrender and primary surrender.

Cathartic surrender involves the letting down of defenses that protect one from the memory of a traumatic event. It is a shedding of the layers of psychological clothing that cover layers of pain. When the therapeutic environment provides sufficient psychological protection, the client spontaneously tells his or her story. This involves a voluntary reliving of the trauma and a voluntary surrender of power to the therapist. This surrender frees the client to display the traumatic event and the wound in the trusted environment and not feel burdened with having to manage it alone. Cathartic surrender occurs first in therapy and sets the stage for primary surrender.

Branscomb (1993) does not mention Hidas (1981) and his term of therapeutic surrender and its relationship to catharsis. Both cathartic surrender and therapeutic surrender refer to phenomena that occur in the depths of the psyche. Until further discussion develops and formal nomenclature becomes established, one can only infer comparisons between the two terms.

Branscomb (1993) describes *primary surrender* as a change in one's beliefs rather than the dropping of defenses. It is a creative and reconstructive change in one's core beliefs and feelings about oneself and the world. Where cathartic surrender sheds defenses and layers of pain, primary surrender actually restructures personality. It is a surrender to a process that provides for information to be processed in new ways, effecting change in one's emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions and altering one's interface with self and Other. The core change helps one to reclaim implicit trust in Others. Primary surrender is a surrender to the belief in the good in Others and potentiates relationships. Where

the therapist is more in charge of cathartic surrender, the client is more in charge of primary surrender.

Atwood et al. (2002) address trauma involved with the annihilation of one's sense of identity and relationships. Their discussion about trauma therapy and interrelationships compliments that of Branscomb's (1993). They highlight the therapist-client relationship as key in a client's readiness to surrender to conversation about the client's trauma. One must first feel safe and understood before one can open up; there must be a field of mutuality. In this, Atwood et al. describe the environment and nature of Branscomb's cathartic surrender. They add that annihilations via trauma are different than those of psychosis or mania; specifically, trauma attacks the clients' sustaining connections with humankind, whereas in psychosis and mania, human ties are left somewhat intact. One wonders whether the nature of surrender is different—both purposefully and phenomenologically—for trauma victims versus clients of dissociative disorders.

Branscomb (1993) focuses on the functions of cathartic and primary surrender and the possibilities that they provide for psychological healing and health. Cathartic surrender seems similar to hitting bottom in alcohol recovery and to therapeutic surrender with its letting down of defenses. Primary surrender sounds similar to conversion surrender in alcohol recovery when one becomes open to learning, and is also descriptive of the epistemological changes in the transformative learning process described by Mezirow (2000). Branscomb admits that therapists have limited capacities in assisting primary surrender. Further development of the subject of surrender can assist in this area.

Transformative surrender. Wallace (2001) defines a type of surrender that he calls *transformative surrender*, based on his work that spans spiritual literature and psychological literature. In his spiritual literature, he includes Eastern traditions, Western traditions, and mysticism. In his psychological literature, he focuses dominantly on Jungian depth psychology while also integrating Freudian and self psychology. His definition of transformative surrender reads:

Surrender is the act of letting go or giving up real or symbolic aspects of one's self through either a voluntary or non-volitional process in order to maintain or re-establish a transpersonal relationship but without foreknowledge of the actual outcome, (p. 59)

Wallace (2001) stresses a teleological component: embracing a supra-ordinate relationship with something greater than the Ego. He believes this differs from surrender as understood in analytical psychologies, which he claims stop short of including transcendent relationships or considering surrender as initiating stages of individuation.

Wallace (2001) concludes that surrender is part of healthy, ongoing psychological development and that first episodes of surrender are affectively laden and difficult to engage. Part of this is due to the novelty of the experience. Subsequent surrenders become comparatively easier not only due to their familiarity, but also because the Ego has become more manageable in the process. Wallace does not cite Jones (1994), but they both discuss the developmental ease with which one can employ surrender with successive efforts. It implies practice: with repeated effort, the surrender becomes more integrated in one's lifestyle and ways of being.

Safe surrender. This type of surrender documents that the term surrender is finding its way into new areas of psychology. *Safe surrender* is considered the item being "sold" during hostage negotiations (Holloway, 2003). The evolving field of correctional psychology is developing the role and capacity of hostage negotiators. These negotiators hone their skills in both psychology and sales. They know the psychological nuances that might be functioning within a hostage taker, and apply the skills of salesmanship to evaluate the needs of a hostage taker and offer solutions. Their goal is to convince the hostage taker that there is such a thing as safe surrender.

Safe surrender could be viewed as militaristic surrender with its attempts at coercion. At the same time, hostage negotiations respect the need to create an environment of trust and safety and the belief in the good in others, which matches the descriptors of surrender in the psychological literature.

Surrender and surrender-to. Wolff (1974) differentiates between surrender and surrender-to, although he admits his own struggle to be articulate about the phenomenon of surrender and his continuous efforts to try. He states that surrender is unconscious, where the object to which one surrenders is not objectified and is virtually identical with the subject's function.

According to Wolff (1974), surrender-to is a conscious dedication and devotion to something: an object of exhaustive concern. Surrender-to has characteristics of surrender but includes consciousness and direct aim toward something. The caveat is that, if that to which one surrenders-to unexpectedly

shifts into an infinite, nonobjectified form as in surrender, then surrender-to becomes surrender.

Wolff (1974) suggests that both surrender and surrender-to are fully devoted to the task; the distinctions are unconsciousness versus consciousness, and identification with an infinite other versus an objectified other. Wolffs surrender aligns with May's (1982) surrender in alcohol recovery, stipulating that surrender must be to a nonobjectified other in order for it to be effective and not distorted; however, May is not insistent about the surrender being conscious or not.

Wolffs (1974) surrender, where the object is identical to the subject's function, is similar to the psychological state *of flow*. Flow is the state of total psychic engagement in a task with no awareness of space or time: a state of arousal and a sense of capacity without a conscious intention to control the situation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Flow is obtainable because of the flexibility in human consciousness. Wolffs surrender and Csikszentmihalyi's flow both describe a state of psychological function that is so consuming as to make the subject unconsciously engaged with it.

Wolff (1974) further typifies surrender by describing *false surrender*—an attempt at authentic surrender that fails. Wolff describes one type of false surrender as *aborted surrender*, which is an attempt at surrender that gets sabotaged by the rigidity of one's beliefs and halts the forward progress of authentic surrender. This sabotage describes the process of defenses and resistance dominating over expansive motives. Wolff also describes another false

surrender as *betrayed surrender*, in which one suspends too much of one's self and equivalently loses one's self-identity in the process; this is similar to altruistic surrender. Wolff states that the dangers of both aborted surrender and betrayed surrender can be avoided by awareness of them and cautioning against them.

Relevant material. Some literature neither discusses surrender nor aligns exactly with the noted categories of discussion herein. Yet, there are noticeable links with two subjects that surfaced in this research: heart anger, and exceptional human experiences.

Conventional approaches to anger management ask people to either hold anger in or to exuberantly discharge it in a protected environment, whereas heart anger is an alternative approach (Masters, 2000). *Heart anger* allows one to openly express anger but with compassion toward the person involved and being mindful of one's coexistence with them. It is expressed anger infused with care and awareness of Other. Heart anger both discharges energy and also expands energy, such that it opens up the sense of space. It is not a submission to anger, but a nonobstruction of energies in which one paradoxically rides the release of anger while also being swept away with it. The combination of release, openness, engagement with Other, and the paradox within the experience all match aspects of surrender.

Exceptional human experiences (EHEs) are nonordinary and transcendent experiences that may serve as gateways to realize one's full potential (Palmer & Braud, 2002). They include, but are not limited to, occasions such as transformational experiences, unitive experiences, or altered perceptions of either

space or time. People have a tendency to not disclose their stories about such experiences, both out of fear for how they will be received by others as well as from not wanting to recreate the unsettling experience for themselves. It was determined that, when people who had EHEs did disclose their stories, the outcomes included a sense of oneness, reduced stress, and overall improved well-being. These attributes are shown later in this review to also be associated with surrender. Surrender not only sounds similar to the experience of disclosing an EHE, but one could posit that surrender is itself an EHE.

Summary about types of surrender. The various authors discussed in this section are speaking about a similar phenomenon in general, but they qualify their understanding of it with the use of adjectives that reflect their observation or interpretive perspectives. Collectively, the terms recovery, therapeutic, altruistic, distorted, true, cathartic, primary, transformative, safe, aborted, false, and surrender versus surrender-to are used to describe surrender, while the details of heart anger and EHEs add extra content with which to fashion an understanding of surrender. As a whole, the descriptions of surrender speak about a psychological phenomenon that does have imposters—such as altruistic, distorted, aborted, false, and surrender-to—but functions deep in the psyche when it is authentic. Whether that depth is at the conscious or unconscious level lacks consensus.

Conscious or Unconscious

One of the more obvious controversies about surrender is whether it is a conscious or an unconscious event. Any conclusions are unclear, but there is

valuable discussion surrounding this issue. For instance, Wolff (1974) is adamant that surrender is an unconscious event whereas surrender-to is a conscious event, but he offers minimal substance to ground his comments.

With regard to recovery surrender and alcohol addictions, Tiebout (1953) states that Ego forces and perceived reality function on an unconscious level. The emotional acceptance in the hitting bottom experience, when one admits that one needs help, occurs at the same level from which the resistant behaviors function: the unconscious. In this case, there is a triggering event—hitting bottom—that effects an unconscious shift.

For alcoholics, some conscious alertness can be intentional; however, alertness alone does not effect a shift or a unitive experience, but only makes one receptive to it (May, 1982). Alertness influences the degree to which the Ego is the sole determiner of the contents of consciousness, and through therapy the dominance of the unconscious mind can be superseded (May, 1982; Tiebout, 1953).

For traumatic events, the traumas induce a type of disbelief that limits the victims' ability to take in the shocking information (Ghent, 1990). Compromising behaviors often take over, such as the defenses of submission or denial, in order to keep the disorienting information out of one's prevailing belief system lest it annihilate one's subjective understandings and collapse the ability to function (Ghent, 1990; LaMothe, 2005). The triggering event—the trauma—is managed at an unconscious level, but the process of dealing with the event and surmounting its negative impact on one's life occurs at the conscious level. In therapy, both the

surrender to the therapist in first opening up the traumatic wound for discussion and in the surrender to one's self to examine one's beliefs and re-establish a benevolent impression of Others occurs at the conscious level (Branscomb, 1993). The Ego initiates unconscious compromising behaviors during trauma because it cannot handle the assault on its way of knowing the world. Thereafter, processing the trauma via surrender becomes a conscious event.

Hidas (1981) sees surrender as functioning at the deepest levels of psychological or spiritual work in one's efforts to transcend the Ego. He views surrender as a leap that results from an abandonment of hope, when reason no longer functions adequately. He sees it functioning as an opening for the possibility of integrating greater truths about self and Other. He explains that this opening of Ego and integration of Other may begin with soul-searching work or be triggered by a crisis. Either way, one is brought to a brink of psychic collapse. If compromising behaviors dominate, then the unconscious Ego is in charge, but if self-examination takes place, consciousness is involved, making surrender to the modification of beliefs a conscious event. Hidas admits that surrender may contain both unconscious emotions and conscious cognition of events.

Hidas (1981) adds another element to the discussion—volition—and firmly states that surrender is involuntary. Wolff (1974), on the other hand, believes that surrender or the suspension of beliefs can be either unexpected or willed. Since Hidas focuses on crisis-born surrender, it could be that surrender tends to be involuntary in situations of duress and voluntary in less stressed

situations. At this point, whether surrender is voluntary, involuntary, or both lacks consensus.

As for consciousness, other viewpoints exist. Viorst (1998) claims that surrender can be conscious or unconscious. Wallace (2001) describes surrender as bringing one's consciousness together with one's unconsciousness. Rutledge (2004) describes surrender as a negotiated loss of control: a balance between control and letting go. She states that the use of thought can help to induce surrender, but that the actual act is less intellectual and more visceral or spiritual. This does not say that surrender is unconscious, but alludes to an unconscious quality. This unconscious quality sounds similar to the art of looking and not looking at the same time that S. I. Shapiro and Soidla (2004) call soft eyes.

There are several loose ends in the literature that leave this discussion open for further development, but interpretive conclusions can be made. Surrender, especially initial surrender experiences, may likely be of an unconscious nature largely triggered by crisis events such as hitting bottom in alcoholism. Once an alcoholic surrenders to needing help, the unconscious is made conscious and successive surrenders occur consciously. Even though traumatic events are psychologically managed at the unconscious level, surrender experiences in trauma related therapy occur consciously. At subclinical and normative levels of psychological functioning, surrender occurs consciously, although it can be triggered either unexpectedly or at will. The stronger the influence of the Ego, the more likely that surrender is unconscious, and certainly involuntary. Reciprocally, the more the Ego functions as the ego, the more likely

that surrender is conscious and potentially even pursued as a tool in personal development, especially spiritual development.

Surrender and suspending beliefs do not reduce one to a robotic organism (Wolff, 1974). Surrender is vibrant, not passive; it is the utmost exercise of one's reason (Wolff, 1974), for which one must be held responsible.

Responsibility

Because surrender is equated with being submissive, the assumption is that it also makes one passive. People fear that surrender will make them pushovers and passive participants of events (Tiebout, 1953). Surrender is a state that is positive, creative, and acknowledges one's responsibilities (Tiebout, 1949). One is not a pushover; one is a powerful presence.

When an act of surrender results in passivity, it is a surrender that has been sabotaged by rigid beliefs, sustaining an interest in judgment and control (May, 1982; Wolff, 1974). The Ego is ironically inadequate at controlling one's life and equally inadequate at relinquishing control. One recognizes the need to be responsible and yet does not always know exactly how to act responsibly (May, 1982).

Western society provides a great deal of liberty that empowers the right to choose and enforce free will, but liberties do not necessarily mean that one chooses wisely. Sufficient external liberties are crucial for healthy living, but liberties are flanked by responsibilities, and inner freedom and personal responsibility are the axis of personal growth (Frankl, 1984; Hart, 2000). In primitive cultures, adulthood is thrust upon one, but in Western cultures, one is

expected to assume adulthood; one has liberty with which comes the responsibility of designing one's destiny (Campbell, 2004). Freedom requires the responsible development of self. To avoid such responsibility creates apathy and serves to stagnate the development of people and society (Hart, 2000).

It is possible to survive by avoiding responsibility, but this is a life based on mindless habits and impulses (May, 1991). Surrender does release one from the sense of absolute control, but it does not abdicate one of responsibility over that which one does control (Masters, 2000). To have a life filled with meaning and creatively realize one's potential, one must responsibly put habits-of-mind to the test and experiment with perceived truths (Hart, 2000; May, 1991). Only through surrender to examination does one give substance to one's beliefs: either confirming them or modifying them appropriately (May, 1988; Wolff, 1974). When one tests one's beliefs, one becomes familiar with one's allegiance to the Ego as compared to one's allegiance to more spiritual guidance (Cohen, 2000).

The task is threefold: (a) to be responsible to notice opportunities for surrender, (b) to engage them, and then (c) to be continually responsible about one's engagement in the state of surrender. Often, opportunities for surrender are missed because of the chaos of society, the clutter of one's thoughts, and one's attachment to self-importance (May, 1982). Even if one does notice opportunities to surrender and examine truths, one must not only actively and creatively engage them, but must remain responsible after surrender. One must not simply surrender and abolish oneself of the responsibilities for subsequent actions. This type of surrender occurs, for example, when one surrenders to an authority figure and

abdicates one's responsibilities, claiming that the authority figure is then in complete control (May, 1982). One must also caution against blind obedience, which might occur, for example, when one surrenders to a leader or group in whom one fully trusts, and then neglects to be watchful about the evolving nature of that person or group (May, 1982). Such neglect results in blindly following a leader who shifts into dysfunction or whose subversive motivations become revealed but not acknowledged.

Responsibility is a constant. Surrender does not mean to live mindlessly (May, 1982). In surrender, one sees clearly and acknowledges a purposeful role within which one is responsible to act (Tolle, 1999) while simultaneously not trying to control the situation for expected outcomes (Rutledge, 2004).

Responsibility is the price for liberation (Cohen, 2000; Frankl, 1984). Irresponsibility is a choice, but it is a choice of convenience and avoidance. Convenience indulges the Ego's desires for immediate gratification and does not develop the moral side of character. Avoidance sustains a habits-of-mind lifestyle that functions on impulse rather than heartfelt passion and meaning (May, 1991), a life that risks being dominated and controlled by others. Ironically, such impulsive or habituated lifestyles risk losing the very control that the Ego connives to maintain.

The average person does not accept his or her responsibility for proactive development (Hawkins, 2002), and the current egoic level of collective human consciousness that resists proactive self-examination and growth has a particularly difficult ceiling through which to evolve (Wilber, 1996, 2001). Only

through responsible choice can one consciously cultivate and nourish the needs of one's soul and release the wants of the Ego (Zukav, 1990) to realize individual potential and life satisfaction.

One can have surrender thrust upon oneself via crisis or one can responsibly choose to surrender in the process of personal development. Acting responsibly requires consideration of self as well as others. Since consideration of others conflicts with narcissistic Ego tendencies, knowing the benefits and outcomes of surrender can offer content with which to negotiate with the Ego.

Benefits and Outcomes of Surrender

Before discussing the actual benefits and outcomes of surrender, two brief commentaries are offered that explain the use of some of the literature. These clarifications help in linking the literature and framing the unfolding understanding about the phenomenon of surrender. The first commentary speaks about the relationship between the act and the state of surrender, and the second speaks about the work of Levitt et al. (2004).

Surrender is generally discussed in the literature as a singular topic, but Tiebout (1949) did mention a distinction between the act of surrender and the state of surrender. According to Tiebout, the act is spontaneously followed by a state, which has recognizable qualities. He further explained that it is unclear as to why the shift occurs; nevertheless, changes do occur that are initiated by and consequential of the act. Tiebout's differentiation implies that surrender is a bundled experience, but the topic continues to be discussed as a singular phenomenon. Therefore, in order to present the collective benefits and outcomes

of surrender as discovered in the literature, the qualities that are assigned to the state are merged herein with the similar attributes that are ascribed to the phenomenon in general.

The content in this section that cites the work of Levitt et al. (2004) comes from insight theory: a lone theory offered by Levitt et al. in the attempt to develop a model of how people experience transformational insights and personal change. Their 5-stage model is highly duplicative of the 10-phase process delineated by transformative learning theory, but insight theory is grounded on psychological theory and research rather than educational theory. According to Levitt et al., the outcomes of potential insight experiences cannot be gained without braving negative emotions and moving into painful or uncertain psychological challenges. Because surrender is understood as such a movement, the findings of Levitt et al. speak to the subject of surrender. In addition, Tiebout (1949) describes a postsurrender state of mind that he terms *insight*, or the a-ha experience, which aligns with Levitt et al.'s (2004) work. Further, there is redundancy between Levitt et al.'s claims and the surrender literature. For all these reasons, Levitt et al.'s findings are integrated into this section.

After evaluating the content of literature that created this themed subheading—benefits and outcomes of surrender—categories were discerned into which the various benefits can be placed. These categories include sense of self, character traits, perceptions, impetus, and interpersonal effect, and are discussed in turn in the following text.

Sense of self. Surrender results in an increased sense of self-esteem (Jones, 1994), self-acceptance, and self-reliance (Levitt et al., 2004). One collectively feels a sense of happiness, inner peace, relief, and positive feelings (Jones, 1974; Levitt et al., 2004; McDonald, 2003; Tiebout, 1949; Tolle, 1999), although initially one can experience heightened anxiety depending on the extremes of the experience (Hidas, 1981; Levitt et al., 2004; Tolle, 1999; Wallace, 2001). There is a reduced sense of antagonization (Tiebout, 1949), along with an ironic sense of greater control even in the face of Ego reduction, a pride for having engaged and persevered the process, and the ability to more authentically express one's self (Levitt et al., 2004).

Character traits. There is an increase in multiple character traits that result from surrender: traits that are deemed admirable on a global basis (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2002). Surrender increases one's humility (Jones, 1994; Tiebout, 1954), receptivity (Tiebout 1949, 1954), wisdom (McDonald, 2003; Tiebout, 1949), patience (Tiebout, 1954), and tolerance (Levitt, 1999; McDonald, 2003; Tiebout, 1954). Surrender and the experiences of insight and wisdom development are also associated with increases in compassion, flexibility, adaptability, and gratitude, along with a reduction in jealous traits (Levitt, 1999; Levitt et al., 2004).

Perceptions. Overall, there is a shift in how one views the world, which then affects how one engages life. There is a greater acceptance of what is as opposed to what one might prefer things to be (Tolle, 1999), and an overall heightened awareness and sensitivity to life's nuances (May, 2004). One begins to

see that one's perceptions can stand distinct from potentially greater truths (Jones, 1994; Wolff, 1974), and information is simply processed more inclusively (Branscomb, 1993). There is a basic perception of openness to experience rather than the tendency to see boundaries (May, 2004; Tiebout, 1949, 1954), and a greater sense of security (Levitt et al., 2004). There is also an increased sense of fulfillment and meaning in life (Jones, 1994), which aligns with the reflective outcomes of states of flow in which one is flooded with gratitude (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

Impetus. Surrender takes place in the present moment, but with a direction of discovery: discovery of one's whole self and better understanding of one's unity with others (Ghent, 1990). This direction toward discovery and understanding is consistent with the universal longing to know and be known (Ghent, 1990), and the impetus for expansion versus preservation, as explained in the defense literature review.

Once the act and state of surrender are experienced, there is an inclination to repeat the experience (Wolff, 1974). Subsequent surrenders become comparatively easier due partly to their familiarity and partly to the Ego becoming more manageable as a result of the experience (Wallace, 2001). Those who have persevered experiences of insight are inclined to formulate methods for innovative application of the process across life contexts (Levitt et al., 2004). The inclination to repeat or creatively apply surrender in one's life supports the premise that, with familiarity and assistance, surrender can become less threatening and more inviting as a proactive tool in personal development.

Interpersonal effects. The numerous benefits to the individual who surrenders translate into improvements in interpersonal relationships. There is an enhanced capacity for basic trust in others and in the world in general (Branscomb, 1993). Surrender cultivates intimacy and relatedness with others (Branscomb, 1993; Masters, 2000; Tiebout, 1949), moving people toward unity with other (Hidas, 1981) while enhancing healthy autonomy (Levitt et al., 2004). Not only are relationships cultivated in the move toward unity, but Tolle (1999) adds that the shift in one's psychological makeup and behavior results in shifts in others'. Others respond to unifying behavior by being reciprocally resilient, rather than sustaining a resistant posture.

Though there are many benefits and outcomes to surrender, fear and resistance can still occur in the process. They are part of the core human responses involved with preservation and the use of defenses toward Other and the unknown.

Keys That Enable Surrender

One can be forced to submit or comply, but not to authentically surrender. Surrender is an act founded on something deeper than the intellect and yet influenced by the intellect. While one cannot force someone to surrender, or apply techniques to cause someone to surrender, one can help to create an environment wherein tangibles and intangibles uniquely intersect in a way that allows for such a transitional experience to occur (Branscomb, 1993; Ghent, 1990).

The identified keys for surrender address both internal (subjective) and external (objective) matters. There is not a magic formula to enable surrender; the

variables are many, and they each have their own spectrums of strength and influence. Some, all, or none of these keys may need to be in place for surrender to occur.

This being said, there is one factor that has paramount mention in the literature: trust. Trust—whether in self, in other, in a higher power, or in something else—is mentioned by numerous authors (Atwood et al., 2002; Branscomb, 1993; Ghent, 1990; Hidas, 1981; LaMothe, 2005; Levitt et al., 2006; Mackura, 2004; May, 1991, 2004; Tiebout, 1949, 1954). Trust is discussed more thoroughly later in this review, but generally speaking, one needs to find someone or something in which to trust, or multiples of trust in self and in other-than-self, in order to enable surrender (Ghent, 1990; LaMothe, 2005; Mackura, 2004). Trust can be both internal and external, so it spans the range of keys mentioned in this section.

Internal. Many internal keys enable surrender. Specific to psychotherapy, it is important to suspend judgment about one's self (Branscomb, 1993). The role of judgment is somewhat imparted to the therapist (Branscomb, 1993), but this is more in the form of a placeholder for judgment, not because the client actually wants the therapist to be judgmental. In fact, part of the client-therapist trust is based on the therapist being impartial (Levitt et al., 2006).

An internal key that is specifically involved with alcoholic and addictive recovery is the pivotal experience of hitting bottom; it triggers the surrender that appeals for help, after which successive surrenders can take place (Jones, 1994; Tiebout, 1949). In the treating of alcoholism, consensus also points to the critical

importance of the internal acceptance of a higher power in which one trusts and to which one surrenders one's will, often called a *conversion experience* (Finlay, 2000; Jones, 1994; Tiebout, 1949, 1953, 1954).

In any type of therapy, it is essential that clients have a personal commitment to the therapeutic process, which will include various types of surrender (Jones, 1994; Levitt et al., 2006). Any endeavor toward personal change requires commitment. Commitment helps one persevere through the repeated exposures to challenges that tend to be necessary to effect change.

The following internal keys are more general in nature and apply in or out of therapeutic contexts. Since these criteria arise from pathology-focused literature, it is important to consider how they can also be applied in more normative contexts for personal change and development.

Several of the internal keys are actually character traits, as identified in the field of positive psychology, and character traits can be developed (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). These traits include courage (Branscomb, 1993; Jones, 1994; Lucas, 1994; Mackura, 2004); honesty, with self and reality (Jones, 1994); and compassion (Levitt, 1999; May, 1991). Another vital trait is hope (Branscomb, 1993; LaMothe, 2005), which supports the key of preferring forward movement rather than remaining stationary with old habits (Mackura, 2004). Seizing the motivational desire to better know one's self and the world, rather than avoiding this desire, is also important (Levitt et al., 2004). Such motivation helps one to engage the process of surrender rather than resist or ignore it. The trait of being open to experience is also significant (May, 1982, 2004). A person open to

experience has a relative lack of defensive tendencies and is spontaneously original in shifting to less regulated thinking (E. T. Fitzgerald, 1966). Confidence is another factor that is highly supportive of surrender (Rutledge, 2004). Finally, surrender is a state of creativity, and creativity is a character strength that finds expression in surrender. In creativity, one's sense of self temporarily disappears and one engages the motivation of growth (Ghent, 1990).

Since the state of surrender is similar to the state of flow, it is worthy of note that a key to obtaining a state of flow is the perception of a manageable challenge: a balanced blend of skill and challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1997). Having a manageable blend implies that surrender is more likely to occur if the opportunity is viewed as matching one's sense of skill and desire for challenge. Perchance, the likelihood of surrender can be increased by heightening one's awareness of personal skills and consciously employing them in opportunities of challenge with Other. Understanding surrender in terms of one's sense of skill and challenge helps to explain the tendency to resist surrender and transformational development; since transformation starts with a disorienting dilemma and surrender tends to occur via crisis, the sense of challenge overwhelms one's perceived capacity or skill. This state of overwhelm creates existential dread, and existential dread thwarts transformation (Gozawa, 2005).

Another key is that of acceptance. Acceptance of what is (as opposed to what one might prefer) is central to surrender (Jones, 1994; Tolle, 1999) because surrender takes place in the present moment without any focus on the past or the future (Ghent, 1990). Having no focus on the future is not inconsistent with the

preference for forward movement. Moving toward something can take place in the present moment without focusing on the future. These distinctions can be very subtle and appear contradictory, but they are not; they refine the understanding of the subtleties of surrender.

A final internal key has to do with expectations: it is necessary to have no agenda when surrendering (Mackura, 2004; Masters, 2000). Having an agenda is weighted with expectations and compels judgmental responses. Surrender is both enabled and sustained when one does not know or anticipate what might happen.

External. In addition to the internal keys that enable surrender, there are many external keys that are valuable to have in place. Some have to do with a person or a thing, and some have to do with the place or the environment, but both have to do with a sense of protection (Atwood et al., 2002; Branscomb, 1993; Levitt et al., 2006).

The indirect object of surrender is irrelevant compared to the process; however, one does need to find someone or something in which to trust that does not impinge on one's Ego (Ghent, 1990). Unlike submission, surrender does not require another person, although most often in psychotherapy it is the therapist that is the object to which one surrenders (Branscomb, 1993; Ghent, 1990). The therapist is central to therapy and surrender (Hidas, 1981), and functions in the roles of protector, witness, spokesperson, and caregiver. Hidas (1981) believes that clients care more about enhanced understandings and improved relations with self and others than they do about trying to reduce painful symptoms; so,

therapists can benefit from looking past the symptoms and viewing therapy from a transpersonal perspective (Hidas, 1981; Levitt et al., 2006).

Before a client will trust a therapist to function in these roles, the therapist must first display that he or she cares, exhibited by appearing genuine, showing respect, and demonstrating expertise in the therapeutic process (Levitt et al., 2006). This expression of care by the therapist minimizes the perceived risk for the clients and enables their trust. Within this trusted alliance is also the belief that the therapist is understanding and can remain impartial to that which the client reveals (Levitt et al., 2006).

Once trust is gained, the functional roles of the therapist can come into play and support the surrender process. As a protector, the therapist provides physical boundaries in the way of their office space as well as time boundaries in the way of scheduled appointments, both of which ensure predictability and availability for the client (Branscomb, 1993). As a witness, the therapist provides a sense of community versus isolation and an inter subjective context (Atwood et al., 2002; Branscomb, 1993). As a spokesperson, the therapist can provide judgment of circumstances while avoiding judgment of the client, and provide validation of the client's story (Atwood et al., 2002; Branscomb, 1993). As a caregiver, the therapist both nurtures and limits, providing the necessary emotional hold while providing structure in which to let go and allow the client to experiment with his or her own development (Branscomb, 1993; LaMothe, 2005; Levitt et al., 2006).

Care enables surrender and operates on a continuum of trust, loyalty, and hope (LaMothe, 2005). As a client reveals his or her self, trust can deepen and the process can expand (Levitt et al., 2006). As the client becomes more self-reliant, the role of the therapist decreases; the therapist acts as a type of surrogate for others' approval until the client has a strong enough sense of self to be more demonstrative on his or her own (Levitt et al., 2006). At such a point, the client may have the required strength and health of ego versus Ego to tolerate the anxieties that come with change (Levitt et al., 2004).

Beyond the role of the therapist, there is the perceived protection that is provided by the environment in which the therapy or surrender takes place. It is key to have a field of mutuality. This field should ideally provide a sense of safety, physical comfort, psychological comfort that opens space for self and other, mutual respect for those engaged, and an invitation to relax (Atwood et al., 2002; LaMothe, 2005; Levitt et al., 2006). A field of mutuality can be created with combinations of physical comfort by way of furniture, lighting, colors, and general attention to environmental elements that may affect psychological issues (Bechtel & Churchman, 2002; Levitt et al., 2006; Mahnke, 1996). Mutuality can also occur by way of rituals (Campbell, 2004; Halifax, 1999; Houston, 1985), which can be highly structured or very simple, such as merely verbalizing the awareness of the field of engagement or gesturing that there is an occasion of engagement. Rituals can provide a dignity and respect in formalizing the act of surrender. The details are highly malleable depending on individual needs, but the

environment enables surrender when it is absent of dominating behaviors and when acceptance prevails (Ghent, 1990).

There is no formula to enable surrender. The literature suggests that more keys are necessary to be in place when the psychological state of the person involved is more vulnerable. Likewise, as one experiments with surrender and reduces the influence of the Ego, fewer keys need to be in place to continue successive surrender efforts.

It bears repeating that the keys facilitate the likelihood of surrender; they do not guarantee that surrender will occur (Ghent, 1990). Likewise, acts of surrender can be sabotaged, inauthentic, or not sustained fully enough to carry one to the place of insight (Levitt et al., 2004; Wolff, 1974). Surrender allows for possibilities, not certainties (Branscomb, 1993). Alternatively, one can be fairly certain that the avoidance of surrender will tend to contain the self, support developmental arrest, and allow oneself to be irresponsibly vulnerable to circumstances (May, 1988).

Overall, there is a parallel between the nature of the therapeutic process and the transformational process. Therapy speaks more to the pathology side of psychological function while transformative learning theory speaks more to the normative side, yet they are comparable. In both cases there is disorientation; in therapy, it tends to be a diagnosed dysfunction whereas outside of therapy, it is a disorienting dilemma triggered by an encounter with Other. In therapy, the therapist is pivotal, while outside of therapy, other people or things may serve as the indirect objects for surrender—but in both cases, the individual is assisted by

trust, a sense of protection, and an intersubjective context. Notably, the stage at which a therapy client experiments with his or her own development parallels phases five through eight in the transformational process that include exploration of new roles and actions, planning for action, developing skills for the new roles, and the provisional trying on of the new roles (Mezirow, 2000). Because of the strength of these parallels, among other considerations, the role of surrender can be better seen as part of psychological development and transformation overall, not just in therapeutic contexts.

Trust

Trust can be both an internal and an external enabler of surrender. In the literature, trust is the most highlighted key to surrender. Trust is "a firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of a person or thing; confident belief; faith" (Morris, 1975, p. 1378). Whether one places trust in a person, a thing, or a belief, there is the element of faith. Faith is used as a secular term in this text; faith is "a confident belief; belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence" (p. 471).

There is an element of faith that everyone experiences in his or her humanness. Faith, whether understood from a spiritual perspective or not, shows up most notably in the lived experience of love for another (May, 1982). Love is the easiest example to which people can relate and understand the intangible yet real nature of faith, of belief that does not rest on logic. Faith and trust function at the deepest levels of one's psychological life (Hidas, 1981; May, 1982). Faith is implicit in psychological transitions (Eigen, 1981).

Trust and faith mutually support one another. Trust tends to be conditioned on lived experiences, whereas faith is more unconditioned and may look at experiences of trust in making choices, but both serve as the strongest foundational elements of human function (May, 1988). Trust is somewhat contingent and framed by ego mastery, whereas faith is the experience of one's whole being; surrender is faith (Eigen, 1981).

If one accepts that faith exists, it is easier to discuss the role of trust in the act of surrender. If one cannot grasp the notion of faith, then the more tangible aspects of trust, such as past experiences, provide the intellectual substance upon which to ground an act of surrender. Unfortunately, past experiences may contradict the capacity to trust and negatively influence the capacity to surrender. This is where faith plays a supportive role in the placement of trust. Trust alone relies on a person, thing or belief, whereas both trust and faith rely on releasing one's sense of absolute control.

Trust does not mean indulgence (Masters, 2000); one cannot surrender to everyone or everything, because some acts of surrender are not wise and are potentially destructive (May, 1982). While surrender consists of stepping into the unknown, it cannot be blind. Wise surrender sees clearly without having to understand; it sees with all of one's faculties without believing that one is master over the situation. Trust and faith allow one to accept the limits of one's control while still being responsible about the wise exercise of surrender.

May (1982) offers criteria to test the legitimacy and safety of enacting surrender. According to May, one should be (a) conscious of the event;

(b) intentional about choosing to surrender; (c) willing to accept responsibility for the act of surrender; (d) willing to accept responsibility for the consequences of surrender; (e) fully committed to the mystery of the act, not committed toward an object; and (f) fully committed to the engagement of understanding, not committed to an escape or avoidance of something. May states that, if surrender meets these criteria, the likelihood of it being destructive is minimal.

The likelihood of surrender being destructive can be minimized—a reminder that risk is still involved. Trust and faith always involve risk (May, 1988). There are no guarantees in surrender; there are only possibilities (Branscomb, 1993). In a worst-case scenario, trust is the hope that surrender does not annihilate one's sense of self (LaMothe, 2005). In a best case, trust enables a sublime experience that results in all of the benefits described earlier. As surrender becomes less epochal or forced, it becomes more liminal (Wallace, 2001), enabled consciously with trust and reducing the resistance of the Ego, bringing the ego and surrender into relationship.

Trust is vital in clinical therapies. The therapist may or may not be objectified by the client, but the therapist tends to serve as the portal through which the client can surrender. The placement of trust can gradually shift away from the therapist and more toward one's self or a higher power as therapy progresses.

In cases of alcoholism or addiction, there is strong consensus that a belief and trust in a higher power is necessary for recovery to take place (May, 1982, 1988; Piedmont, 2004; Tiebout, 1949, 1953, 1954; Vaughn & Long, 1999). This

occurs consciously after the initial surrender effected by hitting bottom.

Spirituality and trusting a higher power is vital to recovery. Negativity about spirituality creates feelings of insecurity, defensiveness, and low self-esteem, whereas positive spirituality provides a durable foundation of meaning upon which to recover (Piedmont, 2004).

Generally speaking, one trusts the therapist in psychotherapy and one trusts a higher power in addiction recovery. Outside of therapy or recovery surrender, trust may be placed in self as well as in others, Others, a group, or a cause; there is the additional trust that is often placed in God or a higher power, sometimes solely and sometimes in combination with other trusts (Mackura, 2004; May, 2004). A person functioning from a state of normality is more likely to have the strength of ego to tolerate the anxieties involved with surrender and change, whether proactive or imposed.

Trust functions regardless of one's awareness or strategic use of it. Once trust is understood as part of human experience, there can be less angst and more curiosity about looking at the unknown into which one surrenders. Trust provides a freedom to be comfortable with not knowing. Trust makes the unknown a little less threatening, while not necessarily less mysterious. What is the unknown into which one surrenders?

The Unknown

Defenses are superstructures of deception that hide one's longing to know and be known (Ghent, 1990). The desire of the ego to know what lies beyond the leap of faith is contradictory to engaging the mystery of the unknown (Hidas,

1981). Much of surrender is bound simultaneously by simplicity and complexity. On the one side is simply the mystery; on the other side, the unknown is complex in its irony and paradox, at least as perceived with an egoic lens.

Humans are biologically hardwired to seek meaning, which is a distinguishing essential of humankind that helps toward realizing one's potential (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). New meanings are found in the mysteries of the unknown. The unknown is not sinister; it is a place where greater truths are hidden that can become known (May, 2004). It is the Ego's concerns that make the unknown a fearful place. The unknown provides an opportunity to find the meaning one is biologically disposed to seek.

In the unknown, one paradoxically gives of oneself and engages an opportunity to receive. It is in the giving that one can receive, but one cannot expect to receive something—one can only allow for receipt of that which emerges (May, 1982, 1991; Wallace, 2001; Wolff, 1974). The unknown helps to liberate one from attachments and expectations (May, 2004). Surrender involves detachment (Hidas, 1981). If one expects something, one seeks to get something, and *getting* is different than *receiving*. Getting is a method of obtaining something with calculated forethought, and having such an agenda is inconsistent with authentic surrender. Receiving is being open to accept what might be offered.

The act of surrender enables an opportunity to catch something (Wolff, 1974). This surrender and catch can be understood as a stretching and a yielding, which are the flowing transitions that occur between letting go and yet being actively engaged (May, 1991). In stretching, one leans in toward something

without having to grasp it; in the stretching one yields to receive without having to hold and stretches the mind without having to comprehend (May, 1991). Stretching and yielding permit flexibility and avoid the rigidity of egoic certainties.

The unknown is a place where grace and fluidity can respect individuality while appreciating unity and similarity. It is a place of cognitive and existential learning where one finds meaning in the mystery and receives something of Other that becomes known (Wolff, 1974). The unknown can provide great meaning and insights; entering it is the hard part. Acceptance is a key that enables surrender, and acceptance has to do with understanding the present moment.

The Present Moment

Full attention to what is creates a gap in the past-future continuum (Tolle, 1999, 2006). Egos tend to function with a great awareness of the past, evidenced when one ruminates or has regrets by judging past events and outcomes. The Ego also focuses on the future, when one worries and overly plans and creates expectations. The present moment cannot elicit regrets or agenda because it continually unfolds in the moment. It is neither past nor future; it is fully present.

Surrender takes place in the present moment. Surrender is the present moment acceptance of is-ness, when one takes in the truth of self and Other without the falsities erected by defenses (Ghent, 1990). When one accepts what is, one surrenders; when one surrenders, one accepts what is and finds oneself fully engaged in the present moment and cooperates receptively (Tiebout, 1953; Tolle, 1999). Surrender reaches into the is-ness of circumstances (Ghent, 1990).

In the present moment of surrender, the resistance of the unconscious has been made conscious and released (Tolle, 1999, 2006). Defiance, grandiosity, attachments, and compulsions cease; great stillness, peace, openness, and awareness arise (Tiebout, 1949; Tolle, 1999). There is a spacelessness and a stillness, and yet there is aliveness and interest in the wonders that surround oneself (Tiebout, 1954).

This is similar to the psychological state of flow. Even though flow is associated with a task, the outcome of the task is irrelevant to the individual; flow has to do with total psychic engagement with no awareness of space or time. This state is obtainable because of the flexibility of human consciousness. Flow lacks a sense of control and thrives with a sense of meaning and purpose (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1997), occurring in the timelessness of the present moment.

In the state of surrender and the present moment, one is willingly moved without being dominated; one does not lose freedom but rather is free; one is in a state that is generative (LaMothe, 2005). In the essence of the present moment is the vastness of possibilities for meaning and greater truths.

The phenomenon of surrender, with its companions of acceptance and the present moment, has an elusiveness that can only be fully known by experience, not strictly by the intellect. This is the very difficulty that Wolff (1974) expressed in struggling to articulate the qualities of surrender. This difficulty partially arises from the limits of language, but it also arises from the limited framework within which the Ego and the ego function. The Ego and the ego seek to comprehend the

paradox of surrender before committing to surrender, but paradox is incomprehensible within egoic paradigms.

Paradox

Surrender is a paradoxical phenomenon (Wallace, 2001), and so is the process of transformation and the bulk of human experience (Ferendo, 2005; Viorst, 1998). Humans are complex systems made up of systems and exist within ever larger systems, and paradox is characteristic of systemic function (Laszlo, 1996; Morin, 1999; Rowland, 1999). Paradox is simply an element of human experience and behavior, evidenced in the self as being both stable and variable, consistent and inconsistent, and agentic and routinized (Mischel & Morf, 2003).

Paradox exhibits the inexplicable, and this is difficult to embrace in Western culture because it goes against the preferential grain of logic and reason that is used to eliminate contradictions. In the act and state of surrender, there is a balance point between being in control and letting go, a paradox of being both voluntary and involuntary (Rutledge, 2004). An outcome of surrender is becoming more open and trusting while gaining wisdom; on the one hand, one becomes younger, recaptures innocence, and has the childlike capacity to see things anew, and on the other hand, one becomes older and wiser (Branscomb, 1993). In surrender, one dies to self and yet becomes born anew (Jones, 1994; Wallace, 2001); one comes to terms with one's lack of absolute power yet recognizes the abundance of one's power (Jones, 1994). In surrender, one is detached from outcomes and yet remains responsibly aware to discern new meanings (May, 1991).

The ultimate paradox of surrender is that the Ego seeks to sustain control and yet, in the process of surrender—the very act it fights against—it gains more control by realizing its actual control versus its perceived control (Jones, 1994; May, 1982). Paradox exists in the rational domain of ego consciousness, which is too small of a system in which to grasp psychological contradictions (May, 1982; Mahoney, 1991; Wilber, 2000, 2001).

Paradox is evidenced when one acts in contradiction to the very behavior that one believes will produce preferable outcomes (Leary, 2004). One reasons one way, but acts in another. By acknowledging and accepting the paradox of one's ways, one can help to avoid deducing inaccurate conclusions about oneself and others (Leary, 2004), and open the gateway for surrender and personal growth. Motives to embrace change arise when the mind is challenged and puzzles are perceived (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Hawkins, 2002). Ironically, paradoxes provide the very puzzles that the mind is disposed to solve.

Paradox can only exist when there are expectations. Without expectations, occurrences simply are what they are, not judged against an expectation or a standard. This is the challenge for the Ego: quelling its certainties and managing its inclination to control and judge via expectations. Surrender accepts what *is*.

There are times when one needs to function with a degree of expectation in life, but in the process of psychological development and transformation, there is also a need for no expectations at all. The narcissistic tendencies of the Ego incline it to minister to the selfish side of human behavior, neglecting the communal and moral side. The paradox of human behavior and the Ego's

resistance to surrender can be better seen in the comparison of dualities and the influence of polarities.

Ego and Polarities

There are limits to the egoic system beyond which one must go for answers to core questions about life itself (May, 1982). Systemic thinking creates a broader perspective within which one can observe the paradox of one's ways and allow perceptively opposing thoughts to peaceably coexist. From such a viewpoint, one can better understand the dual nature of human experience: the experience of being an individual and yet part of a greater whole. Understanding systemic dualities helps in understanding the Ego, its polarized relationship to Other, and its binary operating system of either-or judgments.

Dualities are a condition of being twofold (Morris, 1975); they are neutral and simply identify twofold natures. One can understand the twofold nature of human experience as mind and matter or as spirit and body. Either way, there is a twofold influence on one's behavior. People struggle between the mastery of life and the mysteries of life, trying to be in control and yet to be part of something larger that is in control (May, 1982). This struggle can psychologically amplify dualities and foster objectivism and narcissistic subjectivism, and thus create polarities.

Polarities are not neutral. Polarities are a manifestation of opposing attributes (Morris, 1975). It is the oppositional quality of polarities that gives them a charge, as compared to the neutral quality of dualities. Polarities occur when the spectrum of dualities is strained or severed by the Ego. This strain or severance

positions the dualities in opposition to one another rather than as distinguished points on a continuum, and the positions become charged with judgment: one side is good, the other is bad. This tendency of the Ego, and occasionally even of the ego, is exacerbated by Western culture's promotion of individuality, materialism, and ego-strengthening approaches to psychology (Easterbrook, 2003; May, 1982; Myers, 2001; Schwartz, 2004).

Listed in Figure 3 below are the dualities that stand out in this review and are presented as spectra. These dualities reveal a larger system. There is the individual *and* the community. There is the unconscious *and* the conscious. There is the self *and* other, or Other. There is the known *and* the unknown, and so on. Dualities exist and are neutral. A healthy, developed ego attempts to balance the needs of the individual along with the moral needs of the community, and so on. The ego ideally recognizes the limits of its domain of control and aims for healthy function within the twofold nature of dualities.

The Ego, on the other hand, has morphed into a narcissistic influence that weights its impact toward the left side of these dualities. The left side is not bad; it's just that the Ego, from its relative position on the left side, sees itself as correct and consequently views the other side of the duality in oppositional terms, creating a polarity. Therefore, the Ego views those items on the right side of the spectrum in negative terms. As such, the Ego constantly tries to enforce that which sustains the left side. These dualities and polarities are not right and left with regard to political ideologies; the dualities can swap sides and be just as

Individuality.....Community
 Unconscious.....Conscious
 Self.....Other
 Known.....Unknown
 Fear.....Curiosity
 Indifference.....Compassion
 Certainties.....Possibilities
 Past-Future.....Present
 Suspicion.....Trust
 Resistance.....Resilience
 Boundaries.....Freedom
 Isolated.....Connected
 Defined.....Creative
 Linear.....Holistic
 Protected.....Vulnerable
 Rigid.....Flexible
 Control.....Letting Go
 Nervous.....Composed
 Unstable.....At Peace

Figure 3. Several dualities involved in psychological function. Author's image.

indicative of the point made here: that the Ego severs dualities into polarized opponents and then acts to sustain those that indulge narcissistic preferences.

In order to enhance the unfolding understanding of surrender, it is helpful to expand this discussion of ego and polarities. The topics and new perspectives that support this expansion are ego identity, willfulness and willingness, certainties and truths, surrender and the ego, exercising character muscles, and measuring surrender. Each of these topics is discussed in turn below.

Ego identity. Without a self or an identity, one cannot purposefully control one's behavior or have the capacity to imagine oneself in someone else's place, both of which are hallmarks of human experiences and the basis of current social and cultural establishments (Leary, 2004). Western culture earnestly promotes identity development. The whole process of identity formation can be the beginning of polarities: that which one keeps as one's identity is good, and that which one rejects is bad.

An infant functions in faith, surrender, and creativity in the developmental transitions prior to his or her realization of being distinct from others (Eigen, 1981). Even at that point, self is still more a means of distinction than judgment (Papalia et al., 2004). As one ages and becomes acculturated and socialized, one's identity becomes fused with internalized beliefs and solidifies into a self defined by judgmental boundaries. Since one works so hard to establish one's sense of self, the instinct for preservation and control—which is a lower-order, primary brain function that can override higher order mental functioning—tends to make one reactionary when identity boundaries feel threatened (Phillips, 1995;

Robertson, 2000; Wilber, 1996). This survival mentality is based on the emotions of fear and anger, which distance one from the higher-order mental capacities that are so necessary for healthy functioning in today's society (Phillips, 1995; G. I. Viamontes, Beitman, C. T. Viamontes, & J. A. Viamontes, 2004). This self-preservation mode can be represented as shown in Figure 4.

self=good—————Other=bad

Figure 4. Self-preservational function. Author's image.

Psychoanalytic psychology explains that the ego is developed and fortified by resistance, identity with position, and preservational function (LaMothe, 2005; Mahoney, 1991), but too much fortification produces an Ego that masquerades its weaknesses and fears as strength and certainty (Tiebout, 1949; Tolle, 1999, 2006). The ego needs to be strengthened to the point of efficiency in mediating the dualities of conflict, not pumped up into a role of supremacy. The ego's role in human behavior and development is contributory, not absolute.

When the Ego attempts to function in absolute control, it sabotages any movement toward growth and freedom (May, 2004) and continually puts up an array of obstacles in the form of defenses, which must be overcome in order to realize its more humble position (Grant, 1996) and allow for development of one's greater potentials. Ego can become so consumed by selfish tendencies that it becomes enslaved to the pattern of habits it creates (Tiebout, 1949, 1953, 1954).

In exaggerated form, this shows up as the choiceless compulsions of addictive behaviors that turn objects into idols and creates biological dependencies that complicate one's control over behavior (May, 2004; Tiebout, 1949, 1953).

Freud held that a strong ego can assert prerogatives and a weak ego requires strengthening to do so, but he did not present a strong ego in terms of the Ego. The goal in development and therapy is to reduce the narcissistic tendencies with which one is born and weed out immaturities, weakening the Ego and strengthening the ego (Tiebout, 1961).

The Ego seeks to preserve an illusion; the ego is an identity, not a thing (Hawkins, 2002). Therapists attempt to reduce the Ego's narcissistic influences from sovereign status to more modest roles (Tiebout, 1954). In the rapid changes in today's world, one reestablishes one's identity often (Leary, 2004), but habits of mind remain and new identities are not always fully integrated into one's psychological processes. Because identity changes, so does Other (Kearney, 2003). Old Others remain while new Others form.

The polarizing Ego is thoroughly invested in its fears and desires and is a very anti-evolutionary force (Cohen, n.d.). Consciously building up and employing one's higher-order mental capacities helps quell the influence of the Ego that antagonizes interpersonal relationships, and also minimizes the chance that the Ego will unwisely use the advanced scientific and technological products that are being created (Beitman, Nair, & G. I. Viamontes, 2004; Elgin, 1993; Wilber, 1996, 2001). Consciously building a healthy ego builds the character that the Ego lacks.

Reason is no longer sufficient as a sole guide. Reason falters, fantasies flourish, and Other excites primal fears (Kearney, 2003; Phillips, 1995). This state of stress and primal responses is a result of defensive responses and resisting conditions, yet conditions have no power other than that which one imparts via labels and judgments (Hawkins, 2002). The Ego creates the very polarities that trigger its fears, creating a self-reinforcing cycle that fortifies its structures. The pivotal point in enabling surrender, breaking this cycle, and effecting personal change is the point at which the Ego accepts its limits and manages its willfulness.

Willfulness and willingness. In the West, Other is objectified as being not-me (Gozawa, 2005) and an argumentative culture has since been crafted. The insistence to use reason and logic as distinguishes of truth antagonizes polarities. Western culture thinks in terms of sides. The justice system is designed for war between litigating sides; the educational system promotes intellectual debate versus understanding and agreement; the political system is founded on oppositional houses (Tannen, 1998). The subliminal influence of this cultural design induces polarized thinking. One is often unaware of these guarded subliminal messages and the fact that they become one's own beliefs (Mezirow, 2000). In a polarized system, psyches become fractured (Kearney, 2003) and excite one to hold tightly to one's will.

Willfulness and willingness refer to one's underlying attitude toward the wonder of life itself; the Ego is more willful than it is willing (May, 1982). Willfulness can be a testimony and expression of one's dedication, perseverance, and insistence toward reaching a goal, but one can overdo willfulness and abuse

its role in overall healthy functioning (May, 1991). Extreme willfulness can be the dysfunctional use of agency that severely distinguishes self as separate from Other (Hart, 2000). Willfulness (a) works with the power of intention, (b) attempts to master or control existence, (c) says "No" to the mysteries of life or at best says "Yes-but," and (d) can appear disguised as passivity or even as willingness that is motivated by subversive intentions (Hart, 2000; May, 1982).

Willingness, on the other hand, consists of allowing; it surrenders and says "Yes" to belonging in community and is receptive (Hart, 2000). Willingness (a) realizes one's part in a greater whole, (b) enters and immerses oneself into the mysteries of Other, (c) is reverent about the wonders of life, (d) is a form of surrender that can sometimes seem assertive or even aggressive, and (e) is necessary if one wishes to develop and grow (Hawkins, 2002; May, 1982).

Surrender is a process that dances with and between control and flow (Rutledge, 2004). At one instant, one may be willful and working toward a goal, at another instant one may be willing to surrender in order to deeply commune with the moment, and the energy for growth is activated by this dynamic interplay (Hart, 2000). The wise use of will can get one to the edge of the Ego and one can will oneself into the act of surrender that carries one into the flow of possibilities and growth (Hart, 2000).

Willfulness and willingness as a duality are shown in Figure 5.

willfulness

willingness

Figure 5. Duality spectrum of will. Author's image.

According to May (1982), willfulness is the most frequent block to surrender. Willingness brings into focus those things that the Ego filters out; it broadens awareness to reveal greater clarity (May, 1982). Willingness allows something new to be considered before defining it out of existence. Recovery from any dysfunction as well as growth from places of normality is dependent on the willingness to explore new ways of looking at things, to endure inner fears when belief systems are shaken (Hawkins, 2002). One needs to paradoxically be willful to be willing. Willingness is a form of surrender that opens one's mind to appraise the validity of potential new hypotheses and truths (Hawkins, 2002; May, 1982).

Certainties and truths. The Ego usurps the longing to know and be known and filters out the desire for greater truths (Cohen, 2000). The Ego's willfulness fights against letting go of perceived certainties to allow any room for possibilities. The great tragedy is how easily the human psyche is deceived (Hawkins, 2002). Any truth that is founded on reason is only a contingent truth. Reason is funded by external proofs or approval, which themselves are based on assumptions and qualifiers, and since assumptions cannot be verified, reason yields only contingent truths (Fernandez-Armesto, 1997). The Ego refuses to acknowledge the assumptive quality of its perceived truths.

The truths one currently holds are merely modified past truths that no longer functioned consistently. Ultimate truth lies past one's feelings and logic, where conviction dies and uncertainty is accepted (Fernandez-Armesto, 1997). One has the capability to distinguish faulty truths and to bear problems in mind in order to reveal their secrets, but one doesn't necessarily possess the will or stamina to hold them long enough for the revelations (Wilber, 2001); the Ego wants immediate gratification (Easterbrook, 2003; Myers, 2001).

Human knowledge is constructed by processes of understanding and interpretation (Bentz & J. J. Shapiro, 1998), but the Ego limits the range of information allowed into this process. Likewise, new information is compared to concepts with which one is already familiar (Hawkins, 2002). Therefore, responses are more habitual, not generated with fresh curiosity. What needs to transform is the tendency to automatically respond with judgment and certainty (Gozawa, 2005).

Logic and reason afford one realm of truth. It is not until one's rigid truths become consistently questionable that one may be open to reformation. Such reformation tends to be triggered by crisis; however, it is possible that an alternative route for such examination is that of proactive surrender.

Surrender and the ego. Surrender provides a willing path toward greater understandings. Surrender allows for flexibility and movement in relation to a polarized Other and is a voluntary choice to not resist. Such a choice is as much a part of ego development as choosing to resist (LaMothe, 2005), only it exercises one's moral muscles rather than one's narcissistic muscles.

The Ego shuns surrender and yet, for all people, surrender is a necessary part of the process of maturation: a process of progressively reducing the narcissism with which one is born (Tiebout, 1961). Surrender is a bid at overcoming fear (Ghent, 1990), which expands and develops the psyche. One route to surrender is crisis. Another route is healthy ego function. Still another is through negotiation with the Ego, but the Ego can hear the voice of reason and still not accept it.

Central to personal development is learning to manage the Ego, reducing immaturity, and surrendering to a more universal identity (Hidas, 1981; Tiebout, 1961). In lieu of culturally sanctioned practices of surrender in the West, the need for universal identity and spiritual sustenance comes by way of therapy (Some', 1999), but Western ego-strengthening therapies can inadvertently build up the Ego's narcissistic muscles.

By quieting the Ego, one can soften its rigid influence and help to strengthen the health of the ego and assist the act of surrender (Hidas, 1981; Leary, 2004). Surrender is an act of ego strength void of Ego fixation (Hart, 2000); the Ego may feel like it is dying, but the ego is sustained. In the initial efforts to surrender, the Ego will feel torn, but it is through that wound that new ways of understanding arrive (Branscomb, 1991). New ways of understanding are the epistemological changes of transformation. One will feel vulnerable as one releases control (Hidas, 1981; May, 2004), and yet, the state of surrender creates a sense of freedom and more control.

Discussing surrender in the framework of egoic function is circuitous; it spins in the narrow context. As long as the Ego is in charge or the ego does not acknowledge the limits of its control, the paradox of human experiences cannot be sufficiently contextualized. In this narrow framework, surrender and Ego are combatants. Broader thinking, which can be developed, supplies a framework in which surrender and the Ego or the ego can relate. Ironically, the very fears that one perceives and resists point one in the direction for one's individualized growth and serve as portals for surrender (Hart, 2000). Each surrender exposes one to a part of the larger systems within which one functions and moves one along the path of maturation (Tiebout, 1961).

Beneath the fears of the egoic system, one finds the curiosity and courage that is willing to risk surrender and accept what unfolds (Grant, 1996). This implies that the curiosity and courage to surrender lies within a subsystem of the egoic system. Engaging the unknown is driven by a deep desire to connect (Grant, 1996). Through surrender, the Ego can grasp paradox and satisfy its deep longings for connection. Surrender is the antidote to the influences of the Ego (May, 1991). In the moment one releases the control to which the Ego clings, there is a simultaneous release of the burden of being in control (Branscomb, 1991). Surrender eases the burden of egoic boundary control.

Exercising character muscles. Figure 6 is a representation of a healthy ego situated as balanced in the dual nature of human experience.

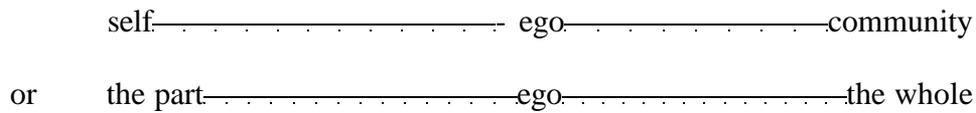


Figure 6. ego situated in a balanced position. Author's image.

Whereas, Figure 7 is a comparative representation of a narcissistic Ego situated in its more polarized position in the dual nature of human experience.



Figure 7. Ego situated in a polarized position. Author's image.

In a state of polarity, the Ego protects the boundaries of the self, and the others in community become the Others against which the Ego resists. Alternatively, community grows more inviting the more the Ego shifts its position to a more balanced relationship between self and others.

Western culture may overemphasize the process of individuation and unintentionally promote individualism. The West's intentions to build up the individual have inadvertently shifted the ego into the Ego that sides with the self, sometimes in lieu of others. Only from this point in history is this apparent.

Growing conversations about the evolution of consciousness highlight this phenomenon (Elgin, 1993; Goswami, 1993; Hawkins, 2002; Wilber, 1996, 2001). New discussions in psychological literature also address the cultural influences that entice the Ego to side with the self. These discussions highlight the paradox of abundance: having abundant material goods while still remaining unhappy and growing increasingly frustrated (Easterbrook, 2003; Myers, 2001; Schwartz, 2004).

The link between Ego frustration and the longing to be in communion with others is as old as psychoanalysis and the need for the Ego to reveal the self that is waiting to be discovered and shared (Ghent, 1990). However deep or buried, there is a longing to surrender (Ghent, 1990) and the desire to be released from the burden of control (Branscomb, 1991). The challenge continues: to build individual character and wisdom by shifting narcissistic Ego functioning toward balance with the moral/communal side of the equation, and also to assist the ego in healthily recognizing its limits within this system of balance. Figure 8 depicts an Ego that is underdeveloped in character, with individual needs being given narcissistic preference over moral considerations; whereas Figure 9 depicts an ego that is more developed in character, with individual needs being valued in balance with moral considerations.

narcissism.....Ego.....moral considerations

Figure 8. Underdeveloped character and Ego. Author's image.

innate needs

ego.....moral considerations.

Figure 9. Developed character and ego. Author's image.

Fear of the unknown and of Other is simply a condition of preunderstanding (Kearney, 2003). One may think that one lives by virtues and influences that can be controlled, but one is in fact governed by more than oneself (Hawkins, 2002). Under the fear of Other lies the desire to practice charity (Leary, 2004) and the curiosity and courage that are willing to risk surrender (Grant, 1996). Surrender is the flex of moral character muscles. The ability to surrender is a powerful indicator of one's commitment to personal development (Mackura, 2004) and the active consideration of more than just the self.

Measuring surrender. When one is gentle with initial efforts to exercise new behavior, one weans the body from one state into another. The goal is for a permanent shift of the Ego into the form of the ego (Tiebout, 1954), but overcoming the Ego is slow, repetitive, and seemingly endless (S. I. Shapiro & Soidla, 2004). Character muscles are intangible. One cannot see that which changes, but one can observe the shifts in behavior that evidences change (Tiebout, 1954).

An instrument called The Surrender Scale, developed by Reinert (1992, 1997), can potentially measure surrender. It was created largely on the work of

Tiebout (1953, 1954, 1961) and the four keys that Tiebout recognized as involved with the act of surrender for alcoholics. These keys are accepting one's limitations, giving up control to a higher power, shifting aggressive and negative feelings to more positive ones, and sensing unity with the world (Reinert, 1997). The instrument is a 25-item questionnaire that asks about openness, acceptance, trust, hope, higher powers, control, wisdom and personal growth themes, unity, and flexibility.

High scores of surrender correlate to lower levels of psychopathology—such as depression, paranoia, and anxiety—and lower tendencies for egoic control orientation (Reinert, 1997). Reduced egoic control is consistent with Tiebout's (1949, 1953, 1954, 1961) observations that surrender reduces narcissism, provides for greater acceptance of what *is*, and elicits a more peaceful attitude. These outcomes evidence a shift in the function of the Ego toward that of the ego. Other results show a relationship between surrender and a greater sense of God-mediated control, which is also consistent with Tiebout's (1949, 1953, 1954, 1961) interpretation of surrender and the philosophy of AA.

While the instrument may provide a tool for empirical studies and potentially illuminate the internal shifts that occur in personal development, one can question what is actually being measured. The instrument is comprised of questions that elicit only either-or responses, and such responses fall within an ego paradigm and hence may not reveal the nuances of authentic surrender. As such, the instrument may not measure actual experiences of surrender as much as it might measure approximations of surrender. The scale may be more helpful in

gauging the ranges of partial surrenders or therapeutic progress than in documenting actual surrender experiences. Reinert (1997) admits that the instrument needs further research to determine its applicability, but he claims that it has been sufficiently tested to deem it reasonably reliable and valid in measuring surrender as a construct.

Essentially, surrender is an exercise in flexing moral character muscles. Each flex improves overall psychological flexibility and, as moral muscles build, the Ego experiences resilience and can shift toward the ego's balanced position. Shifts toward balance reduce the polarized charge associated with Other. Given the Ego's stubbornness, initial practices of surrender will tend to be forced, highly unpleasant, and likely to produce the equivalent of sore psychological muscles. The Ego needs to consistently practice the exercise of surrender, therefore reducing the degree of associated pain. In time, surrender becomes less of a muscular pump and more of a massage of character. Additionally, surrender provides pleasure, experienced as the fulfilled longing to know and be known: to belong.

Generalized Review of the Themes of Surrender

The collected themes of surrender provide concentrated details with which to comprehend the phenomenon of surrender; these details are otherwise dilute in the disconnected, singular pieces of literature. This section offers a brief commentary to unite the overall discussion about the many identified themes, which include: cultural distinctions, types of surrender, consciousness,

responsibility, benefits, enablers, the unknown, the present moment, paradox, and ego and polarities.

The cultural distinctions about surrender put the Western notions of the phenomenon into a larger context for interpretation, which also helps to frame the discussion that defines the term of surrender. The multiple types of surrender that are presented display the variances between the phenomenon, as described by the cited authors, and yet exemplify how the phenomenon has similarities in its interpretation; those similarities, along with all of the content in this review, helped to produce the understanding in use about surrender supplied at the beginning of this chapter. That understanding states that surrender is (a) a necessary part of psychological healing and growth, (b) an exercise in psychological success versus defeat, (c) a point at which the limits of the ego and one's perceived control are realized, (d) a letting-go or dropping of the defenses—which can be voluntary or involuntary—that protect one's certainties or hide one's deep longing to heal and grow, (e) a vulnerable psychological opening that can be safe in a protected environment, and (f) a psychological movement that cannot be forced but can be facilitated.

The content that discusses consciousness, responsibility, benefits, and enablers contributes numerous elements that help to refine an understanding of surrender with specificity. The components of the unknown, the present moment, and the paradox involved with surrender help to describe the edge upon which the ego teeters before surrender occurs.

The discussion on ego and polarities generates crucial extensions of thoughts that help to describe surrender from a new perspective, while simultaneously shedding new light on ego defense functions. This discussion creatively integrates the work from the field of positive psychology. Given the noticeable alignment between defenses, resistance, the longing for connectedness, surrender, and the strengths of character studied within positive psychology, a closer look at positive psychology literature is worthwhile to the goals of this research.

Positive Psychology

There is a striking parallel between the keys and outcomes of surrender and the character strengths upon which the field of positive psychology grounds its work. In fact, there are duplications between the terms used in surrender literature and the named character strengths recognized in positive psychology. Exploring these terms and that which they represent offers added details in conceptualizing surrender.

For much of the 20th century, the field of psychology erred by focusing too much attention on the deficiencies of people by gradually pathologizing every human problem, neglecting the wellness of people and the impact of environments, and contributing very little to the understanding of human strengths (Maddux, 2002; Seligman, 2002; Snyder & Lopez, 2002; Wright & Lopez, 2002). The field researches a broad range of topics essential to a comprehensive understanding of human nature (Simonton & Baumeister, 2005). Positive psychology seeks to establish and improve one's sense of well-being by focusing

on one's strengths, and helping one build up strengths of character overall (Seligman, 2002).

Classifying Character

Peterson and Seligman (2004) created a classification handbook of character strengths in an effort to formalize the field of positive psychology and provide a diagnostic manual as a companion to the *DSMIV*. They identified character strengths that are determined to have global value and which, when in place or enhanced, are found to have direct, positive impact on personal well-being. The strengths of character are categorized under six cross-culturally identified core valued virtues and are listed in the handbook's Table of Contents as follows.

Wisdom and Knowledge

- Creativity [Originality, Ingenuity]
- Curiosity [Interest, Novelty-Seeking, Openness to Experience]
- Open-Mindedness [Judgment, Critical Thinking]
- Love of Learning
- Perspective [Wisdom]

Courage

- Bravery [Valor]
- Persistence [Perseverance, Industriousness]
- Integrity [Authenticity, Honesty]
- Vitality [Zest, Enthusiasm, Vigor, Energy]

Humanity

- Love
- Kindness [Generosity, Nurturance, Care, Compassion, Altruistic Love, "Niceness"]
- Social Intelligence [Emotional Intelligence, Personal Intelligence]

Justice

- Citizenship [Social Responsibility, Loyalty, Teamwork]
- Fairness
- Leadership

Temperance

Forgiveness and Mercy
Humility and Modesty
Prudence
Self-Regulation [Self-Control]

Transcendence

Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence [Awe, Wonder, Elevation]
Gratitude
Hope [Optimism, Future-Mindedness, Future Orientation]
Humor [Playfulness]

Spirituality [Religiousness, Faith, Purpose] (pp. ix- xi)

Many of the terms in the list are those that have been identified as keys enabling surrender or outcomes of surrender. A closer inspection of this alignment is revealing. For clarity purposes, terms from the above list are italicized in the following text.

"Although the specific content of spiritual beliefs varies, all cultures have a concept of an ultimate, transcendent, sacred, and divine force" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 601). Since *spirituality* is identified globally as a character strength and is so significant in the success of AA and addiction recovery, it argues for the object to which one can surrender: a higher power.

Creativity, while not designated as either a key or an outcome of surrender, is a trait of surrender itself; surrender is a creative state (Branscomb, 1993; Tiebout, 1949). *Openness to experience* is both a key and an outcome of surrender. *Wisdom* is an outcome of surrender and, once gained, helps to enable successive acts of surrender; so too with *compassion* and *humility*. *Courage*, *honesty*, and *hope* have all been identified as keys to surrender. *Industriousness* is not mentioned in the literature by name, but it is representative of flexibility and adaptability, which are outcomes of surrender. Likewise, *social intelligence* is not

mentioned in surrender literature, but its deployment of patience and tolerance are outcomes of surrender. *Self-regulation* as a character strength is associated with the entire conversation about surrender: Ego management. As such, it is surprising that the subject of ego, taken from the index of the handbook (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), is only mentioned in association with the strengths of kindness, integrity, wisdom, and perspective.

Kindness is a strength that theoretically results from normal psychosocial development between the ages of 25 to 50 (Erikson, 1963). "Despite the massive literature on moral development in education and guidance, surprisingly little seems to be known about how to encourage kindness and altruism directly" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 333).

Integrity is described as the regular pattern of behavior that espouses values that treat others with care (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Integrity is more than being truthful or nice; it includes taking responsibility for one's thoughts, feelings, and actions with the deliberate inclusion of others, in addition to awareness of self. The concept of psychological integrity had its greatest expression in the humanistic psychologies of the 1960s, but despite its relevance in applied settings, "the humanistic perspective has faded from the theoretical mainstream of social psychology, which is now dominated by more cognitive theories" (p. 252).

Despite the minimal mention of ego in the handbook (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), its main mention stresses that resilience of ego—the capacity to find meaning in stressful situations—assists in the development of wisdom, and

wisdom is a prized character strength. Wisdom is considered the ability to coordinate information for its deliberate use to improve individual and collective well-being. It is inhibited by Egocentrism and the traits of narcissism. *Wisdom* is most closely associated with the character strength of *perspective*, which aligns with the key and outcome of surrender known as openness. It has generally been understood that wisdom results from successful aging, or the completion of Erikson's last stage of psychosocial development called ego integrity (Erikson, 1963; Papalia et al., 2004). Unfortunately, this capacity is largely gained from age 50 onward. Fortunately, recent research and findings strongly imply that interventions at ages as early as 15 years can nurture the development of both perspective and wisdom (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). These findings duplicate what is already understood in Indigenous cultures and expressed in cultural rituals of rites of passage and the intentional instigation of wisdom development (Branscomb, 1991, 1993; Campbell, 2004; Halifax, 1999, Houston, 1985).

In addition to the literature on rites of passage, the subject of wisdom also appears in several other articles cited on surrender. Wisdom has been found to result from specific guidance by others and is motivated by both rational and spiritual influences (Levitt, 1999). Humanistic psychology seeks to assist in the deliberate development and optimization of human potential and views increased wisdom as a measure of progress (Levitt et al., 2005), and yet humanistic approaches to psychotherapy and human development have gone largely unutilized (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Wisdom is specifically identified as an outcome of surrender (Tiebout, 1949), and it is an attribute that is specifically

measured in The Surrender Scale instrument (Reinert, 1997). If one accepts that surrender relaxes character muscles and makes the Ego more resilient, one can further posit that surrender fosters the development of wisdom.

Wisdom and perspective are particularly significant in personal development and well-being. Efforts do exist in the educational system to impart wisdom and perspective through reflective and dialectic thinking; however, wisdom is not gained by imparting information, but rather through cognitive and affective experiential processes that underlie wise action and its attainment (Reznitskaya & Sternberg, 2004). Since wisdom is not gained by merely imparting information, a general concern is whether wisdom is being optimally learned or passed on in Western culture.

The handbook of character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) discusses interventions for every strength, and *Positive Psychology in Practice* (Linley & Joseph, 2004) attempts to move theory into practice by providing suggestions for strength development. The literature on positive psychology consensually expresses the need for further research to discern more methods for the development of character strengths.

Wonder, Interest, Curiosity, Openness

The overlap of the terms *wonder*, *interest*, and *curiosity* in the defense literature with the surrender literature is unexpected but evident. In the defense literature, Vaillant (1995b, 2007) uses the term *wonder* to connotatively describe its transformative contribution to psychological engagement with experiences; he pairs the term *wonder* with the term *play* and refers to their magical relationship

with experiences. Vaillant believes that wonder and play evolve with maturation and the brain's capacity to assimilate experience. From the surrender literature, Tiebout (1954) and May (1982) speak about wonder as an underlying attitude toward life that can influence one's willingness to surrender, and describe how wonder surrounds one in the present moment experience of surrender. The brief review of positive psychology literature presents wonder and play as part of the virtue of transcendence, which is the ability to connect to something larger than oneself (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Interest is a term defined most clearly by Fredrickson (1998) in the defense review and her focus on positive emotions. Fredrickson explains that interest feeds organismic motives toward growth and builds a person's base of knowledge that then becomes a durable resource. Interest broadens a person's thoughts and promotes exploration of new information. Comparatively, the positive psychology literature lists interest along with openness to experience as part of curiosity, and curiosity is considered a trait of the virtue of wisdom.

Curiosity is a term with presence in the surrender literature. Hawkins (2002) states that curiosity inspires proactive personal development but that most people respond to experiences with habituated pattern-recognition and not with fresh curiosity. Grant (1996) explains that curiosity lies beneath the fears of the ego and supplies the willingness to accept and inquire of experiences as they unfold.

Openness to experience is an additional term that is paired with curiosity and is addressed by both the defense and surrender literature. Vaillant (1995b)

considers defenses as highly creative and resulting from one's relative openness to situational influences; the more mature one is, the more open one is to situational content. He specifies that wonder and play both provide for and are experienced as openness to experience. Solomon (1998) states that being open to relating to others and to circumstances is where growth and transformation of self occurs. Surrender literature reveals that openness to experience both enables surrender and is an outcome of surrender. Openness to experience invites surrender, and in the state of surrender the openness allows for not knowing, embracing the unknown, and a lack of perceived boundaries (May, 2004; Tiebout, 1949, 1954). Positive psychology relates openness to experience with wisdom (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Collectively the literature shares a common tone about wonder, interest, curiosity, and openness to experience. A refined look at these terms can assist in further understanding surrender and defenses, and the relationship between them. Wonder is discussed first, and since interest and openness to experience are both presented in positive psychology literature as components of curiosity, the discussion about them is enfolded in the section about curiosity.

Wonder

Peterson and Seligman (2004) list wonder in relationship to the character strength of appreciation of beauty and excellence, which they shorten to the term *appreciation*. Appreciation is the ability to find, recognize, and take pleasure in the goodness that exists in physical and social worlds. A person high in this strength tends to feel the emotions of awe, wonder, and admiration. Peterson and

Seligman list such simple experiences as walking in the woods or reading novels as sufficient to evoke the response of appreciation. One who is low in this strength is described as wearing blinders to the scenes that pass by during the course of one's day. Peterson and Seligman presume that one whose mind is open to appreciation finds more joy in daily life, more ways to find meaning in life, and more ways of connecting deeply with others.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) propose three types of goodness toward which it is beneficial to respond: (a) environmental beauty, (b) displays of skills or talents by others, and (c) displays of virtues or moral goodness in others. McCrae (1996) suggests that appreciation should be compared to the trait of openness to experience, but Peterson and Seligman clarify that appreciation is a bit narrower in scope than openness to experience.

According to Peterson and Seligman (2004), the manifestations of appreciation and wonder are subtle since they involve passive receptivity and stillness. Some expressive markers can include wide-open eyes, goose bumps, or tears. Keltner and Haidt (2003), in their research on awe, add that awe and appreciation are also associated with delayed action, as one is motivated within the experience to be personally and collectively improved. Keltner and Haidt state that appreciation and awe exist at the upper reaches of pleasure and on the boundary of fear; there is a vastness experienced as something larger than oneself and there is often a simultaneous disorientation to existing mental structures that may require adjustment to assimilate the experience. In this case, there is a feeling of enlightenment as one's mental structure expands to accommodate new truths.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) explain that the early field of humanistic psychology incorporated awe and wonder into its interpretations of humankind. Carl Rogers (as cited in McCrae, 1996), a humanistic psychologist, believed that openness and awe are natural human conditions that become suppressed by acquired defenses.

Maslow, another humanistic psychologist, itemizes aspects of what he calls peak experiences, which relate to appreciation. Maslow (1994) finds that peak experiences are egoless in which polarities are transcended, the whole universe is perceived as unified, and one sees the world as good while reconciling that evil also exists. Cognition is humble and receptive, and people listen keenly. Wonder, awe, reverence, and surrender are emotional responses to the greatness of the experience. People are more loving and accepting. There is a loss of fear, anxiety, and defenses.

Maslow's hierarchy of development represents the lower levels as overcoming basic life deficits with the higher levels shifting to broader reception of life and holistic thinking (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). One who functions at the lower levels is inclined toward rational approaches to life. One who functions at the higher levels also incorporates intuitive and nonrational involvement with life and moves toward a more perfect identity, becoming more spontaneous, honest, and innocent. At these levels, one becomes less of an object and more of a psyche that is subject to the laws of higher life. Maslow's description of peak experiences sounds remarkably similar to May's (1982) description of unitive

experiences and the state of surrender in general. One can then describe the state of surrender as wondrous.

According to Peterson and Seligman (2004), the developmental course of appreciation is completely unknown. They believe that adolescents and young adults should be inclined toward maximal appreciation in their efforts to form their identities and values, but that role models for such appreciation of excellence may not be available or sought out. Until further research is done, they speculate that families, schools, and local environments that promote and support open expression of appreciation should enable the trait. Conversely, they also suggest that a culture that values cynicism and equates appreciation and wonder to naivete may inhibit the trait. On a hopeful note, they add that beauty and excellence can be found everywhere and that therefore, appreciation is a profoundly democratic virtue and accessible to everyone. Programs that provide appreciative experiences can foster this character strength. Keltner and Haidt (2003) add that awe-producing experiences can be transforming and reorient one's goals and values, and that such experiences may be one of the fastest and most powerful methods by which one can change and grow.

Curiosity

Freud described curiosity as the thirst for knowledge (Loewenstein, 1994). Peterson and Seligman (2004) list curiosity as an identified character strength that represents one's intrinsic desire for knowledge. Curiosity has been found to be one of five character strengths consistently and robustly associated with life satisfaction: the other four being hope, zest, gratitude, and love (Park, Peterson, &

Seligman, 2004). Peterson and Seligman include the terms *interest*, *openness to experience*, and *novelty-seeking* in relationship to curiosity. Generally, curiosity is the act of recognizing, pursuing, and regulating one's experience to opportunities of challenge. Comparatively, interest helps in directing one's attention, and openness to experience is a quality in how one relates to an experience, allowing for curiosity to be satisfied. Novelty-seeking, while having a curious nature, is distinguished as being motivated by boredom as opposed to seeking knowledge for pure intrinsic worth.

Evolutionarily, attraction to novel stimuli increases knowledge while fear functions to avoid novelties in preservation of the self, so curiosity is necessarily bound by approach-avoidance conflicts (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). One who is strong in curiosity tends to have more fluid attention, which allows for novelties to be recognized, explored, enjoyed, and integrated into the expansion of oneself. When avoidance dominates, one makes automatic determinations about situations and becomes subsequently shielded from further information; ironically, the shielding can trigger regret for leaving curiosity unsatisfied (van Dijk & Zeelenberg, 2007). Loewenstein (1994) and Kashdan and Fincham (2004) explain that optimal stimulation is a blend of pleasant challenge and mild anxiety; too much challenge evokes excessive anxiety and undermines curiosity, while too little challenge evokes no creative tension. This formula for optimal stimulation is similar to the need for a balance between challenge and skill that allows one to experience flow, as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1997). Loewenstein cautions that if the probability of satisfying curiosity is low or the process is too

prolonged, one may not risk the effort. He further explains that, while some people expose themselves voluntarily to situations of curiosity, it is more common for curiosity to be aroused unintentionally by disorienting experiences and violated expectations.

The benefits of curiosity are documented (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). On the individual level, curiosity, interest, and openness to experience are generally associated with positive measures such as positive affect, self-esteem, willingness to challenge stereotypes, creativity, effective complex decision-making and problem solving, greater learning, and goal perseverance. Novelty-seeking can provide the same outcomes but can potentially lead to negative outcomes from the taking on of risky behaviors. On the interpersonal level, curiosity has been shown to predict positive subjective experiences and interpersonal closeness. There is a positive correlation between curiosity and greater intimacy, and early life experiences affect one's innate penchant for curiosity.

Signs of curiosity emerge in infancy and may even be hardwired at the neurobiological level (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Curiosity is considered a transcultural phenomenon. It is a constant, natural, driving force in children and needs to be stimulated, but educational systems tend to quell curiosity, and negative caregiver experiences can thwart a child's capacity to regulate anxiety and remain open to experiences (Gatto, 2008; Holt, 1995; Loewenstein, 1994; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Reese, 2008; Torrance, 1965). In both childhood and adulthood, the perception of security in close relationships is associated with

behaviors of greater curiosity (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Because curiosity is activated by person-environment interactions, the ambiguity inherent in social situations and interpersonal encounters can be ideal for eliciting curiosity (Kashdan & Fincham, 2004; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Curiosity begets further curiosity; it is a looping process where one gains knowledge and consequently recognizes gaps in one's base of knowledge (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Loewenstein (1994) states that curiosity is a form of cognitively induced deprivation arising from the awareness of a knowledge gap. Also, new information changes one's sense of knowledge and what one conceives as knowable. According to Loewenstein, the need to fill the gap and make sense of experiences excites curiosity and causes one to pursue inquiry. He also asserts that curiosity becomes enormous when one recognizes a piece of information as having already been known but forgotten. The heightened curiosity effected by recognizing forgotten knowledge sounds parallel to Reik's (1933, 1948, 1956; all as cited in Arnold, 2007) description of surprise in the therapeutic context: surprise is an expression of resistance to recognizing something that one already knows, and surprise is most elevated when that which is forgotten is made anew.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) submit that research would profit by investigating the causal directions of the looping process of curiosity, especially since the process becomes more pronounced as one becomes more cognizant of the looping effect. They explain that researchers tend to focus on curiosity or anxiety but not on both within a given study, and this limits a fuller understanding

of curiosity's function. Likewise, the research on curiosity tends to be divided between three specialized foci: (a) novelty-seeking curiosity, (b) information-seeking curiosity, and (c) general curiosity. Loewenstein (1994) explains that, due to fundamental problems in trying to measure trait or innate differences in curiosity, state curiosity—which involves situational stimuli—holds greater promise for research efforts at this time. He believes that improved understanding of state curiosity can inform practical methods of stimulating curiosity in the broader population. Likewise, since trait curiosity may reflect cumulative situational factors, effective state-curiosity interventions may enhance trait curiosity. Peterson and Seligman (2004) hypothesize that open-ended learning experiences may increase momentary curiosity as well as create enduring curiosity, perpetuating a virtuous cycle of development. They note that the most extensive work on curiosity has been research focusing on openness to experience.

Openness to experience is a higher-order dimension of function that involves receptivity (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Curiosity is more motivational in nature while openness to experience entails unconventional sensibilities that are neither necessary nor sufficient to energize curiosity. For instance, one can be open to understanding self and others while remaining reluctant to challenge or expand oneself. Curiosity is a mechanism of action whereas openness to experience is more of a psychological posture.

McCrae (1996) explains that openness to experience is usually understood in terms of characteristics of consciousness. It manifests in the breadth, depth, and

permeability of one's consciousness in engaging and examining experiences. It is a central influence in social and interpersonal phenomena. Openness is a broad and general dimension of psychological function represented in artistic and intuitive sensitivity, depth of feelings, behavioral flexibility, curiosity, unconventional attitudes, and thinness of mental boundaries. Openness to experience has powerful and pervasive influences, not just in familial contexts but in political, cultural, and corporate contexts as well. Successful change agents are known to be high in openness to experience (McDaniel, 1992). McCrae states that openness can be seen in the need for novelty, variety, complexity, and intrinsic appreciation of experience. The need for novelty and complexity aligns with systems thinking and the evolutionary nature of open systems moving toward ever-greater complexities. McCrae points out that openness affects the nature of one's mental structures and the content that is therefore allowed in. He further maintains that established social etiquette can potentially limit the degree to which one is invited to be open. Social etiquette frames and limits the content of mental structures and may be one of the factors that Alexander et al. (1990) suggest as freezing human development in levels of ego consciousness. Openness to experience provides the room to scaffold one's mental structures to new levels.

Loewenstein (1994) indicates that being aware of one's own gap in knowledge is a precondition for experiencing curiosity; conversely, a failure to acknowledge that one does not know something creates a barrier to curiosity, and such barriers are pervasive. Research has documented that people underestimate the magnitude of their knowledge gaps. Without accurate feedback, people cannot

recognize their gaps of knowledge and hence curiosity is eliminated. One needs enough information about one's bank of knowledge and about the unknown to entice an inquiry. Then too, inquiry is generally pursued only when one expects that there is enough information to be gained to satisfy the inquiry, but if feedback is lacking to validate the accuracy of the interaction, the effort can prove frustrating for personal and interpersonal growth (Loewenstein, 1994; van Dijk & Zeelenberg, 2007).

Loewenstein (1994) points to the ironic gaps in knowledge about the topic of curiosity. He finds this noteworthy, given its widespread recognition of importance for education, scientific discovery, and multiple domains of human activity. He stresses that educators are better at educating motivated students than they are at motivating students in the first place. It is not surprising that Albert Einstein quipped about the miracle that curiosity survives formal education. Loewenstein believes that curiosity is greater when one pursues pure insights as opposed to seeking solutions to problems, and curiosity can be enhanced in cultures that value the awareness of gaps in knowledge and stimulate the practice of inquiry rather than allowing gaps to be filled with automatic responses.

Loewenstein (1994) describes curiosity as an indissoluble mixture of cognition and motivation. One's knowledge structures influence one's curiosity while, reciprocally, curiosity is an important motive involved in the formation of those structures. Loewenstein specifies that curiosity is critically positioned at the junction of cognition and motivation. Curiosity is currently an under-recognized

and underutilized innate trait that has powerful capacity to positively effect human development.

Systems Thinking

Given that (a) surrender is discussed with reference to qualities that transcend the framework of ego function, (b) ego development theories reference the systemic relationship between levels of development, (c) defense theories can benefit from boarder contexts within which to evolve defense theory, and (d) the overall literature commonly refers to psychological functions in terms of systems, a brief discussion of systems theory along with psychological literature on consciousness and self-awareness is highly supportive to the goals of this research.

First, defining the distinction between evolution and growth is helpful. In both denotative and connotative terms, *evolution* refers to significant change, generally toward greater complexity, though not necessarily toward something that is better. On the other hand, *growth* is paired synonymously with terms such as development, maturation, and cultivation; these lend a connotative understanding of improvement or betterment. Evolution is somewhat inevitable while growth or betterment is optional.

Defining a System

A system can be described as a conceptual tool that helps to understand a group of related elements organized for a purpose. Systems often have subsystems, and sub-subsystems. Three keys identify a system: (a) distinguishing

its boundaries, (b) knowing its purpose, and (c) defining the level of abstraction to be studied (Bullock & Trombley, 1999).

The longevity of a system is partially influenced by its communication paths. Directedness is the term used to understand systemic communicative routes. One-way directedness—or a closed system—limits communication and can create a self-reinforcing pattern for an individual unit within a system, whereas reciprocal communication—typical of open systems—allows for full circle communication (feedback) and growth (Barabasi, 2003; Rowland, 1999). Feedback allows for a circuitous flow of information that supports evolutionary tendencies.

Closed systems cannot survive forever, whereas open systems coevolve with their environments and go through a normal cycle of growth, death or transformation, and redesigned functioning with a new purpose (Rowland, 1999). While closed systems are static, open systems are dynamic. Open systems generally exhibit stability but eventually are punctuated by points of chaos or disorientation at hubs of concentrated influence wherein evolutionary behavior occurs: behavior comparatively known as *phase changes* or *transformation* (Barabasi, 2003; Combs, 2002; Mezirow, 2000).

As a system responds to its environment, there are times when discontinuity creates a disruption where a hub's vulnerabilities are attacked; in chaos theory, this disruption evidences a new attractor in the system that throws the patterned behaviors out of their established grooves (Combs, 2002). At these critical points, clustering behavior develops; *clustering* is the birthing process

whereby complex systems temporarily override the uniqueness of the individual parts and shift to universal behavior that gives birth to new order (Barabasi, 2003). This pattern of change is a signature of self-organization in complex systems (Barabasi, 2003).

Consciousness and Self-Awareness

Basically, systems evolve toward greater complexity, and human psychology and the phenomenon of consciousness does likewise (Laszlo, 2003). There are patterns of average behavior at any given level of psychological development and collective consciousness. Ego development literature tends to describe the patterns in terms of individual traits and behavior, while literature on the evolution of consciousness tends to discuss the patterns in terms of collective levels of behavior and differences across generations. As consciousness evolves, so do the motivations that activate behavior. Each new evolutionary level of psychological function overcomes past problems, but has its own paradigmatic weaknesses and stubbornness (Wilber, 1996, 2000, 2001). New knowledge leads to new ignorance (Morin, 1999). Evolution of consciousness initially occurred organically, but mankind is now conscious of its consciousness, and this heightened consciousness affects the growing complexity of man's psychological system. Also, evolved consciousness determined that people become culturally organized, but it did not presuppose what type of culture would be created, so cultural evolution is influenced by humankind's conscious awareness of its impact on the systems of evolution (Laszlo, 1996).

Collective awareness is influenced by individual self-awareness. Self-awareness enables one to self-direct one's development by (a) knowing who one is and what one wants; (b) consciously embracing one's feelings and actions, and minimizing the likelihood of second-guessing oneself; (c) making full use of one's innate capabilities; (d) trusting oneself; and (e) accepting the consequences of one's actions rather than unwittingly being led by others or letting pure busyness substitute for purposeful action (Langer, 2002; Rogers, 1983). A complicating factor is that cultural developments now occur too swiftly for evolution to optimize the brain's ability to meet the demands of daily change and technological advancements (Bowlby, 1973). Self-awareness is an evolutionary enhancement of brain function, yet such higher order capacities do not negate the primal survival functions of the brain (G. I. Viamontes et al., 2004). Today's sociocultural world depends on higher order cortical functioning.

Biologically, the brain is a physical, technological system that works with psychological functions. The self is a representative integration of multiple brain maps created within biological neural networks (G. I. Viamontes et al., 2004). The interdependence of established memories and the processing of new experiences is key in identity formation and development. Long-term memories are hubs in one's self system and are the substance of belief systems. Belief systems influence the creation, sustenance, and potential changes in cortical biology. Short-term memories are only temporary alterations in neural connections, while long-term memories are more permanent: the equivalent of cerebral ruts (Calvin, 2006). Experiences need to persist for two to three years in

order to redirect cortical wiring (G. I. Viamontes et al., 2004); this is the biological requirement that explains Kegan's (1982, 2000) report that, given that people are resistant to change, people tend to need repeated exposure to given challenges in order to effect a preferred change in habituated responses. Additionally, such change contributes to the reformation of mental structures; this reformation helps evolve one's scope of consciousness and assists in growth and transformation.

Biological systems and psychological systems have unique interrelatedness. By adolescence, the cognitive capacity to conceptualize and define one's identity has evolved and peaked, but cognitive abilities advance ahead of adolescents' abilities to resolve the confusion and conflicts they perceive (Harter, 2002). Wisdom does not arrive as quickly as the brain develops. As for adults, models of adult cognitive development propose more complex patterns of operational thought, which do not require biological development but do require the optimizing of capacity, and this is often neglected (Alexander et al., 1990; Hawkins, 2002; Richards & Commons, 1990). Additionally, at any age, the brain can attend closely to only a small amount of information at a time, and the kind of information brought into awareness depends on the search engine that the brain uses at the time; one's brain schemas predispose how one focuses, leaving a gap between one's actual performance and one's potential performance (Ford & Maher, 1998).

Alexander et al. (1990) claim that the brain is fully capable of higher-order function and that higher stages of function would occur naturally were it not for

the premature freezing of development that occurs via accumulated stress and the lack of appropriate support or exposure to practices for personal development. Alexander et al. state that the development of mental capacities to shift into the transcendent stages of consciousness is no more mystical or less inevitable than the more common shift from children's sensory levels of brain function to more abstract cognitive functions achieved during normal development. They stress that higher stages of consciousness exist independent of one's ability to appreciate them, and without cultural assistance to recognize and amplify human capacities, development is impeded. Alexander et al. state that transcending any given level of development requires a mental practice that frees one's attention from its habitual thoughts to progressively narrow the abyss between self and other. Also, if such a practice were introduced age-appropriately and before development freezes, the higher stages of consciousness would be inevitable consequences of normal human development.

To evolve by choice can be inspired by individual curiosity, but the greater public is not inclined toward this effort (Hawkins, 2002). The process of human development is a highly dynamic, lifelong endeavor of which one is rarely aware (Mahoney, 2002), and in that unaware state one underutilizes one's influential capacities. Systems thinking reveals not only the psychological system within individuals but also the shared destiny of humankind and the requirement for responsible cultivation of self (Morin, 1999).

Awareness arrives to the unaware person via crisis (Zukav, 1990). With today's advanced weaponry and technological complexity, crisis could mean

annihilation. Humans now have the capacity for foresight and choice. "We have become, by the power of a glorious evolutionary accident called intelligence, the stewards of life's continuity on earth. We did not ask for this role, but we cannot abjure it" (S. J. Gould as cited in Calvin, 2006, p. 92). The individual is no longer considered a passive responder to stimuli. One has choices, which influence one's sense of control and therefore what ensues relative to attaining goals and avoiding what is undesirable (Seligman, 1998, 2002; Thompson, 2002). If the choices one makes are rooted in habituated or narcissistic desires, one might attain immediate gratification but jeopardize one's longevity in exchange.

The Experience of Surrender

There is minimal literature that documents the actual experience of surrender, which may be a partial function of the overall dearth of surrender literature, but could also be a function of the privacy of the experience. Practitioners have shared their general observations of surrender in their clients, but they have not spoken about the subjective experiences of their clients. This section speaks about surrender as experienced in occasions of hitting bottom (reactive surrender) and in a unique study that provoked physical surrender with gymnastic balls (proactive surrender). In both of these subsections, participant language is provided that exemplifies feedback from the participants of the studies. These statements are representative of participant comments but are not generally verbatim quotes. However, there are occasional verbatim overlaps between the examples herein and the exact wording of the source, so page numbers are provided where appropriate to identify the related segments in the

source documents. In order to provide scope, two other discussions are also offered: unitive experiences and experiences of change.

Reactive Surrender

Stories of alcoholics hitting bottom are the most documented experience of surrender. This form of surrender is more a last-resort reaction to circumstances than it is a strategic, proactive effort of personal development. Hence, it is described here as reactive surrender, as opposed to proactive surrender, and represents recovery surrender and those of similarly severe circumstances, such as trauma or crises. Participant language in this section is representative of the participant comments found in Jones (1994), pages 178—187.

Jones (1994) studied the experience of surrender in hitting bottom in substance abusers. There are three images commonly associated with the experience: desperation, precipice, and choice. Desperation images evoke the feeling of last resort: that no other known method of functioning suffices and sobriety is the only way out of recognized misery. Some of the types of comments about this feeling of desperation shared by Jones' participants include:

I was emotionally a wreck.
I was numb.
Hopeless
I was backed up against a wall.

Precipice images equate to standing on the edge of one's life, preparing to leap into the unknown and risking action at any cost. Jones' (1994) participants offer:

There wasn't anything else left.
It was a risk I had to take.
I needed to surrender the fear of the unknown.
I was dangling from the end of my rope.

Choice images are somewhat paradoxical. While surrender occurs in desperation, it is ultimately still a choice. Jones' (1994) participants convey:

The choice was there, I could go backward or I could go forward.
I came to the choice that I did.
I chose to surrender and I choose daily.
Surrender is a lifestyle that becomes progressively real over time.
I have a choice and I make the decision.

One of the key ingredients to recovery success is the long, slow process of daily choice, and integrating surrender and its benefits into daily life. Blanco (2003) states that recovery requires very active, concentrated focus to sustain the elements of change. Achieving and maintaining this focus requires multiple forms of support such as sponsors, counselors, and support groups and meetings. This environmental support provides a positive feedback loop of information to help one remain cognizant of one's symptoms and the direction of one's progress (Bateson, 1992).

Jones (1994) lists components involved in the experience of hitting bottom and surrender: defeat, honesty, awareness of lethality, willingness to believe, willingness to risk, conscious decision, and acceptance. Defeat itself is not surrender; defeat is the hitting bottom experience, but without surrender there is no recovery. In recovery surrender, there is the simultaneous experience of hitting bottom and surrender (Lechner, 2003). The gist from one of Jones' participants was that:

All the stress and traumas just beat me until I became teachable.

Lechner explains that, when alcoholics hit bottom, they cry out "Help me, God." This is not so much a pious profession as it is a supplication to a nameless reality that is simply apprehended as not-me (Mellon, as cited in Lechner, 2003).

Blanco (2003) and Bateson (1992) describe hitting bottom and surrender as a transition experience in which one's logical framework collapses and one becomes open to consider new principals by which to organize one's behavior. One reaches the threshold of having bankrupted one's epistemology and discovers that It—the system—is larger than oneself (Bateson, 1992). With the new epistemology, transformations continue to occur within the new systemic structure as more mature defenses permit deeper self-exploration and the ability to integrate and tolerate affect-laden situations (Blanco, 2003). Surrender gives up the past framework and gives in to a new one (Lechner, 2003). It is the surrender to something larger-than-self that is vital in recovery. AA refers to this something-larger as God but leaves it to its members to determine their own interpretation of God.

Defeat must lead to honesty, and this is also a process (Jones, 1994). One Jones participant came to admit:

Maybe I am an alcoholic, maybe I really am.

Such a testimony is closely associated with the recovery component of becoming aware of the lethality of one's extreme behavior. Defeat, honesty, and awareness energize the willingness to believe in something larger than oneself, and this provides the bridge from defeat to power. Jones quickly adds that belief helps, but there is no recovery without the willingness to risk and to act: to surrender. One of his participants suggested:

Active faith is no more than risk-taking and taking risks gives God an opportunity to act.

There is a responsible relationship between self and God.

The consciousness of one's defeat and sense of lost control paradoxically reveal the magnitude of control that one still possesses. Jones' (1994) participants express comments such as:

I consciously gave up and it all worked out just fine.
Whatever happens, you are going to be all right.
Just stop fighting and let God do what He's going to do in your life.

One comes to terms with one's lack of absolute power and then comes to terms with one's actual powers. Such surrender is an act of humility in accepting responsibility for one's own behaviors and respecting the sovereignty of God or the system that is larger-than-self.

Recovery surrenders evidence the role of volition and the need to willingly risk in trusting more than oneself: to make choices on the edge of one's given ways of knowing and on the brink of the abyss of the unknown (Jones, 1994). Jones finds that surrender is a process of personality transformation where one realizes that narcissistic Ego defenses are no longer effective and one accepts a new reality. It is a new reality resulting from ruthlessly testing one's assumed truths. Jones notes that his participants demonstrated resistance and eventually moved beyond it. Hitting bottom combined with the humbling via surrender shatters the wall of resistance and allows for acceptance of what is. Jones describes the combination of hitting bottom and surrendering as an experience of becoming open to learning from others. Lechner (2003) refers to an anonymous AA member as saying that "expectations are resentments under construction"

(p. 40), and so one must be open to learning without expecting the content of the knowledge to be gained.

Lechner (2003) describes AA as a jazz program that supplies the melody to which members improvise their behaviors. Eventually, it becomes common music to which every member dances freely: individually and collectively. The improvisational nature of recovery surrender has similarities to a study of proactive surrender.

Proactive Surrender

The term *proactive surrender* is used to represent surrender that results from the voluntary seeking of surrender-provoking experiences. Rutledge (2004) designed a unique study to provide such an experience. She grounds her work in dance theory and created an opportunity for participants to experience their bodies differently than in typical movement classes. She is interested in what it is like for participants in her study to feel out of control. She compares her method to a movement activity called *contact improvisation*, which is a form of dance that is primarily about giving one's weight to another or receiving the weight of another. Participant language in this section is representative of the participant comments found in Rutledge (2004), pages 56-58.

Rutledge (2004) created an environment where participants could experiment freely with gymnastic balls. A *gymnic ball* is an inflated rubber ball sufficiently large and sturdy to allow one to lay on it with one's full body weight and give in to rolling with the ball in various directions. Rutledge believes that it is impossible to translate words into movement, yet it would be difficult for

participants to improvise surrender without some verbal prompts. Therefore, she reviewed literature from various fields including psychology, philosophy, and dance in order to find words to represent surrender. Examples of the terms she used to evoke surrender include soft, melt, under, open, release, let go, collapse, weak, light, give up, resign, quiet, trust, acceptance, yield, defeat, quit, peace, and expand.

Rutledge (2004) videotaped the sessions and met with each participant afterward, using the video to elicit detailed recollections of the experience: a methodology called *stimulated recall*. In viewing the video, her participants were able to identify moments in which they had surrendered.

In the recall sessions, Rutledge (2004) asked questions having to do with participants' perceptions of time, space, control, and relationship to the environment. She explains that, just as words are difficult to translate into movement, so too is movement difficult to translate into words, but the voice of her participants offers insights. Participants admitted to being distracted by thoughts and feelings, saying such things as:

It's all this thinking that's getting in the way of surrender.

Comments that variously represented the moments of surrender include:

I let the ball dictate, what it did I followed, I was connected.

I gave up who I wanted people to see.

I was able to go inside myself.

Time just flew by.

It's just happening.

I am in the moment.

A feeling of relief.

I feel a giving up, but sometimes only by giving up can I feel a sense of control.

Giving in and letting something happen versus giving up.

I committed.
You get flow after you've surrendered.

Rutledge (2004) finds that surrender requires training as well as trust in unknown results. She finds that surrender is an experience of transcendence, allowing one to go beyond a situation and providing for the creative process to flow. She conceptualizes the experience of surrender as going forward, trusting the process, yielding, accepting what is rather than giving up, granting or ceding of something, giving up preconceived notions, and the experience of a tension between control and release. Ultimately, the effort to describe the experience in words comes in the form of opposites: perseverance and giving in, fighting and yielding, spatial experience of linear movement, lightness and heaviness, continuous and percussive, and collapsing and suspending.

These dualistic terms describe the paradox of surrender when one attempts to understand it in rational ways. The experience translates poorly into words. It can be said that surrender functions outside of the realm of language and rationality.

Unitive Experiences

May (1982) is referenced often in the review of surrender literature. He views unitive experiences as experiences of surrender, and compares unitive experiences to forms of spiritual experiences such as conversions, charismatic events, visions, psychic experiences, possessions, and intuitive experiences. Conversions are immediate and dramatic transformations enacted by faith or passive acceptance of grace. Charismatic events include healings, prophecies, or speaking in tongues. Visions are perceptions of revelations. Psychic experiences

are associated with extrasensory perception or astral projection. Possessions are occasions of being taken over by a force or entity. Intuitive experiences are more subtle experiences of inner knowing. According to May (1982), all of these are strongly affected by personality, environment, and culture, and all of them retain a sense of self during the experience. As such, May calls all of these experiences self-defining experiences.

Comparatively, May (1982) describes unitive experiences as self-losing. These are much more common and universal experiences of consciousness, mystery, and being. It is an experience of radical spontaneity in which one feels suddenly swept up by life, wakeful, suspended in the moment, peaking with awareness in all dimensions, and void of the sense of time, space, and self. The duration of such experiences is usually short. Mental activity is suspended, leaving everything perfect as it is.

The commonness and briefness of unitive experiences makes them often go unrecognized (May, 1982). They are often transiently associated with nature, such as seeing the sun rise or walking through the woods. They can often be experienced in moments of intimacy with others: moments of feeling close to or loved by others. Major life events with others also evoke these experiences, such as the birth of a child or the death of a loved one. Unitive experiences occur quite naturally in human life, regardless of age, culture, personality type, or historical era, although they are viewed as special in Western culture and more ordinary in other cultures.

May (1982) describes three qualities that are critically important in a unitive experience, all of which need to be present. The first two are constant while the third is variable. The first is the quality of being-at-one, not in terms of feeling or sensing but in terms of no self-definition. It is not the addition of a unitive feeling to one's self but the subtraction of self-definition. There is no concept of control, accomplishment, or the doing of anything. There is no intent, aspiration, or fear. The feeling is one of eternal presence and being immersed in immediacy. While self-other distinctions disappear, a body-sense is sustained at the physical level that prevents one from, for instance, walking into trees or walls. Absent is the consideration of the self. Physical forms and structures are perceived, but there is no sense of location. Space either disappears entirely or expands infinitely.

The second quality is the change or shift in awareness (May, 1982). Intentional direction of attention ceases. In exchange, there is maximum sharpness of awareness, radical alertness, and all senses are acute without labeling or judging the sensory stimuli. There may be differences in the experience of openness in "normal" people as compared to so-called spiritual masters. Masters have overcome the fears of self-loss and this fear does not lurk in the recesses of consciousness, whereas it might in other people. The experience of expanded openness is relative to one's normative expanse of awareness.

The third quality has to do with one's reactions to the experience that occur either at the end of the experience or upon reflection of it (May, 1982). Reactive sensations consistently include wonder, awe, beauty, reverence, and a

sense of truth or tightness. One senses that the experience reveals the way things really are. Accompanying these feelings is fulfillment, warmth, and love. Some people will simply feel grateful. Often there is an associated sense of fear or anxiety, although this may not come into full awareness.

May (1982) explains that, other than for spiritual masters, there is fear involved in both self-identifying and self-losing experiences. Self-identifying experiences may reveal too much self-referent knowledge for people; an overabundance of knowledge can evoke the fear that prompts resistance in therapy and in personal change in general. Self-identified revelations threaten the habitual ways in which one views oneself. Comparatively, self-losing experiences threaten the very existence of a self-image. Unitive experiences are usually remembered as peaceful and beautiful, but there is the underlying threat related to the absence of self-definition.

May (1982) believes that extremely brief unitive experiences happen to most people multiple times every day; he is certain that the potential exists at each blinking of one's eye or at each pause of one's breath. Unitive experiences are any moment when one glimpses perfection. They occur from a willingness to experience experiences, with no willful intention, only the impression that they are gifts. Unitive experiences may well arise from the human desire for love rather than personal growth; the desire to love life itself and to be in love with creation and the universe. It is the experience of union and mutuality—of belonging—that is desired.

Meditation is often a practice used to induce unitive experiences (May, 1982). As one eases up on mental activity, the self-defining processes of the mind become less active. At a critical level, whether in meditation or in other accesses to unitive experiences, one either moves into the experience or the ego senses its conscious demise and immediately reflexes into self-definition. If the unitive experience does occur, the ego gathers resources to disrupt it. These resources show up in the form of mentally commenting on the experience, noticing oneself having the experience, or trying to grasp it. Some people try to hold onto the experience and prolong it, but this never works and is contradictory to the phenomenon. Self-consciousness always terminates the experience. Finally, if the ego does not disrupt the experience, it can provide backlashes hours or days later in the form of ill tempers, irritability, or crashing dreams. There lies in the psyche the anger of having had one's self-image stripped away.

May (1982) explains that, in spontaneous unitive experiences born unexpectedly, the ego is caught off guard. In unitive experiences born of intent, such as via meditation, the ego senses its end and moves to use its defenses. If one perseveres through the ego's maneuvers, a sense of true opening occurs that becomes more natural over time; the mystery of it all becomes less threatening. The only last threat in developing one's practice of unitive experiences is having the ego rise up as self-righteously spiritual. Once this level has been surpassed, experiences of authentic, self-less, unitive experiences occur more consistently. It is a dying to self that is associated with nonattachment to the workings of the mind. One cannot try to achieve such a unitive realization because that would be a

self-defining effort. Meditation or other practices to calm the workings of the mind must be employed with open receptivity, not as outcome-oriented or as tranquilizing escapes from reality. There is a purity to engaging or inviting unitive experiences that transcends the ego's way of knowing and functioning.

Experiences of Change

Mahoney (1991) addresses human change processes and speaks about the experience of change. He explains that modern synthesis of contributions from cognitive and developmental psychology along with systems science help to explain change processes. They involve dynamic tensions and opponent forces. The self-system seeks a moving balance between familiarity and novelty. Development is exhibited when typical methods of adaptation fall out of step with the changing world and, after periods of disorganization and distress, new adaptive patterns emerge. Knowing and learning serve the dual functions of conserving self and expanding self. Furth (as cited in Mahoney, 1991) states that this sequence of conservation, expansion, disturbance, reconstruction, and conservation is valid for all areas and all stages of development, and that an organism with schemas that no longer expand will eventually die.

Mahoney (1991) provides a list of principles involved with human development, some of which include the following. Human experience is a lifelong unfolding of epistemological processes. All psychological change involves changes in personal meanings, and personal meanings are participatory relationships expressed in patterned activities. Those relationships that involve strong (positive or negative) emotional bonds provide the most powerful contexts

for change and development. One's relationship with one's self is the most powerful determinant of one's quality of life, but the self is integrally connected to the system of relationships. Resistance to change is common and influences the pace and direction of change. Positive psychological development is facilitated by environments that accept and encourage exploration.

Mahoney (1991) shares insights into the experience of personal change. The experience is essentially the same for everyone, whether in or out of formal therapy, even though the content of the experience is individualized. The patterns of change cluster into four categories: (a) personal organization of experience, (b) resistance to change, (c) oscillations in change, and (d) changes in one's relationship with self and others. These are further discussed below.

The personal organization of change is a complex interdependence of knower, known, and knowing (Mahoney, 1991). Change cannot be separated from the experience of experience; it is relative to each individual and his or her own reference of stasis. The content of the experience is equally individual, being affected by processes that are both conscious and unconscious.

Resistance makes it possible to compare mental inputs and comprehend life (Mahoney, 1991). The concept of resistance did not originate with Freud; it was expanded by him from the findings in physical science, biology, and medicine. The existence of resistance is less controversial than its interpretation. Psychological theories variously interpret resistance as either (a) motivated avoidance (Freudian in nature, viewing avoidance as an instinctual impulse to avoid conflict), (b) motivational deficit (born of habitual stimulus-response

patterns), (c) ambivalent choice (the dualities involved with choices), (d) reactance (the centrality of freedom of choice in social interaction), and (e) self-protection (emphasizing caution). All change presents challenges that, regardless of theoretical position, effect varying degrees of resistance.

The oscillative nature of change represents the dynamic nature of change—conflict and tension are dynamic and not static (Mahoney, 1991). Mahoney believes that some of the greatest strides in understanding and facilitating human development will come from studying this phenomenon. He finds themes of expansion and contraction in client reports of experiences of change, and sees relationships with phases of activity and passivity. This representation naturalizes the change experience, and he finds that clients are reassured when they learn that their waves and cycles of experience are common and not deviant.

The changing nature of one's relationships with self and other is a function of the self-referential nature of experiences (Mahoney, 1991). Psychological change involves changes in personal meanings and core ordering processes. The term *relationship*, in this context, refers to the broad reach of relationships having to do with people as well as one's relationships to all boundaries of the familiar and the novel. Changes in relationships effect changes in attention, which then effect changes in activities. When a person changes, his or her thoughts, feelings, and behavior change, but so too does the web of their relatedness. One's relationship to self does not reduce to simplicity; it is a complex system and is central to human function.

Mahoney (1991) explains that the changes in one's relationship to self are closely associated with progress in psychotherapy. The three most common dimensions of change are openness to experience, personal agency, and self-valuation. Openness to experience provides for possibilities to be realized. Openness and closure are not fixed but are dynamic developmental processes with individual rhythms; hence, optimal development is not about only encouraging one-directional openness. Openness and closure need to be coordinated, and this is the ever-present challenge of growth.

Personal agency has to do with activity versus passivity (Mahoney, 1991). As with openness and closure, activity and passivity are relative and compliment one another. While some life circumstances benefit from activity, others benefit and can be satisfactorily altered via acceptance and surrender.

Self-valuation is the process of self-acceptance versus self-rejection (Mahoney, 1991). Rejection is not just confined to interpersonal relationships; acceptance of self versus rejection of self is vital to psychological health and efforts toward growth. One must distinguish between self-acceptance and the adequacy of that which is appraised about oneself. Self-acceptance is accepting of what is while appreciating that there is always room for growth.

Mahoney (1991) explains that change is relative to that which is familiar. The familiar is not static; it is itself dynamic and relative. The familiar can remain unchanged but only through repeated regeneration via experiences. It can be said that change occurs when one engages experiences in a manner that allows new

information to be integrated into the familiar, thereby generating new forms of familiarity. The experience of change is simply complex.

Consolidating Comments for the Entire Chapter

Where the initial pool of literature on surrender appeared unsubstantial for a thorough discussion, keen inspection revealed otherwise. The historical review offered little to understand the nature of surrender, but provided a grasp of the development of the topic over time. Tiebout's (1949) article can be considered a launch date for the subject in psychological literature. Since then, there has been scattered development of the topic largely within the categories of alcoholism and addictions, psychotherapy in general, trauma therapy, and doctoral dissertations. The field of transpersonal psychology contributed a sprinkle of literature. Links to complimentary literature provided scope to the discussion, such as literature on cultural views about surrender, transformative learning theory, insight theory, positive psychology, and systems thinking. Because the authors inconsistently reference one another, the implication is that the phenomenon of surrender is indiscriminately attracting the attention of practitioners and researchers. Given that the production of literature on surrender is slowly building momentum over time, the further implication is that interest in the subject may be approaching a critical mass that can direct significant and purposeful attention to the topic.

The discussions about the themes of surrender are particularly informative, and this content reveals the nature of the phenomenon of surrender. The cultural information helps to refine the definition of surrender and present it in positive terms, not defeatist terms; it also situates Western cultural notions of surrender

within a global context and underscores the value of reintroducing the term to Western culture with a refreshed interpretation. The types of surrender described indicate that surrender has a fundamental nature that has been described in terms of the understanding in use—essentially, surrender is understood as a positive, necessary psychological shift involved with healing and growth, and it occurs in protected environments when one drops the defenses that feign control, which then allow one to reveal and examine one's certainties and longings. An abundant collection of keys that enable surrender are identified along with an array of benefits and outcomes of surrender; this itemization of keys provides specificity in designing the environments that can facilitate the psychological surrenders that are therapeutically necessary, and itemizes identifiable value in surrendering. In addition, issues of controversy provide focus for developing further discussion and research about surrender. Examples of those issues include whether surrender is conscious or unconscious, forced or sought, and willed or unwilled. Discussion about responsibility shows that surrender is not a static psychological posture, but one that is dynamic and requires responsible involvement. The discussions about the unknown, the present moment, and paradox all reveal the more illogical aspects of surrender—the aspects that are so difficult for the rational ego to manage and that are the edge of certainty across which one moves with surrender.

Additional perspectives are offered that help to expand the framework in which to conceptualize the phenomenon of surrender. Comparing surrender to polarities as well as the flex of character muscles provides important new lenses through which to view the topic, and creates the opportunity to integrate insights

from the burgeoning field of positive psychology. With this new perspective, surrender can be viewed less as a psychological cliff-dive and more as a slide along one's developmental path. Another outlook is provided with systems thinking, which contributes new rhetoric and concepts that significantly aid in theorizing about surrender and the dynamics between self and Other.

The section about experiences of surrender shows remarkable similarities between the four examples defined as reactive surrender, proactive surrender, unitive experiences, and experiences of change. The similarities corroborate Mahoney's (1991) insistence that, while the individual content of change may be different for people, the actual experience of change is the same. Whether born of crisis or proactively pursued, the commonness between the four examples can be described with the very terms that define surrender: liberation, expansion, nourishment of the soul, vibrancy, timelessness and spacelessness, awareness, reciprocal responsiveness, and improvisation. Comparatively, one can also intuit differences between the examples, nuanced differences that imply that one's ego development and situational context influence the overall experience of surrender. It can be discerned—especially within the description of unitive experiences—that it is not the state of surrender that is different, but the elements that surround surrender that differentiate the experiences. Specifically, the degree to which the ego is invested in guarding against the unknown generates the nuances between surrenders.

All in all, that which initially looked like an unremarkable pool of literature turned out to be highly remarkable. Many factors are identified that can

enhance the likelihood that one surrenders. The state of surrender has commonness about it, along with shared benefits and outcomes to having had the experience. Distinctions between experiences of surrender revolve around circumstantial details and the degree to which one's ego tries to manage or permit the experience. This brief understanding, combined with the details in this and prior chapters, leads into the discussion of the significance of this research, as presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: SIGNIFICANCE

The purpose of this research was to deduce a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of psychological surrender as it is represented in the literature and how it might relate to psychological defense. This chapter provides a synthesis and extension of ideas from throughout this dissertation and addresses the specified goals of this research.

The primary goals were to bind the loose threads of literature on psychological surrender into a tighter fabric in order to advance, clarify, and frame an understanding of it, and to posit a relationship between surrender and psychological defenses. Secondary goals aimed to contribute to the start of nomenclature for the topic of surrender and to discern areas for future research efforts. The primary and secondary goals are met and discussed in this chapter, but unexpected outcomes are also achieved. One of those outcomes is the consolidated meta theory of ego defenses provided in the defense literature discussion; this reframes how one can look at the landscape of ego defense literature, describes the overall nature of defenses, and provides strong content with which to posit a relationship between surrender and defenses. Another unexpected outcome is the creation of a conceptual theory of surrender, provided within this chapter. This theory further distills and reframes the literature on surrender, specifically describes the nature of surrender, and provides a basic theory that can support the mission of this research, namely, to form a new

foundation upon which future research can occur to further understand surrender, ego defenses, and human resistance to change.

The Fabric of Surrender Literature

The larger, prior review of the literature on psychological surrender achieved one of the primary goals of this research: binding the loose threads of literature on the topic and weaving them into a tighter fabric that advances, clarifies, and frames a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of surrender. The historical review showed the scattered development of the topic over time. The thematic review provided the most value by framing the literature with the embedded themes discovered and with creative extensions of thought. The discussion was further extended by integrating information from the field of positive psychology, the subject of systems thinking, and the literature that addresses the experience of surrender. This blend of themes and extensions of thought created a greater understanding about surrender and supplied a form of shared knowledge across the literature and between the authors where no such cohesion existed before.

The larger review is the actual fabric of surrender literature, whereas this section is a representative swatch of that fabric. This section consolidates the larger review to provide a succinct grasp of it. In this extracted form, this section is void of citations; any specific reference to the points herein benefits from proper recognition of the original authors cited in the larger review.

The subject of surrender, as addressed in the field of psychology, had its debut in the mid-20th century. At that time, one author discussed the topic in

regard to alcoholism, recovery, and the philosophy of AA. Roughly thirty years later, new literature on the topic started to arise. Authors then approached the topic largely through the lenses of alcoholism and addictions, psychotherapy, and trauma therapy. The literature tends to discuss surrender based on clinical observations and framed within pathology, with meager mention of the role of surrender in normative development. Intentional research on surrender starts to occur in the 1990s as seen in doctoral dissertations. Overall, there is no strong pattern of development of the topic, other than a slight increasing tempo with which new literature on surrender becomes published.

Cultural differences exist in how surrender is viewed and understood relative to personal development. Western culture approaches human development more in terms of stages that are somewhat consequential to aging, but also in terms of socialization. Surrender generally connotes defeat and is not viewed as part of purposeful character development; wisdom is assumed to come with age. In the West, the ego is considered a part of psychological function. The ego tends to become associated with self-identity, which needs to be psychologically protected. Eastern cultures have more spiritual understandings of the term of surrender and its role in individual and communal development. In the East, the ego is understood as the current illusion of self-identity and is not something to which one should be attached. Indigenous cultures are particularly supportive of the role of surrender in personal development and even sanction it through instigative rites of passage for adolescents. The subject of the ego is unapparent in Indigenous cultures. The West, East, and Indigenous cultures all

value the human element; they just differ in their understanding and use of surrender in the process of development.

Surrender is generally understood in the West more as an act of submission, resignation, compliance, or defeat. It is viewed as a passive state. Therapists appreciate surrender more in terms of *giving over* rather than *giving up*. They speak of the universal longing to surrender and point out that surrender is a vibrant state. The longing to surrender gets thwarted by the ego's attempts to be the absolute master and controller of one's life.

Across the literature, various types of surrender are described. The descriptors used (e.g. therapeutic, altruistic, cathartic) are lone expressions of different authors and not yet part of a communal discussion about surrender. The differences between the types of surrender involve varying degrees of emotional content in the act of surrender and variations in clients' sense of self that enable or thwart the act. There is also discussion about personal identity and the degrees to which one does or does not lose self in the act of surrender. For instance, altruistic surrender is a pathologized blending of self with other, where self is virtually lost in the act. At the other extreme is aborted surrender, which is a false surrender sabotaged by rigid beliefs.

Some authors further distinguish surrender in terms of it being a conscious or an unconscious act, and being voluntary or involuntary. Given the disconnected nature of the literature and the lack of collective discussion about the topic, there is no consensus on these aspects of the surrender phenomenon.

Another aspect of surrender involves responsibility. This discussion revolves around interpretations of the term *surrender*. When surrender is understood more negatively and in terms of resistance, responsibility tends to be seen as relinquished in the process of surrender. When surrender is understood in positive terms and more resilient in nature, it is understood that one has a responsibility to surrender in service of personal and interpersonal well-being and to remain responsible while in the state of surrender.

Collectively, the literature reveals many benefits and outcomes of surrender: (a) increased sense of self-esteem, self-acceptance, and self-reliance; (b) a sense of happiness, inner peace, relief, and positive feelings; (c) reduced antagonization; (d) an ironic sense of greater control; (e) pride; (f) a sense of authentic expression of self; (g) improved trust in others; (h) increased humility, receptivity, wisdom, patience, tolerance, compassion, flexibility, adaptability, and gratitude; (i) reduced jealousy; (j) cultivation of intimacy and relatedness with others; (k) enhanced autonomy; (l) greater acceptance of what *is*; (m) overall heightened awareness and sensitivity to life's nuances; (n) distinction between one's perceptions and greater truths; (o) more inclusive processing of information; (p) a sense of openness; (q) a greater sense of security; (r) increased sense of fulfillment and meaning in life; (s) innovative application of surrender in other areas of one's life and the related willingness to be more inclined to proactively enact experiences of surrender; and (t) reduced resistant behavior from others as they respond to one's position of surrender. It is noted that initial experiences of surrender can be loaded with anxiety and the benefits do not necessarily arise

spontaneously and may require time to evolve. Also, fear and resistance can remain as emotional components in future acts of surrender and not necessarily be eliminated in the continued process of personal development.

The keys that help to enable the act of surrender fall into two categories: internal and external. There is no formula given as to which keys are necessary for a given person in a given circumstance. Internally, surrender is variously enabled by (a) trust; (b) suspended judgment about oneself; (c) an experience of hitting bottom; (d) acceptance of a higher power; (e) commitment to the act of surrender; (f) commitment to the therapeutic process; (g) character traits of courage, honesty, acceptance, confidence, and hope; (h) seizing the desire to know self and Other; and (i) having no expectations or personal agenda with regard to any outcomes of the act of surrender. External keys that enable surrender include (a) a sense of protection and security in the environment and the person with whom one might be engaging; (b) an indirect object in which one trusts and which provides multiple purposes for the individual of surrender, such as protector, witness, spokesperson, or caregiver; (c) a field of mutuality; (d) assistive environmental comfort, colors, and lighting; and (e) rituals that formalize the act of surrender with respect and dignity. These keys can facilitate surrender but do not guarantee it.

Trust is identified as the most important ingredient for surrender to occur. The capacity to trust is influenced by cumulative life experiences as well as present situational elements. The indirect object in which one trusts is individualized and can vary from a higher power, self, other, or Other. Trust can

be placed singularly, such as in a higher power, or it can be placed in multiple objects, such as in a higher power, and in a therapist, and in one's self. Trust provides the freedom to not know and to engage the act of surrender with a sense of protection. Discernment is also necessary in enacting surrender; one should not necessarily surrender to everyone and every situation. There are criteria that help to determine the advisability of surrendering.

The unknown into which one surrenders is the place of mystery where curiosities can be pursued. The unknown is a place that exists in the present moment, not the past or the future, and liberates one from attachments and expectations. Surrender can only happen in the present moment and can reveal a context within which contradictory phenomena can exist without judgment or confusion.

The literature consistently states that surrender reduces the narcissistic tendencies of the Ego. In a healthy psychological state, the ego neutrally manages psychological content and one's sense of self, which is important in personal development, interpersonal relationships, and effective functioning in today's complex world. Developmentally, the ego evolves in relationship to the external world. Personal predispositions, life experiences, and sociocultural influences all impact the makeup of the ego throughout life. The Ego tends to be very willful and selfish and resists surrender, while the ego is more able to be willing to surrender. The Ego is certain of its perceived truths, whereas the ego allows for greater truths to be sought and discovered. The Ego ironically functions in contradiction to its deep desire to know others and to be known by others. This

longing is often buried deep in the psyche where the rigid and narcissistic nature of the Ego keeps it hidden. Current psychological therapies attempt to reduce the Ego to its more proportional role as ego: not Ego as master but ego as a neutral mechanism that balances personal needs with moral responsibilities.

The burgeoning field of positive psychology approaches psychological well-being from the normative side of health. Whereas most psychological therapies address pathologies of Ego and dysfunctional behaviors, positive psychology seeks to identify and build up one's strengths of character. Many of the character strengths recognized and studied by positive psychology—identified as globally valued—match the keys, benefits, and qualities of surrender. It is posited in this research that one act of surrender simultaneously exercises multiple character-strength muscles.

Overall, the literature reveals that surrender is a nameable act that is instantaneously followed by a state of surrender. It is a phenomenon that occurs in therapeutic processes as well as in normative processes of personal development. The literature highlights the beneficial role that surrender plays in psychological health, and the need for further research about it.

A Theory of Surrender

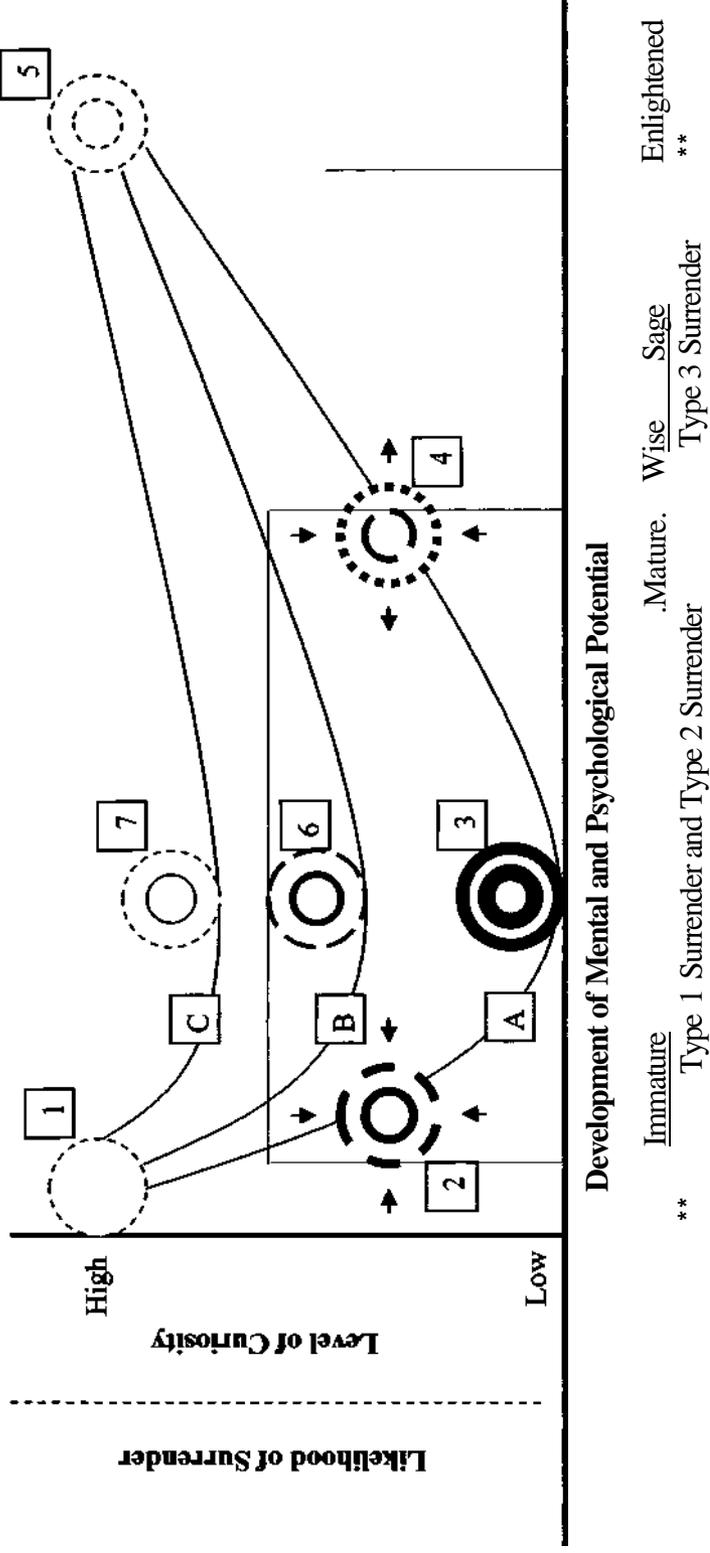
This research provides a conceptual theory of surrender. The nature of the phenomenon of surrender can be described as developmental, evolutionary, alchemical, relational, contextual, communicative, and both innate and learned. Each of these descriptors is discussed in this section. This theory is based on interpretive integration and extension of the defense theories, ego development

theories, descriptive and empirical accounts of surrender in the literature, and findings and propositions offered by the fields of positive psychology and systems theory.

Developmental Model

The developmental nature of surrender is represented in Figure 10: Developmental Model of Psychological Surrender. The model incorporates a synthesis and extension of the contents of this dissertation, with weighted influence from the literature on developmental theories of ego defenses (see Cramer, e.g., 2006; Vaillant, e.g., 1995b), theories of ego development and mental development (see Alexander et al., 1990; Cook-Greuter, 1999, 2000; Hawkins, 2002), psychological change and growth (see Mahoney, 1991; Pyszczynski et al., 2003), positive psychology (see Peterson & Seligman, 2004), systems theory (see Barabasi, 2003; Rowland, 1999), education theory (see Gatto, 2008; Holt, 1995; Torrance, 1965), and psychological surrender (see Branscomb, 1993; Ghent, 1990; Hidas, 1981; Jones, 1994; May, 1982; Tiebout, 1949, 1953, 1954; Wallace, 2001). This model frames surrender in terms of pathology as well as health and normative development. As such, it may be viewed more as a health model than a pathology model, yet it is designed to provide a new perspective on the entire range of psychological function.

A thorough review of the elements in Figure 10 helps to explain the developmental nature of surrender, while more overarching comments are provided at the end of this discussion. The types of surrender depicted in the



Numerical boxes: identify the circular figures, which represent hypothetical points of function relative to curiosity and development

Solid circular lines: generally represent rigid and closed psychological function

Dashed circular lines: generally represent flexible and open psychological function

Alphabetical boxes: identify hypothetical developmental trajectories from Innocent to Enlightened

* : marks the developmental range entitled Innocent

** : marks the stages of development lived in Constant Surrender (trans-egoic function)

Figure 10. Developmental model of psychological surrender. Author's image.

model—Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3—are discussed in the nomenclature section of this chapter.

Horizontal Axis

The horizontal axis in this model represents the stages of actualized development of mental and psychological potential. Mental development refers to the building of one's mental structure that frames one's worldview and processes experiences to make meaning of them. One's mental structure equates to one's level of consciousness, and development is a process of scaffolding to ever higher and more inclusive systems of perception and processing. Psychological development refers to the building of one's ego, identity, and the dynamic process of differentiating one's self while also connecting with one's community; it is the development and use of one's capacities to manage psychological content, and is affected by biological aging and cumulative life experiences. In this context, development of mental structures is enmeshed with the development of psychological structures.

Innocent—marked by the asterisk due to space constrictions—represents the stage of being inexperienced, unworldly, and pure. Innocence is also associated with naivete, which is a state that lacks critical ability and is nonjudgmental. This stage of pure, undifferentiated, nonjudgmental nature is exhibited in infants. This research states that innocence is also represented in unborn children; the process of development starts within the womb where a child is influenced by his or her environment, and that environment is subject to the psychic energies that pulse through the mother.

Immature represents a stage of being underdeveloped. At this stage, one distinguishes self from others but requires great nurturance from others in order to become developed. One who is age-appropriately immature is raw with capacities and has yet to fully utilize and ripen them.

Mature is a stage of ripened capacities. Maturity correlates with more adaptive responses to situations than those in immaturity, and with a developed capacity to tolerate paradox. Many models of defense and ego development present maturity as the uppermost range of development.

Wise represents the stage of development where one has a higher capacity to discern what is true. If one is wise, one is respected as informed, aware, and able to coordinate information for collective well-being. Models of ego defense and development often associate the virtue of wisdom with maturity, but this model deliberately plots wisdom as a recognizable advancement beyond maturity, en route to becoming sage and enlightened.

Sage represents the first level of function that can be considered trans-egoic: having an awareness of self but mentally functioning beyond the confines of the ego's system of function. A sage person is communally revered as being richly experienced, calmly discerning, and wisely judicious. Sage people understand—both rationally and nonrationally—the limitless interconnectedness of all things; they function in terms of holistic existence, not in terms of one's own self.

Enlightened represents the current perception of the pinnacle of development. One who is enlightened is aware of one's manifest form but

functions in a trans-egoic state of constant surrender. An enlightened person is considered endowed with knowledge, eternal truths, and understanding.

The solid line that underlines the range from innocent to the mid-point between immature-mature indicates that development during youth, adolescence, and young adulthood has a more predictable pattern. The line becomes dashed as it moves closer to the range of maturity, to indicate that the shift into maturity is less easy to calculate than the prior stages of development. The dashed line also represents the range when one has the biological capacity and the sociocultural freedom to become more self-determined in one's development, if one chooses. The line remains dashed through the wise stage because self-determined development may be inconsistently chosen. Thereafter, the line becomes solid again, based on the assumption that growth in this range tends to be proactively sought on a fairly constant basis.

While defense theories lack consensus on fully distinguishing defenses from coping, a key conclusion in this research is that defenses are in fact different than coping. Some defense theories put defenses on the same spectrum as coping, implying that one moves from the use of immature defenses into forms of coping strategies. Other defense theories hold defenses and coping as two different functions, and that viewpoint is maintained herein. Defenses are viewed as holding and defending one's beliefs and certainties, whereas coping is viewed as a problem-solving technique. These are two distinct roles. Defenses may arise from problematic conflict, but they are protection-oriented. This distinction grounds another key conclusion in this research: that defenses continue to develop past the

level of maturity. The early stages of development incline one to grip one's truths and shield them from inspection; maturation moves one to develop looser and more flexible grips that occasionally open one's truths up for examination; development through the wise and sage stages moves one toward softly holding one's truths open and sacredly offering them up for continual assessment. Defenses are unconscious and primal in youth and become more conscious and refined via maturation; eventually, one can learn to witness one's own defensive functions and consciously massage their character toward enlightenment. Mentors are crucial for optimal development.

Vertical Axes

The dashed line that separates the vertical axes of Likelihood of Surrender and Level of Curiosity indicates that they stand as one blended axis, but that there is a distinct relationship between the two measures relative to development. Surrender is on the outer edge because, while it is posited that the likelihood of surrender does correlate with mental and psychological developmental, it is more closely correlated with levels of curiosity. Curiosity is considered the motivating influence of surrender and more closely correlated with developmental processes and stages than is surrender. This theory of surrender states that higher curiosity correlates with a higher likelihood of surrender, and that surrender accelerates and shortens one's path to enlightenment. This theory also states that a certain stage of development is not necessary for one to be curious and surrender.

Curiosity is a character strength, as defined by positive psychology. Generally speaking, curiosity operates toward growth and development rather

than preservation and stasis. Curiosity is higher when one looks for insights rather than just solutions to problems. Based on transformative learning theory, such insights or new knowledge gained via curiosity and surrender may not necessarily be new information, but rather confirmation of old knowledge and a new way of relating to that knowledge; confirmation of this sort supplies new knowledge in the form of new ways of knowing. One is born with innately strong curiosity, but it needs to be stimulated in order to be sustained. Curiosity becomes diminished in the process of Western education, socialization, and acculturation (see Holt, 1995; Loewenstein, 1994; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Since character strengths can be developed, curiosity can be redeveloped as one becomes reacquainted with one's innate capacity for this strength of character. In this regard, curiosity is developmental, and it directly affects the likelihood of surrender.

The axis for the Likelihood of Surrender does not represent graduated approximations of surrender; low does not represent an unsuccessful surrender and high does not represent an authentic experience of surrender. This axis is the measure of the *likelihood* that one will authentically surrender. It also represents the likelihood of the *act* of surrender and does not address the *state* of surrender (discussed in the nomenclature section in this chapter). For example, if one is extremely low in curiosity, the likelihood that one authentically surrenders in the face of Other is very low; if one is extremely high in curiosity, the likelihood that one authentically surrenders is very high. Surrender is always an option at any point in development or in any experience; everyone always has the capacity to surrender, but does not always have the motivation or support to surrender.

Circular Figures

The circular figures identified by the numerical boxes represent hypothetical points of function relative to curiosity and development. The inner rings represent the combination of one's mental structure and psychological development. The more solid—as opposed to dashed—and thick are the lines, the more rigid and habituated one is in one's mental and psychological function. The outer rings represent one's openness to experience and willingness to test reality. The more solid and thick are the lines, the more one is closed to experiences and the less likely one is to test reality or examine one's own self. Together, the two rings represent one's sense of self and the manner in which one meets Other.

Point 1 exhibits an undifferentiated self. This point represents the pure, innocent state of an unborn child or an infant. Such a person is innately open, trusting, and curious.

Point 2 represents a person with a differentiated self and a strong need to preserve that self. Such a person is guarded in being trusting or curious, but is still open to being influenced. The arrows indicate that, at this stage of development, one is largely impacted upon by external influences. One is continuously taking in rules of engagement and trying to construct a sense of stable self. During times of difficulty or disorientation, blame is projected outward rather than accepting one's role in finding meaning and producing behavior.

Point 3 shows a person with a differentiated self and an extremely severe need to protect and preserve that self. Such a person is closed to experiences, untrusting, and has no willingness to test reality. The hardened and closed nature

of the mental and psychological structure and the unwillingness to engage experiences makes this point of function the near-equivalent of a closed system; a closed system lacks the capacity for the feedback that is necessary to sustain healthy life. This point could represent some types of pathology. It is beyond the scope of this research to fully represent all pathologies, but the defense and surrender literature provide reason to posit that this point can represent someone in the grips of addiction or possibly someone with a severe personality disorder. It is fair to say that someone functioning at this point uses ego defenses maladaptively, and any occasion of surrender will be epochal in nature.

Point 4 displays a person with a differentiated self that is strategically open to change and growth, albeit rarely. Such a person is moderately guarded in openness, calculated about being trusting, and selectively curious. The arrows indicate that one is still impacted upon by external influences, but one also understands one's capacity to impact and can accept one's role in outcomes. One is more capable of tolerating paradox and conflicts, and can function with more self-determined choices. At this point, one creatively synthesizes situational content into tolerable form. There is no guarantee that mature responses to Other allow one to actually come to know Other; one may only creatively tolerate or adapt to Other. This limits personal and interpersonal growth.

Point 5 exhibits a person with a differentiated self, but with no need to preserve the self. This person functions in a trans-egoic manner while still acknowledging his or her manifest presence and influence in the world. This person is innately open, trusting, and childlike in curiosity, and understands the

self as part of a limitlessly larger system. He or she respects the sociocultural order in which he or she exists, while not necessarily subscribing to the ideologies or behaviors of that order if they contradict the higher order of truth and understanding that is known at this level.

Point 6 shows a differentiated self and a moderate need to preserve that self. One functioning at this point is somewhat guarded in openness, cautiously trusting, and willing to risk being curious if circumstances provide a sense of protection. This point represents a fairly healthy state of self-awareness and internalized rules of order that regulate behavior based on social norms.

Point 7 represents one with a differentiated self and only a minor need to preserve that self. One who functions from this point is innately open, trusting, and curious, and senses a system larger than the self. While high in curiosity, one still needs to become experienced with sociocultural rules of engagement. If one functions with pure, childlike curiosity past the chronological age of childhood, but without the social rules that order language and behavior, one could be perceived as rude. For example, if a young adult asks personal questions of an Other in the same manner as would a child—who can be blunt and crudely honest—it may aggravate rather than enhance the encounter. This is why the enlightened person at Point 5 is shown at the far upper right corner of the model; enlightened does not represent curiosity plus age, it is more an amalgam of curiosity, experiential effectiveness with rules of engagement, and knowledge of greater truths.

Trajectories

The curvilinear lines identified by the alphabetical boxes are macro trajectories that represent hypothetical paths of individual development, respecting that a micro view would show more jagged lines. For instance, it is posited that each progressive change in development is associated with a slightly less strong ego as one becomes familiarized with one's new point of function; if the trajectories in this model showed the micro paths of development, this less strong ego would be displayed as a small downward dip within the larger overall trajectory. As familiarity with new positions of development increases, ego strength generally increases and provides for the next round of potential growth.

The curvilinear lines indicate that one is born trans-egoic and with high curiosity, and in the process of being educated, socialized, and acculturated in the West, one proceeds through stages that form one's identity and methods of engaging experiences during which time one's innate curiosity is not sustained. The process continues toward maturity during which time one's identity generally becomes more flexible, one's worldview becomes more open and inclusive, and intuitive curiosities have more capacity—both biologically and socioculturally—to be entertained. The trajectories show a steeper path in the range from innocence to the mid range of immature-mature because this phase of development is more predictable and prescribed. The slope up to maturity is slightly less steep and compliments the dashed line that underlines the mature and wise stages. Maturation at this point is less predictable or prescribed and more a consequence of self-determination than aging and socialization.

The curvilinear trajectories may also represent paths of development in other cultures, but that cannot be claimed in the scope of this research. The focus herein is on Western culture; the research is based on literature that is dominantly framed by Western notions of surrender as well as literature that addresses how curiosity can be weakened in Western developmental processes. This research includes generalized cultural distinctions about surrender in order to provide a global perspective on the West's current relationship to the phenomenon, not to rank any culture as better or worse than another or to deny their similarities. This perspective provides breadth for understanding surrender and creates a broader context for discussion, which is especially valuable given the globalizing nature of cultural developments at this time in history.

As one develops, one is dominantly positioned at a given point in the model, but in situations of extreme or unexpected stimuli, one may respond from positions of function that are less mature or less open to experience. This means that, regardless of where one is in one's development, sudden or severe disorientation will shift one toward the lower left quadrant of psychological function: a more primal mode of self-preservation. One may also shift to the lower-left quadrant of function if one is in a situation experienced as highly negatively charged.

Trajectory-A is a hypothetical trajectory of development that includes Points 1-5. This path becomes severely Ego-laden in the process. Trajectory-B hypothesizes a more adaptive path of development; theoretically, one on this path incorporates social and cultural influences while sustaining a respectful capacity

to question norms and continually integrate new knowledge. Trajectory-C represents a life sustained by constant openness, trust, and curiosity; there is minimal ego dominance while also experiencing ego presence and ego development, ultimately reaching the trans-egoic stage of enlightenment. Trajectory-C could be representative of human exemplars who have been historically recognized as spiritual prophets, sages, or saviors.

Overarching Comments on Developmental Model

The human brain can only manage a limited amount of information at a time. The cost for taking in the prescribed information provided by Western education, socialization, and acculturation is reduced curiosity. Trajectory-C is the shortest trajectory and implies that a sustained level of high curiosity provides a swifter path to wisdom and enlightenment, and also tends to avoid the deep levels of psychological struggle that occur in the slumps of rigidified ego function and lack of openness to experience. Trajectory-C is an unlikely path in Western development.

Across the range of development from innocence to maturity, the types of defenses that one can choose and use become more complex, whereas surrender is a constant option and remains simple. The perceived complexity and challenge involved with enacting surrender is a function of the complexity in one's mental and psychological functions. For instance, small worldviews, rigid egos, and lack of openness to experience get caught up in the complexities of reason, even though one may paradoxically behave illogically. This level of function leaves no room for purposeful integration of intuitive or nonrational considerations, which

complicates and constrains the likelihood of surrender. Nonrational considerations allow for simplicity and more openness to unitive and universal functions.

The boxed area encompassing Points 2, 3, 4, and 6 represents the modal level of function for 90% of the population. It is the range where people tend to function with more of a polarized, problem-oriented view of conflicts, rather than a more unified, systemic view of dualities. It is the realm where truth is discerned via reason and logic. This is the range of conformity and perceived mastery or control over one's fate. One who typically functions within this range can occasionally function outside of it, but it is more likely a rare occurrence than a common one. The more one functions in the lower or left quadrant of this range, the more difficult it is to fathom surrender and the more unlikely that one will surrender in the face of Other. This boxed range also represents the generalized framework of current ego defense theories and conventional defense function.

The range between Points 2, 3, 4, and 6 also represents a range of psychological magnetic pull. Since this range represents the modal level of function of the populace, and since the desire to belong in community with others is stronger than other innate desires—even including the desires for expansion and growth—one tends to gravitate to this normative range. This magnetic pull on the energies of the psyche helps to explain why one tends to need repeated experiences of challenge to overcome habituated patterns of response; it takes fair thrust to escape a gravitated/habituated position, and one will likely need repeated efforts to shift into sustained new positions of function. This also explains the need for a certain degree of ego strength in order to objectively test one's reality;

one needs a strength that can step out of one's magnetized worldview and examine one's self and the relations to one's surroundings. Also, since this range represents the realm of reason and logic, one likely needs to go beyond this range to answer deep philosophical questions, but the magnetic pull of this range can thwart these efforts.

Any unfulfilled curiosities—whether philosophical or practical in nature—can cause regrets and psychological frustrations. Often, such regrets are born from the unfulfilled longings to know Other and to be known. If such longings go unfulfilled when one functions in the boxed modal range, the negative energies of regret systemically pour into the collective range; psychological frustrations on an individual basis contaminate the collective field. The modal range of ego function is a range that regards disorienting stimuli in more negative terms, possibly as a result of accumulated negative energies. In this range, one is more susceptible to suspicious or cynical regard of Other, which effects negative emotions and perpetuates the cycle of pouring negative psychological energy into the collective field; negativity begets negativity. The modal range of function is a system that risks becoming closed with its lack of interaction and feedback from the broader ranges of function.

The modal range of magnetic pull also helps to explain why successive acts of surrender become easier; as one exercises multiple character strengths with one act of surrender, one moves in the direction of wisdom and starts to escape the pull of collective magnetism and individualized fears. As character muscles are exercised and stretched, they become stronger and more flexible—just like

biological muscles—building the strength to proactively repeat acts of surrender and thereby accelerating one's growth. Where curiosity may motivate initial attempts of surrender, the experience of surrender inclines one to sustain curiosity and self-determine repeated surrenders; surrender begets surrender. Because of the magnetic pull of the modal norm, it is very important for one to have a guide or mentor to help one navigate out of this range of development.

Within the boxed modal range, therapies or efforts toward personal development are likely to be problem-solving in nature or, more rarely, self-revolutionary in nature (see Frankel & Levitt, 2006), but not both at the same time. In comparison, functioning outside of this modal range is posited to allow for purposeful, simultaneous functions of problem solution and self-revolution, and problems are viewed less as problems and more as puzzles or mysteries to be solved. In the nonmodal range of function, one has enough stability in curiosity or maturity or both to opt for growth in encounters with Other; one has more virtuous regard for Other and tends to generate positive emotions rather than negative emotions.

This model represents the broadest range of developmental function, including potential pathologies as well as the upside potentials beyond maturity and wisdom. Generally speaking, the deeper one slumps into rigid ego functions and lack of openness to experience, the harder it is for one to develop out of those psychological postures and move toward higher stages of development. Developmental paths with deep slumps are also more unpleasant than those of higher function due to the negative regard of stimuli produced at those levels and

the resultant experience of negative emotions. The slumps in the trajectories help to represent the ability to predict adult outcomes based on young adult defense choice and use. For instance, someone functioning at Point 3 may not be predicted to reach healthy psychological adjustment to Point 4; whereas one functioning vertically between Point 3 and Point 6 could be predicted to reach mature well-being.

Development is a process of differentiating oneself and also connecting with community. This model shows how an act of surrender—anywhere along one's path of development—can simultaneously reacquaint one with one's innocence while moving one toward wisdom (see Branscomb, 1993). This model shows how one does not go back to one's innocence, but that an act of surrender results from a higher level of innocent curiosity while also stretching one forward in character development. In this view, surrender does not stretch one in opposite directions between innocence and wisdom; rather, one moves singularly in an angular direction toward the upper right quadrant of the model: toward enlightenment. Generally speaking, every act of surrender is an exercise of multiple character muscles that moves one into more effective interpersonal relating and healthier personal well-being. Surrender massages an Ego into an ego, or helps to shift an unbalanced ego into a more balanced ego, or ultimately shifts one from ego function to trans-egoic function. The trans-egoic level of function does not annihilate the ego; the ego is simply a subsystem of the greater system of awareness, and the ego is no longer the executor of mental processes.

This model presents ideal personal development as a process of sustaining innate curiosity through the navigation and balanced negotiation of individuation, socialization, and acculturation. Mental and psychological development based on curiosity and surrender is the path of a pioneer, not of a conquering hero or warrior. The image of a conqueror is one who is already accomplished and proves oneself. Such an image leaves no room for new learning and presumes that one has achieved one's height of capacity. Even a mythical hero or warrior moves into challenges with the expectation of being wounded. A pioneer innovatively ventures into unknown territory; he or she may be wounded, but it is not a foregone conclusion. Motivated by curiosity, surrender allows one to pioneer relationships with Other and grow.

It takes curiosity and a pioneer's heart to grow beyond the modal range of development. In essence, psychological development is a path of growing ever more aware of and responsible for one's mental processes and level of consciousness. At the upper reaches of development, one can consciously influence the direction and magnitude of one's own growth and evolution.

Evolutionary

Some defense theories consider defenses evolutionary in their capacity for self-preservation (see Plutchik, 1995, 1998); defenses secure survival and procreation. This perspective represents evolution more as an inevitable duplication of oneself into the future. Comparatively, the evolutionary nature of surrender is threefold: (a) surrender accelerates one's psychological growth and raises one's own level of consciousness; (b) surrender affects the growth of others

as they try to duplicate the behavior that they witness, which creates ripple effects into the future; and (c) the heightened consciousness that one achieves via surrender can theoretically be genetically transferred to one's offspring (see Cloninger, 2004). This is more than duplicating oneself into the future; this is growth-oriented evolution and provides direction for the evolutionary processes of humankind.

Acts of surrender are like micro evolutionary phase changes that occur at points of disorienting chaos. As surrender begets surrender, one starts to systemically affect the entire arc of evolution. The evolutionary nature of surrender rests in its capacity to accelerate one's own growth, affect the growth paths of others, and genetically transfer higher consciousness to one's offspring.

Alchemical

Alchemy is a magical transmutation of one thing into something entirely different: so different as to be perceptively unrelated. The phenomenon of alchemy is a nonlinear burst of change where the comparative phases lack comparison.

The nature of surrender is alchemical because it is more than a creative synthesis that transmutes conflict into tolerable form. While defenses are creative in their ability to transform disorientation into stasis in one's given level of function, surrender is a bundled alchemical phenomenon; the act of surrender spontaneously propels one out of one's given level of function and into the state of surrender. The spontaneity associated with the phenomenon (see Branscomb, 1993; E. T. Fitzgerald, 1966; May, 1982; Tiebout, 1949) serves as the alchemical

nonlinear burst of change; surrender spontaneously transmutes one's realm of consciousness, function, and experience.

Figure 11 somewhat depicts the alchemical nature of surrender. The image on the left shows the dualistic nature of defenses. The heavy, solid lines that frame the areas identified as You, Beliefs, and Lived Life represent the rigid and impenetrable nature of habituated function. The arrows that point outward from

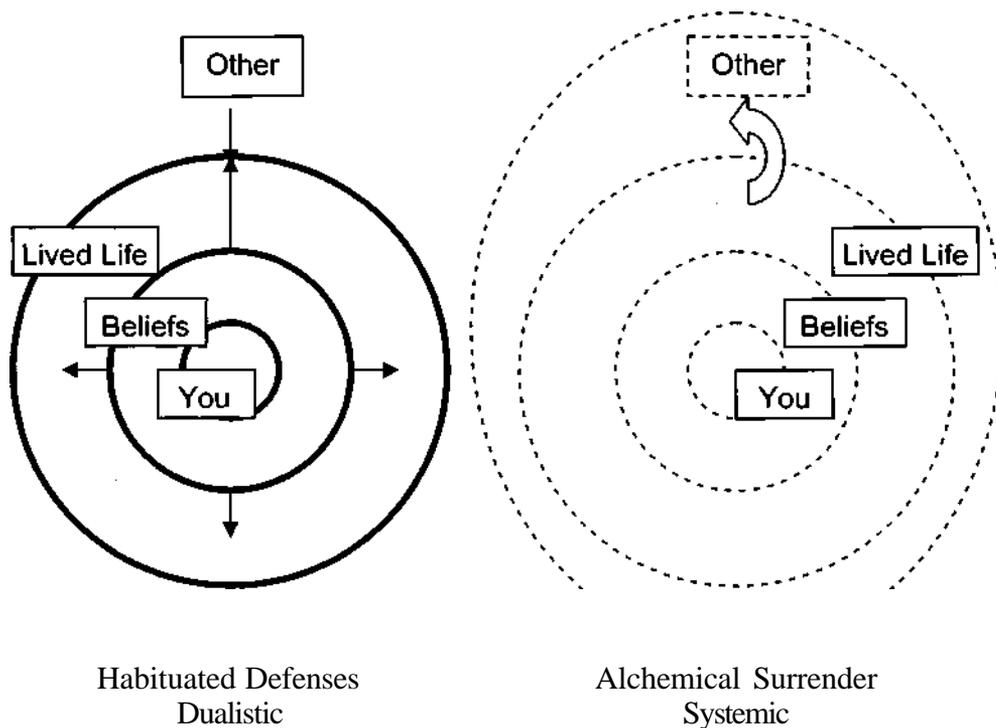


Figure 11. Relational and Alchemical Models of Defenses and Surrender. Solid lines represent closed psychological posture, and dashed lines represent openness. Author's image.

the Beliefs ring represent the fort-like nature of defending one's beliefs with defenses. In this range, one's beliefs meet Other head-on in defensive posture, keeping Other outside and unknown, and keeping oneself inside and barricaded. Alternatively, the image on the right represents in two-dimensional form what is a transdimensional phenomenon. The dashed lines that loosely outline the areas of You, Beliefs, and Lived Life can either represent one who consistently functions in a high state of curiosity and openness—similar to Points 1 and 5 in Figure 10— or the dashed lines can represent one who is uncommonly functioning in the state of surrender. The dashed lines represent the fluid engagement with the experience of surrender and meeting Other. The curved arrow that swings from the Lived Life area into the space of Other represents the mental and psychological thrust out of one's normative function and into the phenomenon of surrender. Surrender is inclusive of and unitive with Other, as indicated by the dashed line that encircles Other.

In the image on the right, Other is not the unknown that is feared and resisted but is instead the new attractor in one's system of function. Where the ego may find Other unattractive, curiosity finds Other attractive; one is curious about Other, faithfully enacts surrender, and spontaneously phase-changes into an entirely new system of function. This depicts systems theory (see Barabasi, 2003; Combs, 2002) specific to the phenomenon of surrender. The faith in enacting surrender is as alchemical as the state of surrender; they both defy logic and trust in the existence of things unseen.

As a result of this research, it is also posited that the act of surrender is alchemical due to its simultaneous exercise of multiple character muscles. This sweeping flex of numerous psychological muscles infiltrates one's psyche and is alchemical in its disorienting uncommonness and pervasiveness.

The phenomenon of the state of surrender is alchemical in its sheer disconnect from egoic function. All the energies that are otherwise bound in egoic directions are instantaneously freed. The experience of surrender infuses one's energies into a transcendent realm. This realm can only be fully known and understood via experience; to explain it as trans-egoic or ego-free still uses the ego as a referent and anchors the imagery of the phenomenon to something that is incomparable to the experience. Some of the mystery of the phenomenon of surrender is embedded in its alchemical nature; this quality of surrender can be best understood experientially, not intellectually.

Relational

The relational nature of surrender refers to the arising of the opportunity to surrender when one meets Other. Until one functions in a constant state of surrender, surrender always occurs in relationship to Other. Even in proactive efforts, Other is the relational impetus to be curious and surrender. Figure 11 shows how Other provides the relational experience that triggers defenses as well as the opportunity to surrender.

It can become easy to interpret Other as another person; this is an error that must be monitored. Other is a generalized term that can represent a person, a group of people, an ideology, or anything that bumps up against one's

familiarities and is perceived as not-me; this includes the fact that one can be Other to one's self. Hence, the relational nature of surrender is internal as well as external.

Further, the relational nature of surrender is systemic. Surrender involves the relation between self and Other as parts of one's normative system of function, but surrender also acquaints one with systemic interconnectedness. Via surrender, one experiences a relationship with a system bigger than one's self-system.

Contextual

The contextual nature of surrender is less about the environmental elements of an encounter with Other and more about the identification of a gap in one's knowledge. Thus, the context of surrender is not external; it is internal. One discerns a disconnect between that which one knows and that which Other presents as contrary to that knowledge. This disconnect gives rise to the indicator emotion of anxiety. Anxiety tends to trigger defenses, but the more that one becomes familiar with surrender and effectively meeting Other, the more one realizes that anxiety can point to a gap in one's bank of knowledge. This gap is rimmed with resistance and curiosity, and represents the space for unregulated thinking, growth, and transformation of self (see E. T. Fitzgerald, 1966; Fredrickson, 1998; Lowenstein, 1994; Mahoney, 1991; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Pyszczynski et al, 2003; Solomon, 1998).

Resistance correlates to the perceived magnitude of the gap. When a gap appears manageable and one's curiosities can be satisfied with reasonable effort,

one is more inclined to surrender. Small gaps in knowledge meet with little resistance and are somewhat easy to bridge and fill. The surrender in this experience goes unrecognized. Larger gaps can look massive and intimidating. In such cases, one either opts for defensive postures or ends up surrendering as a last resort.

If one does authentically surrender into a gap that appears beyond one's capacities, one inevitably finds surrender's alchemical loft. In authentic surrender, one does not hit bottom. Hitting bottom is the shattering of one's certainties, which then crumble away. In such an experience, there is nowhere left to stand and one psychologically leaps; one becomes curious enough to learn something new, even if reluctantly so. Authentic surrender always catches and holds one's psyche. It is posited that psychological breakdowns do not result from the overwhelm of surrendering; rather, they result from staying tethered to one's failed certainties and falling with the crumble into rubble. Like the phoenix rising from the ashes, therapists help people rise from this rubble.

An experience of surrender via crisis will not necessarily cause one to go seeking knowledge gaps. Yet, the experience does become a durable point of reference, which can support or incline one to identify such gaps in future meetings with Other and potentially surrender more willingly. Anxiety still arises in the process, but it becomes known as pointing to one's own edge for growth rather than pointing at deficiencies in Others, even though sudden or severe disorientation can still trigger primal defense functions.

Surrender is not a blind leap of faith. Surrender is contextualized by the recognition of a gap in one's knowledge, which is a precondition for experiencing curiosity. Curiosity is a mechanism of action that motivates surrender and is energized by the love of knowledge—or the love of coming to know Other. Curiosity is greater when one seeks pure insights rather than just specific solutions to problems; therefore, the innocence involved with instinctive curiosity may improve the likelihood that surrender is authentic, whereas the reluctance involved with unintentionally aroused curiosity (e.g. hitting bottom) may impact the occurrence of inauthentic surrender (e.g. aborted surrender). Innate, innocent curiosity and authentic surrender are oriented toward pure inquiry and understanding potential discoveries, providing for intellectual insights as well as transformational insights. In this way, pursuing curiosities aligns with Western-based therapies that emphasize the attainment of intellectual insights, and surrender aligns with Eastern-based therapies that promote transformational experiences as curative. The act of surrender steps one into the gap of the unknown where one is held in wonder and awe with Other, and where new knowledge can be received.

Communicative

The changes that occur in one's self as a result of surrender shift one's psychological energies from communicating resistance to inviting openness and intimacy (see Branscomb, 1993; Hawkins, 2002; Hidas, 1981; Tiebout, 1949, 1954; Tolle, 1999). The most striking outcome of surrender that exemplifies its

communicative nature is the shift in others as they reply more openly to the unifying power of surrender.

As Freud claimed, too much psychic energy focused on the self can be pathological and leaves little energy to invest in relationships. Surrender communicates vested interest in Other. Self-preservation energies can be forceful and repellent in nature, whereas surrender has an expansive energy; it is a power that attracts and unifies. The power in surrender is stillness; it rests in the is-ness of the present moment.

Surrender communicates trust in others, patience, receptivity, and curiosity that is attracted to meaning and understanding. All of this moves people toward one another. Surrender is the psychological etiquette that communicates loving openness to be in relationship with others. It fulfills the deep psychological desire to know others and to be known.

Innate and Learned

Surrender is innate. One is born with no sense of self and in a state of constant surrender, being fully open, curious, and trusting. Through the process of development in the West, these qualities become reduced. As one's ego and identity develop, and the social rules of engagement become learned, defenses develop. As a result, the state of surrender slips away and one needs to learn how to enact surrender in order to return to the state of surrender, which also involves learning how to undo automated and habituated defensive responses.

Surrender is not often promoted in the West as a healthy response to conflict or as part of psychological development. The more one becomes seated in

defense functions, the more surrender becomes a forgotten mode of function. One may learn coping skills in the process of development, but coping is not surrender; coping orients toward problem-solving whereas surrender orients toward learning.

Learning to enact surrender tends to result from crisis. While this is not a preferred path of learning, the experience can reacquaint one with the positive and powerful effects of the state of surrender. One can learn to enact surrender as a skill in personal and interpersonal development, rather than an exercise in defeat. The benefits experienced from surrender can create the desire to repeat the experience; the learning process starts to build upon itself and accelerates one's development. Just as character strengths can be learned and developed, so too can one learn to enact surrender. Surrender is an innate way of being and in addition, one can learn how to access and sustain that realm of function.

Nomenclature

The literature on psychological surrender collectively supplies numerous terms that can form base nomenclature for discussing surrender. Various types of surrender are described in the literature review including recovery, therapeutic, altruistic, distorted, true, cathartic, primary, transformative, safe, aborted, false, and surrender versus surrender-to. Related literature offers additional terminology and perspectives, such as heart anger and exceptional human experiences; these terms can broaden the base of nomenclature and deepen the discussion about surrender. In addition, issues of controversy add to the pool of terms and

discussions, including whether surrender is conscious or unconscious, whether it is willed or unwilled, and the responsibility involved with surrender.

In general, the descriptions of surrender speak about it as a singular phenomenon. Only Tiebout (1949) specifically distinguishes between the act of surrender and the state of surrender. He explains that the act of surrender is instantaneously followed by the state of surrender, but that the details involved with that shift are unknown. Due to the alchemical nature of surrender, the details of that shift are beyond articulation, but this research promotes the distinction between the act of surrender, the state of surrender, and constant surrender.

Acts Versus States Versus Constant Surrender

The act of surrender is a psychological movement to which one commits, which moves one to be open to more than one's certainties in the effort to inquire about unknowns. Surrender tends to be understood as letting go of defenses, dropping defenses, releasing defenses, or sacrificing defenses. All of these descriptions are defeatist in nature and focus on defenses, not on surrender. This research shifts the focus and concludes that surrender is a psychological alternative to defenses; one does not act to drop defenses, one acts to surrender and with that choice, defenses simply fall away or become alchemically nonexistent. Psychologically, this is an entirely different experience; one does not let something go but instead opts for something else. There is no psychological nakedness with surrender as there is with the notion of dropping defenses; surrender provides a different choice of psychological clothing, albeit sheer. Acts of surrender put one's capacities of character to actual use and express the

psychological etiquette of meeting Other with respectful curiosity—they are the psychological step that activates inquiry.

An act of surrender alchemically transports one into a state of surrender. States of surrender involve the unobstructedness of all psychic energies. This is not a state of oblivion; it is radical awareness. Surrender can be found in the recesses of meditation, and it can be experienced in face-to-face engagements with other people; it can be found and experienced anywhere, any time, and at any age. The state of surrender is where new learning occurs.

States of surrender are momentary, as opposed to the constancy of surrender that is experienced in innocence or enlightenment. A *state* is a brief experience of psychological function that is other than one's stage of function; a *stage* is one's routine level of function (see Cook-Greuter, 2000). As one develops, the states of surrender can be experienced as longer in duration and less encumbered by the ego's attempts to intrude upon the experience. Therefore, while one always experiences the wondrous nature of surrender, the stage of one's development and the circumstances that surround an experience of surrender influence three things: (a) the felt length of the experience, (b) the proximity with which the ego lurks around the experience, and (c) the capacity for one to integrate new knowledge in the moment of the experience. The ego is never in the experience of surrender, but one's stage of development and circumstances influence the degree to which the ego encroaches on one's entry and exit of surrender. As one becomes more familiar with surrender, the functions of the ego are less involved with resistance or interpretation of the experience. At lower

levels of curiosity or development, the new knowledge found in the state of surrender needs to be integrated into one's mental structures after the experience, not during the experience.

Constant surrender is the pinnacle stage of enlightenment, as compared to transient states of surrender; it is pure consciousness. It is not a state or a stage, it simply is. Such a mode of function lacks the ability to be defined by terms. The act of surrender no longer functions in this realm because one no longer needs to move beyond one's certainties; they are always open for assessment. In constant surrender—in enlightenment—greater truths are simply apprehended and one thrives in transcendence.

Surrender Redefined

The *act of surrender* is a commitment to inquire of Other and psychologically shift beyond one's position of certainties; it is an act that moves one into the open state of surrender, which is a state of unobstructed psychic energies. *Constant surrender* is the perpetuity of the state of surrender. The *state of surrender* is a momentary experience of enlightened consciousness, which defies definition but is knowable via experience. As a result, rather than attempting to redefine surrender, a list of descriptors is offered. This list helps to describe surrender in terms of its fragrance rather than providing a bottled definition.

In surrender, one experiences timelessness and limitlessness, resilience, compassion, openness, vibrancy, unconditional and wholehearted acceptance of what is, unity, connectedness and belonging, mutuality, receptivity, a common

code of integrity, liberation, expansion of self without specific direction, curiosity attracted to meaning and understanding, nonjudgment, lack of expectations, innocence, nourishment of the soul, sacred play, dynamic immersion, improvisation, absolute awareness, reciprocity, magical mystery, teach-ability, sovereignty of systems beyond self, peace, transcendence, animated suspension, spiritual harmonics, mindfulness without thoughts, responsible freedom, eternal presence, wholesomeness, fulfillment, love, gratefulness, wonder, reverence, awe, and bliss.

General Types of Surrender

The types of surrender that are described in the literature are more specific in nature than the types of surrender described in this section. Analysis of the literature revealed several nuances in the different specific types of surrender, especially as discussed in the experiences of surrender. Select focus on these nuances, combined with the discussions about therapeutic treatments, ego development, and ego strength offers a basis for generalizing three overall types of surrender simply called Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3. Figure 10 frames these types of surrender relative to levels of curiosity and psychological development. All three involve learning something new, but they differ in several ways.

Type 1 Acts and States of Surrender

Type 1 surrender tends to be more reactive in nature and is more closely involved with ego defenses. In viewing Figure 10, Type 1 occurs in the range that houses Points 2, 3, 4, and 6, which is the modal range of human consciousness and ego function. Type 1 surrenders range from crisis events, such as recovery

surrenders, to those that are part of normal psychological development but still involve anguished challenge of one's certainties. This type of surrender can be described in terms of the act of surrender, the elements that surround the act, and the subsequent state of surrender.

Type 1 acts of surrender are conscious and willed, but reluctantly so. They tend to be fearful, reactive responses of last resort that feel mandatory. They are psychologically complex because they involve ego defenses and highly regulated thinking prior to the act: thinking that manages the contents of mind and negotiates with the ego to find a way to not surrender. These acts tend to be threshold moments involving a disturbing sense of lost control. Type 1 acts of surrender feel like major thrusts out of one's habitual patterns of behavior and can be epochal in nature. In severe cases, the psychological imagery is that of a perilous precipice upon which one teeters before taking the proverbial leap of faith; such extreme experiences look and feel like moments of conversion. Based on the literature, the specific types of surrenders that appear to fit into this category include therapeutic, cathartic, and recovery.

There are multiple elements surrounding an enactment of Type 1 surrender. The framework tends to be very issue-specific, bound by space and time, and highly negatively charged. All of this polarizes the circumstances and creates a huge gap between where one is and where one feels expected to go. One views the gap more as an external span carved by Other, rather than an internal gap in one's own knowledge. Generally, one's certainties and worldview become shaky, and external influences cause one to feel pushed to press through

resistance. One has an unstable sense of self in relationship to the issue, is inexperienced with the phenomenon of surrender, is well-rutted in programmed behavior relative to the issue, and is utilizing a high degree of ego defenses to buy time while one prepares to surrender. As a result, one needs to be surrounded by many of the enablers of surrender: not only before the act of surrender but also after the experience of surrender in order to debrief it, integrate the new knowledge gained therein, and put the new knowledge into practice. Language and symbolism are often used in processing the experience. Successive surrenders may be necessary to help effect the neurological rewiring that can self-sustain the desired change, but successive surrenders tend to be progressively less traumatic as one becomes familiar with the exercise.

The phenomenology of the state of surrender is always the same, but the state can vary in length and the surrounding elements can affect not only the entry into surrender but one's psychological reception coming out of the experience. In Type 1 surrender, the state is fleeting: infinitesimal in perceived length. The proximity with which one's ego hovers and impinges on the experience is very close and affects one's capacity to stay engaged with the moment. Due to the fractional nature of Type 1 states of surrender and one's inexperience with the phenomenon, new knowledge received within the experience itself needs to be discerned and integrated into one's mental structures after one exits the experience.

Type 2 Acts and States of Surrender

Type 2 surrender is enacted and experienced unconsciously, therefore it goes unnoticed as either an act or a state. This type of surrender occurs as part of the normative process of development. It is the opening created where new information is secretly learned and one shifts from one method of adaptation and use of defenses to another. During the course of development, these unconscious shifts may not always direct one's path in a positive direction; some shifts may actually be forms of submission or compliance that dysfunctionally integrate sociocultural norms or destructive impressions of oneself into one's mental structures. Type 2 surrender goes unrecognized because of the stealth with which the ego experiments with new ideas and momentarily releases control to allow new knowledge to slip undetected into one's psychological makeup. One could argue that no surrender takes place in this normative process, but this research builds on the defense theories that look at the micro determinants of defense function, systems theory, and Marko's (2006) research that evidences the existence of facilitative agents that incrementally move one beyond one's current worldview. The conclusion offered in this research is that Type 2 surrender occurs as a microincremental shift in mental processes that facilitates the unfolding of normative development.

Type 3 Acts and States of Surrender

Type 3 surrender can generally be understood as conscious and willed, but there are two subtypes of surrender in this category. Type 3 surrender can be

either spontaneous-unitive or proactive in terms of consciousness and volition of enactment, but they both provide similar states of surrender.

Spontaneous-unitive. Spontaneous-unitive Type 3 surrender is an experience of an unexpected, spontaneous unitive phenomenon. Unitive experiences are states of surrender. One does not will it; one is simply willing to receive and experience it. In Figure 10, this type of surrender occurs across the entire upper range of high curiosity when one is caught off guard by the awe of an encounter and responds with innate innocence and curiosity before the ego has a chance to intervene. While it is not willed, it is the willing and innocent nature with which one receives and experiences spontaneous-unitive surrender that qualifies it as Type 3.

The consciousness of spontaneous-unitive surrender depends upon one's level of development and the perceived magnitude of the experience. In youth, it is likely that such experiences occur often but are not conscious because one is still fresh with innate curiosity and openness to experiences, such that the events do not stand out as uncommon to one's psyche; yet, spontaneous-unitive surrender is recognized at subconscious levels. In the course of development, this type of surrender occurs less often; innate curiosity starts to wane because the limited capacity of one's developing brain becomes preoccupied with managing the crowded mental content involved with psychological development and sociocultural role fulfillment. This concentrated and preoccupied use of brainpower limits one's abilities to even acknowledge spontaneous-unitive surrender at the subconscious level.

This preoccupied use of brainpower may also influence why Valliant (1995b) considers wonder to be a capacity of mature brains, which are more able to assimilate experiences. Based on the research herein, a modification of Valliant's thoughts is offered; specifically, wonder is not a mature capacity but an innate capacity that also wanes in the process of Western development. In youth, one's attention and brainpower are directed by sociocultural prescriptions; as one matures past this prescribed course of development, mental space is freed up and one can become more self-determined in directing one's attention and again recognize wondrous phenomena. As a result of this revitalized capacity for wonder, spontaneous-unitive surrender at mature stages is not just an uncommon experience of awe; it can often be an experience of wondrous surprise as the forgotten is made anew. In the early stages of development, spontaneous-unitive Type 3 surrender is recognized more at the subconscious level of function and needs to have a magnitude about it for it to reach consciousness. In comparison, at more mature stages of development, even wisps of such experiences can reach consciousness due to the combination of freed attention and the novelty of the reawakened capacity for wonder.

Spontaneous-unitive Type 3 surrender does not require enactment; it is simply experienced willingly—consciously or subconsciously. In comparison, proactive Type 3 surrender can be understood in terms of enactment, the elements surrounding the act, and consciousness.

Proactive. Proactive Type 3 acts of surrender are conscious and willed with eager curiosity; they are proactive, elective, first-choice responses to

opportunities for learning. These acts tend to involve more mature, wise, or sage defenses, but can also come about via pure curiosity at any age. In Figure 10, proactive Type 3 surrender occurs across the entire range of heightened levels of curiosity and also in the upper stages of mental and psychological development. These acts of surrender are psychologically uncomplicated, since one is not caught up in defensive operations of thought. Thinking is less regulated and curiosity thrives, making the act an innocent step toward Other. Issues of control are rarely involved because one is open to playing with a loose set of rules; the only rules are to be genuinely curious and open to discovering new knowledge. It feels like an unfolding glide into the creative tension of improvisation and adventure.

Multiple elements surround the enactment of proactive Type 3 surrender, but the external surround is less influential than one's internal environment. One has tended to experience surrender in the past and is familiar with the process, making it purposefully sought out. One's worldview is broad and strong, yet flexible, allowing for more virtuous regard of stimuli, which produces more positive emotions that fuel curiosity. Time and space are less relevant as one functions in the present moment. As a result, dualities are somewhat transcended and the gap for surrender is viewed as a holistic part of oneself in relationship to a greater whole. Other still triggers the indicator emotion of anxiety, but it is attended to early and is recognized as pointing to one's own area for personal growth. Fear is progressively minimized as one advances in the practice of surrender. One is motivated by curiosity with a forward magnetism to inquire;

given the minimal resistance involved, one feels less like one is pressing through something or reluctantly being pushed forward and more like one is simply venturing eagerly into open space. It is posited that the neurological grooves of one's habits are shallow in relationship to these surrenders, providing for ease in directing one's path toward new attractions. Given these elements, one needs less enablers to enact surrender or upon one's exit of the experience. Because one is more self-determined in this type of surrender and seeks personal growth and change, and because it is posited that one's neurological grooves are biologically less rutted, successive surrenders are less necessary to sustain and apply the new learning gained in these experiences.

Type 3 states of surrender. The state of Type 3 surrender—whether spontaneous-unitive or proactive—can feel like a lifetime, and it can also feel like a moment in time; time is not a representative measure of the experience. The ego is more relaxed and less impinging, allowing a more boundless experience. This boundlessness enables new knowledge to be integrated in the state of surrender itself. In initial experiences of Type 3 surrender, one may still require post-surrender reflection to fully capture the knowledge. As one progresses in development and experience with surrender, one can have full and immediate apprehension of new knowledge during the experience itself. This new knowledge is not necessarily understood in definitive terms or symbols; one can be purely infused with understanding greater truths. In the enlightened stage, one no longer enacts or experiences states of surrender; one continuously functions in the phenomenon of surrender.

Comparison of Types

In order to help compare the general types of surrender, Table 3 was created. Only Type 1 surrender and proactive Type 3 surrender are compared—to the exclusion of Type 2 and spontaneous-unitive Type 3—because they represent the types of surrender over which one can claim more conscious control. The element of conscious control makes these surrenders more available for purposeful use in attending to one's resistance to change and desires for growth.

Table 3 provides clear-cut distinctions between Type 1 surrender and proactive Type 3 surrender. While this format helps for the sake of comparison, it is an error to hold it as a rigid representation of the two types. Both are conscious and willed, but Figure 10 provides the visual context in which to see where the rigid differences between the two types start to soften and overlap in nature. Generally speaking, Type 1 surrender—as depicted in Table 3—is representative of one functioning more in the lower, left quadrant of the model in Figure 10, and proactive Type 3 surrender is representative of one functioning more in the upper or right portions of the model. The more that one moves from the lower, left quadrant of function to the mid-level of curiosity or closer to the mature stages of development, the more that Type 1 surrender starts to take on the qualities of proactive Type 3 surrender. Clarifying these points emphasizes that successive surrenders can become easier and may become more frequently enacted as one moves along one's developmental path and scaffolds to new levels of function.

Table 3
Type 1 Surrender Versus Proactive Type 3 Surrender

| Type 1 surrender | Proactive Type 3 surrender |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| The act of surrender | |
| Conscious | Conscious |
| Willed | Willed |
| Feared | Sought out |
| Reluctantly enacted | Eagerly enacted |
| Willingness to learn | Genuine curiosity |
| Reactive | Proactive |
| Mandatory response of last resort | Elective choice of first response |
| Complicated by modal defenses | Simplified by wise defenses |
| Involve highly regulated thinking | Involve more unregulated thinking |
| Feel like threshold moments | Feel more gliding |
| Control feels lost | Control is not an issue |
| Agonizing in nature _____ | Mild indicative anxiety |
| Surrounding elements | |
| Issue specific | Situational opportunity |
| Generalized, habitual responses | Specific, thoughtful responses |
| Unstable sense of self with the issue | Stable self in general |
| Rigidified responses to the issue | Novel responses to stimuli |
| Suspicious regard for circumstances | Virtuous regard of opportunity |
| Bound by space and time | Viewed in-the-moment |
| Polarized perspective | Systemic perspective |
| Negatively charged | Positively charged |
| One's worldview grows shaky | One's worldview is resilient |
| One feels imposed upon by Other | One views a gap in one's knowledge |
| One feels pushed by circumstances | One is magnetized toward Other |
| One is inexperienced with surrender | One is experienced with surrender |
| One is rooted in a defensive posture | One holds one's truths open |
| One feels caught on a precipice | One sees an adventure |
| Many enablers of surrender required | Few enablers of surrender required |
| Pre/post-surrender support needed | Needs little to no external support |
| Language is often used to debrief | Knowledge comes in many forms |
| Successive surrenders necessary | Singular surrender is likely |
| The state of surrender | |
| Infinitesimal in length | Not measured in terms of time |
| Integration of knowledge afterward | Immediate apprehension |

The Relationship Between Surrender and Defenses

The relationship between surrender and defenses can easily be perceived as oppositional, yet there is interplay between the two functions. More importantly, there is a synchrony in how they relate that makes them more united than they appear at first blush.

Compare and Differentiate

This comparison of surrender to defenses is based on authentic surrenders; any attempt at surrender that does not result in authentic surrender has been sabotaged by defensive operations and resides on the side of defenses. The theory of surrender and the consolidated theory of ego defenses supplied in this research provide for ease in comparing the two. Therefore, this comparison is broken into the categories entitled developmental, evolutionary, alchemical versus creative, relational, contextual, communicative, and innate and learned. An additional category for more general comments is also included.

Developmental

Developmentally, surrender is simple. It is the same act and state throughout development—understanding that spontaneous-unitive Type 3 surrender is not enacted but does provide the experiential state. Surrender is available at any age and appropriate at any age. Surrender starts to feel difficult and complex because one gets involved with the reasoning and complexities of defenses, and distanced from the familiarity of innate curiosity. The ability to enact surrender improves as one matures and starts to safely hold the self with

defenses rather than rigidly protect the self. Developmentally, surrender never changes; it is one's relationship to the act and state of surrender that changes.

Defenses are complex as compared to surrender, and they grow more complex in nature with development. Also, as one's repertoire of defenses grows, the process of selecting defenses for use grows more complex, compounded by the fact that defenses can also be combined. Not all defenses are available at all ages, and not all defenses are appropriate at all ages. The nature of defenses becomes less rigid as one matures, but the mental processes involved with defenses are still complex. Defenses are heavily involved in the chaos that builds in the system of the ego, and surrender is always the simple option that can take one out of chaos and into a nonchaotic, non-egoic system.

Evolutionary

Evolutionarily, surrender can accelerate one's own development. Theoretically, one can also genetically transfer heightened consciousness to the next generation through one's offspring. Additionally, one can positively affect the likelihood that others surrender and grow as they witness the modeling of the behavior and potentially attempt to duplicate it themselves. These individual evolutionary capacities—accelerated personal evolution, procreated levels of consciousness, and rippled affects in others—can influence the evolution of collective humankind and also consciously direct the path of that development: an evolution toward betterment. Surrender attends to the expansive needs of the self in the present moment; this is a movement that is both forward in development

and upward in terms of curiosity. Surrender is an efficient use of psychic energy that is invested in the present moment with future benefits.

Defenses are preservational and maintain psychological stasis, tending to slow the process of development. Their evolutionary influence addresses primal needs for survival and procreation of self. Rather than procreating an expanded self into the future, defenses tend toward procreating a duplicated self into the future: a more inevitable path of evolution. Given the chaos of the egoic system and the energy placed in psychological boundary control, defenses can squander one's limited psychic energies by fearing the present moment, ruminating about the past, and worrying about the future. Defense use can potentially exhaust one's psychological well-being, especially if defenses are overused or highly rigid in nature.

Alchemical Versus Creative

Surrender is alchemical in nature and transports one out of the system of the ego into an incomparable realm of unified consciousness. In that state of radical awareness and openness to experience, there is complete acceptance of what *is* and one engages all forms of knowing. Paradox is transcended. One is looped out of dualistic relationships of cause and effect into a level of abstraction that is limitless.

Defenses can seem alchemical in their ability to transmute situational elements into tolerable form, but that ability is born of creativity and not alchemy. Defenses keep one in the egoic system and, via creativity, put something in one's psyche that was not there before: something tolerable that is sculpted from filtered

mental content. Alchemy does not filter anything out; it takes what is and magically transmutes it into something entirely incomparable. Defenses are creative in their ability to distort; they do not transmute. At best, defenses tolerate paradox but do not transcend it; the level of one's abstraction is still egoic and reasoned, and one can twist linearity but still rely on a dualistic perspective.

Relational

For both surrender and defenses, Other presents the opportunity for response. On a relational basis, the act of surrender functions in the moment with curiosity; surrender moves one to be in relationship with Other. Defenses are based on past and future referents and suspicion of Other. Defenses can serve the goal of belonging in community, but they can also counter this goal and repel the very people with whom one deeply wants to commune.

Contextual

The context of surrender is internal; it is the recognition of one's own gap in knowledge that can be bridged and filled by engaging Other. The context of surrender is one of learning and growth. Comparatively, the context for defenses has more to do with external elements and the nuances of situations that are integrated in defense choice and use. Defenses result from a sense of assumed knowledge and a focus on finding a best-fit response that preserves self while accommodating social norms. External context is one of the factors that make defenses so complex.

Communicative

Surrender communicates openness, interest, acceptance, trust, nonjudgment, the admission of the limits of one's own knowledge, and the desire to grow in knowledge. Surrender is inviting and attractive to others and eases their need to respond with defenses, thereby creating a space for play and improvisational learning. Surrender communicates power in its stillness. Surrender is communicated more at a subliminal level where one resonates with positive emotions; body language is generally softer and words may be less important for full communication with Other. If words are used, they are more socially respectful of Other. If surrender appears odd or disorienting to others, it is because it is more uncommon to be on the receiving end of such nondefensive and attractive behavior; the disorientation is short lived as others become disarmed by the inviting nature of surrender.

Mature defenses can communicate many of the same messages as surrender, but on the path to that stage of function, defenses can communicate resistance, suspicion, judgment, superior knowledge, and lack of curiosity. At the mature level, defenses can be admired and appear attractive to others, but en route to maturity, defenses can be repellent or appear odd to others and incline others to also be defensive. Defenses come across as competitive with their forceful projection. Defenses are communicated at the subliminal level where one tends to resonate with negative emotions, but defenses involve more obvious body language that comes across as edgy; one may also use more spoken language to

explain oneself or decry another, and one could be vulnerable to using words that antagonize rather than soothe conflict.

Innate and Learned

Surrender is one's innate way of being. Currently, as one develops in Western society and culture, one becomes distanced from this innate mode. As a result, one needs to learn how to enact surrender and respond to one's instincts to expand in order to get back into that state of being. Defenses are innate responses to developmental experiences: responses that ideally become more mature over time as one stabilizes one's sense of self. Defenses are innate in their instinctual role to protect one's sense of self; as one grows wise and sage, defenses become flexible and open enough to allow one's normative state to be more surrender-like in quality.

General Comparative Comments

Type 1 and proactive Type 3 surrenders are considered conscious, willed, and adaptive; Type 2 surrender is considered unconsciously enacted and experienced as part of normative development; spontaneous-unitive Type 3 surrender is not enacted but is an unexpected state of surrender that is willingly experienced, consciously or subconsciously. In comparison, defenses are viewed as generally developing from unconscious and unwilled functions to ever more conscious and willed operations, especially if one learns to be a witness of one's own psychological maneuvers and behaviors. Due to the multiple influences that affect defense functions, defenses cannot be explicitly described as adaptive or maladaptive; they can be either, depending on many factors.

Overall, surrender is unifying and communally oriented, while also meeting individual needs for expansion and growth. Surrender functions in a limitless system where reality is not defined and one remains open to genuinely experiencing the state of wonder and awe. One's radical awareness and curiosities act like antennae with which to receive new knowledge. In surrender, one realizes the limits of one's control and yet still acknowledges responsibility for impacting the whole. Surrender is harmonically resilient and moves to resonate with Others. Surrender is informative as well as transformative.

In comparison, defenses are more divisive and self-oriented; they can range from polarizing in nature to more neutral yet dualistic in nature. Defenses attend to one's need for protection and stasis, and function in the complex egoic system of reason and logic. With development, one's range of awareness can broaden in scope, but the modal range of defense function is narrow and selectively blocks out significant information in order to appease one's discontent. Defenses operate for control, and one may not always realize the impact that one has on the greater whole. Defenses are more apt to create discord and minimize the ability to resonate with Others. Immature and modal defenses are highly protective in nature and tend to conform the self, not transform the self.

In general, surrender and defenses can be understood as opposite in nature. In the case of the alchemy of surrender compared to the creativity of defenses, the comparison is not linear. They both alter the nature of an encounter with Other, but the alchemy of surrender functions in a different psychological dimension than the creativity of defenses, so the comparison is not apples-to-apples.

Surprisingly, given the multiple points of difference between surrender and defenses, there is interplay between them that is highly cooperative in nature.

Relate and Integrate

Aside from the opposite natures of surrender and defenses, they have many points of interrelatedness. Most significantly, they are both operationalized by anxiety; in that moment, defenses can buy time for one to discern the wisdom of surrendering and prepare to surrender. Defenses help one to gauge the magnitude of a given opportunity for surrender and whether one feels experientially capable of committing to the act. If enacted, surrender reciprocally gives one a much needed break from egoic boundary control. This is a very synergistic relationship that is necessary for healthy psychological development.

Between the stages of innocence and enlightenment, one dips into the process of development. The unconscious nature of defenses in early development is partially responsible for Type 1 and Type 2 surrenders during those stages; one either fights against change (Type 1) or does not know that one has surrendered to a developmental change (Type 2). As defenses ripen into consciousness, one becomes more aware of one's choices for behavior and one's capacities for proactive development (proactive Type 3 surrender). The likelihood of spontaneous-untitive Type 3 surrender is reduced with the demands of early development and more immature defense functions, and restored as defenses become more mature in nature. Until one is fully enlightened, defenses sustain psychological integrity as one prepares—consciously or unconsciously—for one's next movement in mental and psychological development via enactments of

surrender. Additionally, if one remains high in innate curiosity throughout life, defenses help in the process of socialization and experimentation with age-appropriate expressions of raw curiosity.

Defenses also provide an opportunity to ritualize the act of surrender. Defenses can provide a pause in which one can acknowledge an opportunity for growth, tap into one's curiosities that lie beneath one's fears, bid a type of psychological farewell to one's current ground of certainties, and venture into the unknown. In that ritual, one can honor one's certainties, recognize that one's certainties can remain intact, and even symbolically lock them up for safe keeping in the hands of a trusted other.

Additionally, healthy choice and use of defenses add richness to experiences of surrender; defenses help to differentiate the self from Other and provide details for the experience. In innocent surrender, there is no sense of self, so one only experiences wholeness, not self in communion. Maladaptive use of defenses separates the self from the communal whole, but adaptive and progressively mature defenses respectfully differentiate one from the whole without separation. Healthy defenses detail the difference between self and Other, enriching the awe in surrender where one can learn more about the connectedness between self and Other.

Across the range of development, adaptive defenses help to stabilize one for surrender, and surrender energizes the psyche by freeing egoic energies to play in wonderment. In essence, the art of development is learning and refining how to choose and use defenses that provide for pause, rather than stopping and

blocking opportunities for growth. When one's path causes a psychological wound, defenses can bind the wound while one prepares to surrender and open the wound for healing. Synergy between defenses and surrender streamlines one's path of development, and the synergy can grow in harmony as one develops.

In the sage range of development, one can simultaneously defend and surrender. The defenses in this range do not exhaust psychic energy; they provide an open foundation of trust. In this range, the synergy between surrender and defenses harmonizes enough to allow one to surrender at the same time that one sacredly holds one's truths open for assessment and integration of new knowledge. At the point of enlightenment, defenses and surrender fuse into limitless openness: complete consciousness organized by transcendent truths.

Research Conclusion

The details presented throughout this dissertation provide an extensive palette of colors with which to paint an intricate picture of the nature of defenses, the nature of surrender, and the interrelatedness of the two with regard to resistance to change and psychological development. This section supplies a basic canvas of the key points that emerged from this research.

Across the landscape of ego defense literature, a conceptual theory of the overall nature of defenses has been offered. This theory describes defenses as developmental, evolutionary, creative, relational, contextual, and communicative. This theory rests on the understanding that the ego is the part of one's psychological structure that uses defenses to help navigate one's path of sociocultural development; defenses are the ego's response to emotional anxiety

that rises up when one's beliefs and certainties feel challenged by unknowns. Defenses creatively filter mental contents and craft tolerable interpretations of one's experiences. Defenses are viewed as necessary for psychological health and development and connectedness with others, while respecting that they can be misused and become problematic. Defenses are considered distinctly different from coping; coping functions to solve problems whereas defenses function to hold and protect one's current beliefs.

The literature on surrender was disconnected prior to this research and also lacked a specified understanding in use about surrender within Western professional and research environments. An understanding was deduced from a thorough analysis of the literature, stating that surrender is (a) a necessary part of psychological healing and growth, (b) an exercise in psychological success versus defeat, (c) a point at which the limits of the ego and one's perceived control are realized, (d) a letting-go or dropping of defenses—which can be voluntary or involuntary—that protect one's certainties and hide one's deep longing to heal and grow, (e) a vulnerable psychological opening that can occur safely in a protected environment, and (f) a psychological movement that cannot be forced but can be facilitated.

The synthesis and extension of the literature provided in this chapter modifies several of the understood concepts about surrender and also adds to the list. The advanced understanding—the conceptual theory—of surrender posited by this research states that surrender is:

1. A transcendent state of wonder and awe in which new knowledge can be apprehended;
2. A state in which one is born and out of which one slips during the process of sociocultural development;
3. A state that can be alchemically re-entered through the act of surrender or a spontaneous-unitive experience;
4. An act and state that is necessary for healing and growth, and that occurs at every movement in healthy psychological development;
5. A conscious and voluntary act when purposefully chosen, and an unconscious act when growth occurs microincrementally during normative processes;
6. An act that is not only a psychological success in functioning beyond one's typical ego limits, but is also an achievement in exercising and building multiple strengths of moral character that move one developmentally in the combined direction toward innocent curiosity and enlightenment;
7. An act that can be psychologically difficult, not only due to egoic influences but also due to the potential overwhelm involved with the simultaneous flex of multiple character muscles;
8. A distinct and primary psychological option for responding to an encounter with Other, not the act of dropping defenses or the secondary consequence of dropping defenses;
9. An act that engages Other rather than protecting against Other;

10. A phenomenon viewed less as a philosophical, vulnerable opening and more as a practical, purposeful opening that is motivated by curiosity and the genuine desire to learn something new;
11. A psychological act that can be facilitated and also can actually be taught, becoming a durable choice in one's ongoing efforts for psychological development;
12. An act that can accelerate one's growth and development if chosen with frequency; and
13. Something in which one can become proficient, requiring less support to enter or exit the experience and increasing one's ability to comprehend new knowledge in the state of surrender rather than through post-reflection.

Another meaningful finding in this research is the posited relationship between defenses and surrender. At first blush, defenses and surrender can erroneously be considered combative forces. Surprisingly, the meta theory created to describe the nature of defenses—as developmental, evolutionary, creative, relational, contextual, and communicative—is the template with which to nearly describe the nature of surrender; surrender is put forth as developmental, evolutionary, alchemical, relational, contextual, communicative, and both innate and learned. While this near-duplication in descriptions might imply that defenses and surrender are more similar in nature than they are combative, the relationship is posited as uniquely synergistic. This description points less to their differences

or their similarities and more to their dynamic interrelationship in the process of one's psychological development.

The synergy between defenses and surrender is empowered by the creative tension between one's innate preservational impulses that are served by defenses and one's innate expansive impulses that are served by surrender; they both work strategically together in the process of sociocultural and psychological development. Defenses offer the time to determine the advisability of surrendering in encounters with Other. It is posited that the quality of defenses can develop past the point of maturity, becoming wise and sage in character. At the sage point of development, defenses and surrender work in near unison; defenses hold one's beliefs open for continual examination, while one functions in a more constant state of surrender with the ability to fluidly assimilate new knowledge. It is also submitted that one's use of defenses becomes more conscious with development, such that one can witness one's own defense functions, making them more transparent and accessible for conscious reform. The dynamics between defenses and surrender give vibrancy to the lifelong process of learning.

Importantly, curiosity is presented as the motivator of surrender. Curiosity is a mechanism of action and an innate strength in character that can frame and energize one's instinctual impulse to expand and grow. Innate curiosity can become weakened if it is not nurtured, but it can also be re-strengthened with proper attention and room for expression. Since surrender can appear difficult—consciously or unconsciously—partially due to its simultaneous flex of multiple

character strengths, focusing on the singular motivational strength of curiosity may psychologically reduce the perceived difficulty attributed to enacting surrender. Relating to one's innate capacity for curiosity offers practicality to the process of change and growth by framing one's philosophical longing to know and be known; one can encounter Other and frame an identified gap in one's own knowledge that can be filled by engaging Other. Curiosity helps to illuminate the otherwise shadowy territory of the unknown into which one pioneers via surrender. Innocent curiosity and authentic surrender are oriented toward pure inquiry for the sake of potential insights or new ways of knowing, providing for new information as well as personal transformation.

CHAPTER SIX: FUTURE EFFORTS

The content in this chapter is based on multiple factors. Some of the suggestions surface from lack of clarity on specific issues or between comparable issues within the literature. Some are based on new ways of looking at the topics, especially compared to the discussions that currently surround them within the literature in which they are found. Some are based on intuitive considerations. These suggestions are offered as one perspective for future efforts, maintaining that other directions may be equally valuable.

The Future for Understanding Defenses and Mental Development

The field of psychology looks to transcend the framework of current ego defense theory and conceptualize defenses from new perspectives. The present research provides a broader scope with which to discuss defenses by framing them beyond the realm of ego function. Given the proposition that there are advanced types of defenses in the stages of wisdom and sageness, defense theorists could focus more on the qualitative shifts in defenses over the course of development. This focus could create a better understanding of the general role of defenses in socialization and acculturation, and could also inform human development theorists.

Some defense theorists claim that mature defenses are not defenses at all, that instead they resemble character traits, which are categorically different than defenses. This research stipulates that defenses protect and hold one's truths. In

this more generalized view, character traits are not categorically different than defenses; they represent the qualitatively softened version of defenses that evolve at the upper reaches of development and function. Given the lack of consensual nomenclature in ego defense theories, it is recommended that theorists discuss the nature of mature defenses as compared to character strengths and positive emotions. Likewise, further discussions could surround the proposed continuum that includes advanced defenses described as wise and sage, and how that could be integrated into defense theories. These discussions could provide some consensual nomenclature and create conversation between the fields of defense theory, positive psychology theory, positive emotions theory, and mental development theories.

Defense theories lack consensus on clearly distinguishing defenses from coping; new conversations can take place around this issue. The content of this dissertation may contribute to the comparison of defenses to coping and potentially smooth some defense theory controversy.

Vaillant (1995b, 2000, 2003) presses for a poetic science that can better understand defenses. Given the interrelationship between surrender and defenses, defense theory and research can look more closely at the subtleties of this interplay. Research could study defenses in regard to both preservation and expansion, rather than just in terms of preservation. Given that defense theorists and researchers are trying to find ways to study defenses without operationalizing them unethically, this expanded focus can create new opportunities for creative research design.

Similarly, Mahoney (1991) claims that some of the greatest strides in understanding and facilitating human development will come from studying the dynamics of conflict and tension. Expanding the discussion on the interplay of surrender and defenses can provide the missing discussion in the theories of defenses, ego development, and mental development: the discussion about the actual nature of psychological shifts. This dissertation supplies a basis upon which to begin to discuss the nature of developmental shifts, both within ego function and in trans-egoic function.

Since some theorists and researchers still prefer to be unassociated with Freudian theory, it would be helpful to the field of psychology and defense theory to popularize Freud's openness to the very advancements that have occurred in defense theory. Additionally, theorists could build on Freud's concern about misallocation of psychic energy. For instance, there may be value in researching Freud's ideas about limited psychic energy and seeing how his work aligns with Eastern notions of prana and the chakra system. Given the rapid pace of globalization, finding common understandings about psychological and energetic functions could inform global conflict resolution. One could also study S. Freud's ideas about psychic energy and Eastern notions of prana relative to spiritual texts, looking for similarities and potentially even finding the seed theory of psychic energy rooted in historical texts.

Since Reid (1999) suggests that U.S. culture has a normative value orientation of a white, urban, middle class male, defense research could look into the imagery involved in defense function. Understanding the hidden images upon

which people base their behavior could reveal much about defense function as well as potential cultural messages that are unintentionally conveyed through the process of Western sociocultural development.

Systems theory explains that systems are identified by their distinct boundaries, purposes, and level of abstraction studied. While Cramer (e.g., 2006) and Vaillant (e.g., 1995b) both clearly define the age groups of their foci and the development of defenses within those groups, the boundaries and levels of abstraction in other defense theories is not always so obvious. Creating a grid that can categorize defense theories by their frameworks and abstractions would provide ease in distinguishing the theories, revealing their interconnectedness, and smoothing the jagged landscape of defense literature. The consolidated theory of defenses offered herein provides one spectrum of categorization that may contribute to such a grid.

Research could look to blend or bridge Cramer's (e.g., 2006) developmental theory that focuses on youth with Vaillant's (e.g., 1995b) hierarchical theory that focuses on adults. This dissertation puts forth a model of development that incorporates both of those theories and represents the simultaneity of step-wise development and hierarchical development. Further bridging of Cramer's theory with Vaillant's theory and the details in this research could offer a more complete theory of defenses, and potentially a single theory that could gain consensual acceptance in the field of psychology.

Since investigations have shown that humans are biologically hardwired to seek meaning, research could attempt to identify brain processes involved with

finding meaning and how this relates to defense functions. For instance, research could attempt to distinguish the path of neurological function when meaning is found versus when meaning is not found, and whether the path of no meaning leads to defense function.

Also, given that experiences need to persist for two to three years in order to redirect cortical wiring and create new neural ruts from which one automatically functions, studies could look at the brain functions of people deemed to be wise, sage, or enlightened and study the plasticity of the brain at higher levels of consciousness. Theoretically, one might need less than two to three years of persistent experience to effect neural changes. Given that surrender becomes easier with repetition, this ease may be correlated to brain plasticity and invites investigation.

On a similar note, Cook-Greuter (2000) recommends that research should explore the phenomenological distinctions between levels of consciousness. The content in this dissertation may contribute to the design of such research; it offers a potential new perspective on the shifts into new levels of consciousness, as well as potential nomenclature and measures with which to discuss the phenomenological distinctions between levels.

The Future for Understanding Surrender

Given the minimal literature on the actual experiences of surrender, the dominant suggestion is to design phenomenological studies to inquire about surrender experiences. Researchers could look for the nuances within given types of surrender. For instance, in addition to further studying recovery surrenders in

general, one could research to discern any residual elements of submission or resignation—both of which are not surrender—that might be involved with recovery surrenders. This path of inquiry could refine the understanding of addiction recovery and inform intervention practices. Research could also inquire about the detailed nature of therapeutic or cathartic surrenders, and better understand the experience of the therapeutic process. Alternatively, researchers could look for distinctions between types of surrenders. For instance, one could inquire about phenomenological distinctions and similarities between recovery surrenders and cathartic surrenders. One could also inquire about distinctions and similarities between recovery surrenders and the successive surrenders that are involved with addiction recovery.

Research could look into the differences, if any, in the surrenders that heal trauma versus psychosis or mania. Atwood et al. (2002) stress that the annihilations of self from trauma are different than those of psychosis; trauma attacks one's connections with humankind, whereas human ties are left somewhat intact with psychosis and mania. A study could look at the role of trust in the comparative groups and the subtleties of surrendering as a trauma client, where trust in humankind may be broken, versus as a psychotic client, where trusting others may be easier.

E. T. Fitzgerald (1966) explains that a person who is open to experience is neither more nor less anxious than people of lesser openness, nor does this person necessarily differ in terms of ego strength. The field of addiction recovery could be informed by research that specifically studies the nature of hitting bottom,

enacting recovery surrender, and the pre- and post-measures of ego strength and openness to experience. Ego defense and surrender literature both suggest that strength of ego is involved with developmental processes, but it would be valuable to further understand how much ego strength might be necessary. Given that the West emphasizes individuality and that Western culture might inadvertently promote Ego functions, a better understanding of ego strength involved with surrender could heighten the understanding of the roles of ego strength versus humility in psychological development.

Given the distinctions between the states of Type 1 surrender and Type 3 surrender regarding integration of new knowledge, researchers could seek to learn more about how and when integration of new knowledge via surrender occurs. Research could inquire as to whether certain enablers are more assistive than others in capturing new knowledge, integrating it, and putting it into practice. In addition, research could investigate the nature of Type 2 surrenders as compared to unconscious forms of dysfunctional submission or compliance that occur during development.

In that same vein, research could study the specific roles of the various enablers. If research could discover the ideal combination of enablers that assist specific categories of psychological needs or circumstances, the field of psychology could be measurably advanced in its capacity to help people in their development and well-being.

Since Marko (2006) has supplied a new framework in which to study psychological development—the role of critical incidents and facilitative agents

involved in incremental changes in mental structures—research could inquire about surrender's role as a facilitative agent of change. This dissertation presents surrender as facilitative and as the phenomenon that occurs in every movement toward growth, but refining that understanding through the lens of Marko's work could reveal more about that moment of change and shift. Research of this type could also inquire about the role of unitive experiences as critical incidents that facilitate development.

Since defenses become more complex as one develops, and it is proposed that surrender is simple, research could study the phenomenon of relief that arises in surrender when one is no longer responsible for egoic boundary control. Systems theory could be integrated into such studies to help describe the sense of chaos that builds in the complexities of defenses and the threshold experience of tipping into the alchemical system of surrender.

It would be worthwhile to design studies around the preparations for surrender. In cases when surrender looks like a cliff dive into an abyss, one could inquire about the assistive nature of ritualizing the enactment of surrender. Such rituals could involve the understanding that one's truths and certainties can remain intact during one's experiment with surrender by symbolically handing one's truths over to a trusted other for safekeeping. The ritual could also include the recognition of the temporary nature of surrender: that surrender is not permanent, but a temporary flight of discovery.

This dissertation proposes that surrender is a distinct psychological choice that is separate from, although interrelated with, defenses. Research on surrender

could inquire about the experience of functioning without defenses; this is a nuanced lens of research that could be insightful. Research could also be designed to study the likelihood of surrender if participants view surrender as the dropping of defenses compared to viewing it as a separate choice of psychological clothing.

Since it is proposed that surrender might be an exceptional human experience (EHE), research could occur through that lens. A theoretical study could compare and contrast surrender to EHEs. Also, since EHEs may only be exceptional because of their uncommonness, research could study the role of EHEs in psychological development and how that relates to surrender's role in development, as put forth in this dissertation.

The abundant list of benefits and outcomes of surrender supply criteria with which to measure or infer the experience of authentic surrender in research participants; this measurability enables refined research designs. Research could also look into Reinert's (1992, 1997) scale of surrender and determine whether it actually measures experiences of surrender or whether it tends to measure approximations of surrender. Additionally, one could research how Reinert's work could be advanced by the offerings in this dissertation.

Just as defenses have observable features with which one can infer defense use, one could research the possibility of observable features that indicate surrender. For instance, it is proposed that surrender is a state of wonder; given that the experience of wonder is marked by wide-open eyes, goose bumps, or tears, one could research to see if there is an alignment between markers of wonder and experiences of surrender.

Given the theory that surrender simultaneously exercises multiple character strengths and virtues, research about surrender could be richly informed by the field of positive psychology. Researchers could look at the measures of character strengths and determine if those measures are also indicative of surrender. Researching surrender through the lens of positive psychology could also inform clinical practices. For instance, a further proposition in this dissertation is that it is the multiplicity of psychological muscles that are flexed by surrender that make it so intimidating; hence, surrender can be approximated by the practices for character development (offered by the field of positive psychology) and ease people closer to a full exercise of surrender. Phrased differently, having a client practice the building of singular character strengths could function as a psychological training program that builds the capacities for the surrender that is therapeutically necessary.

Research could also look to design other practices that build peoples' abilities to surrender. Meditation is often suggested as a practice for stepping out of one's mental processes, which is similar to surrender. Given that the West is more entrenched in doing things than in being, and given that Rutledge's (2004) research designed a creative method of physically inducing the phenomenon of surrender, research could look to design more physical practices with which to experience surrender, in addition to contemplative practices. For instance, such research could experiment with movement exercises, creative arts, rituals and pilgrimages, interpersonal exercises, or communal involvement. Given the interrelatedness of surrender and defenses, these efforts could reciprocally inform

the understanding of defense function; and since operationalizing surrender may pose less ethical challenges to research design than trying to operationalize defenses, this could offer an entirely new angle for defense research.

Based on the theory that curiosity motivates surrender, further research on curiosity could heighten the understanding of surrender. Research designed to find potential correlates between trait curiosity and participant stories of surrender could be revealing. Since state curiosity is somewhat easier to study, and since research on curiosity to date has not included a blended focus of curiosity with anxiety or defenses, and since people who experience recovery surrenders admit to their need to learn and their willingness to become teachable, research could focus on the relationship between resistance and curiosity in recovery surrenders, thereby mutually informing defense theory, addiction interventions, the understanding of curiosity, and the understanding of surrender. The topic of curiosity could also be theoretically integrated into existing theories of human development and used to discern any further insights about surrender and human resistance to change; such integration moves human development theories away from stage-related criteria and considers more qualitative criteria involved with development. Additionally, trait and state curiosity could be studied cross-culturally, investigating the manner in which curiosity is stimulated or not in comparative cultures and educational systems.

Given the cultural differences already recognized about surrender, research could delve further into these distinctions. Clearer understanding about the cultural differences and similarities surrounding the phenomenon of surrender

could prompt cross-cultural discussions of mutual benefit. Also, studying cultural impressions of surrender relative to gender or imagery could be revealing. For instance, one could study whether Indigenous rites of passage view surrender in masculine terms or whether surrender is viewed as effeminate in Western culture, and how that plays into the likelihood of surrender and defense use. Such research could be framed by many theories, but the developing field of cultural psychology might have particular interest in this recommendation, since it looks at how culture shapes psychological function. Comparatively, the developing field of cross-cultural psychology could frame this research in terms of looking for universality in surrender imagery.

It would be worthwhile to create an open discussion with the identified authors of surrender and flesh out the details of their thoughts. Hidas (1981) and Branscomb (1993) could compare and contrast their understandings of therapeutic surrender versus cathartic surrender. Branscomb (1993) and Frankel and Levitt (2006) could help inform therapeutic approaches with a discussion surrounding self-revolutionary therapies and the primary surrenders that might be involved in self-revolution. A committee or task force coordinated within the field of psychology could initiate these discussions and possibly assist in refining nomenclature on surrender, cross-informing specialized roles that facilitate surrender (e.g., clinicians, hostage negotiators, and conflict resolution intermediaries), as well as providing further research recommendations.

Finally, research could be designed to validate or further evolve the conceptual theory of surrender offered by this research. This could help move the

investigations on the topic of surrender further along the research continuum from basic, theoretical research into more applied or action oriented research.

The Future for Assisting Clinicians

This dissertation was basic theoretical research, not problem-oriented; therefore, one of its aims was to explain psychological surrender and its relationship to defenses and not to provide specific applications for the information. Because theoretical research design does not prohibit the sharing of ideas for applications, the thoughts that appear worthwhile to offer to clinicians as a result of this research are provided in this section.

Since understanding defenses helps clinicians understand and assist the processes of change for their clients, and since measuring and assessing defenses offers only limited information for therapy, at a minimum the content in this dissertation provides a different lens with which to view and interpret defense functions and how they relate to the ability to change. Clinicians can determine how the information in this dissertation informs their particular practices, and may be able to find their own creative applications of this knowledge, whether enhancing given therapeutic approaches or designing new approaches all together.

Knowing that resistance to change involves fear of the unknown, informing clients about the phenomenon that moves them beyond resistance—surrender—may enhance their view of the therapeutic process. If clients knew the benefits and outcomes of surrender, and learned more about what to expect in the experience of surrender, they might be more open to enacting the experience.

Additionally, viewing surrender as a diagonal movement upward in growth rather

than a downward cliff-dive may be helpful for clients. Likewise, keying into the curiosity involved with surrender may highlight a positive skill that clients recognize in their selves, offering a positive relationship to change rather than viewing change as plowing through resistance or standing naked without defenses. Clinicians may simply find it valuable to share the details about psychological surrender with clients and make the unknown phenomenon a bit more known.

Additional information that can be shared with clients is the 10-step process of transformation offered by transformative learning theory; these steps are listed in this dissertation in the section entitled Transformation, or they can be found in Mezirow (2000). Through the lens of transformative learning theory, a client may feel more like he or she is in a classroom of learning rather than a course of therapy, which could be psychologically freeing. Seeing the delineated process of change may help clients plot themselves in the process and see the details of what is still involved. The West values reason and logic, and seeing itemized steps may rationalize the process of change and make it more consumable for clients.

Clinicians may find room to explore options for ritualizing the preparations for surrender. This author has witnessed a coaching session where the client was rigidly resistant to exploring new perspectives of thought. In that session, the facilitator cupped her hands to form a symbolic container and asked if the client would be willing to put her certainties and fears in it. The facilitator specifically stated that she would hold those certainties and fears in safe-keeping

while the client experimented with new thoughts. There was a spontaneous shift in the client; she instantly accepted the facilitator's offer and simultaneously moved into open thinking. This ritualizing of the process may have room for development and expansion in the field of psychology. It builds on the key enabler of surrender, which is trust; builds on the value of releasing egoic boundary control and showing that one can opt for surrender instead; provides a place to keep one's truths intact and trust in the temporary-ness of surrender and that nothing has to change at all; and also integrates the power of ritual and formalizing the movement toward exploring new psychological territory.

Imagery is powerful. The Western image of a conquering hero—one who is already accomplished and can only succeed by continuing to prove one's accomplishments—leaves no room for further personal growth and no room for acceptable failure. Even the image of a mythical hero or warrior is set on the stage of confrontation, with the expected infliction of a wound. The image of a pioneer may have value in clinical settings. A pioneer may become wounded, but it is not inevitable. Likewise, a pioneer adventures into unknown territory, not necessarily aiming to conquer it; this changes the psychological relationship with the journey. Being open to that which can be found is different than feeling forced to find a new truth or having to prove one's self. Perchance there is room to explore how imagery assists clients in moving toward their desired goals: not the image of their goal, but the symbolic image of their selves in moving toward their goals. Also, given the preferred value image in the United States of a white, middle class male, clients could be coached to identify and understand the image they hold of

their selves compared to that image and see what insights can be gained from that awareness.

Cultural perspectives influence the client-therapist relationship; if it is not already a part of a clinician's practice, there may be potential value in discussing cultural backgrounds with clients. Since contemporary therapies involve more self-disclosure on the part of therapists, and since part of creating the sacred space in the therapeutic environment involves the mutual sharing between client and therapist, part of the introductory sessions may benefit from inquiring about cultural backgrounds. As an example, since Western therapies emphasize the gathering of information and presume that intellectual insights provide cures, and since Eastern approaches assume that transformative experiences are curative and that insights are gained afterward, knowing a client's cultural background could guide therapy. A client with Eastern cultural influences might be able to relate to surrender as a curative experience after which he or she debriefs the experience and gains insights, if that approach were linked to cultural underpinnings. If nothing else, the shared discussion of cultural backgrounds personalizes the therapeutic relationship and might uncover hidden determinants involved with a client's issues.

It was suggested in the prior section that clients might benefit from practices that build character strengths, practices that are provided by the field of positive psychology. Based on the theory that surrender flexes multiple psychological muscles of character, and based on the assumption that a simultaneous flex of multiple character muscles may be too demanding on one's

psyche, the select flexing of singular character muscles might start the process toward a full surrender that is therapeutically required. It would be valuable to organize a group of clinicians and dialogue about the potential benefits of having clients practice acts of character development unrelated to the focus of their therapy. The hypothesis is that this might indirectly loosen the rigidity of clients' preservational resistances by familiarizing them with acts of expansion. By taking the focus off of resistant issues and directing a client's attention to areas where he or she can experiment and succeed with character development, there might be a reciprocal influence on the original issue that is being resisted. Practicing character development helps to approximate the surrender that might be therapeutically necessary and can also improve the three areas associated with progress in psychotherapy, those being openness to experience, personal agency, and self-valuation.

The Future for Influencing Culture

While this research reveals the individual and collective benefits and outcomes of surrender, promoting surrender on a cultural basis in the West poses immense challenges, especially given its interpretation as defeat. Rather than trying to change the image of surrender, the image can be modified systemically by touching the systems that touch cultural values. These include the educational system, the corporate business system, and the legal and political systems.

Education

Wisdom is considered a globally valued virtue. In today's complex and rapidly changing environment, higher order strengths and virtues such as wisdom

are necessary. Unfortunately, in the West, wisdom is generally gained from the age of 50 onward. The pulse of today's world needs the wisdom embedded in people to rise up sooner, and Western research has corroborated what Indigenous cultures already know: wisdom exists in youth and can be actualized with instigation.

Since surrender is part of healthy psychological development and can be learned, there is an obligation for it to be taught. Assuming that the subject of surrender is unlikely to be taught any time soon, the motivator of surrender—curiosity—can be addressed by Western educational systems. This can be the Western approach to instigating developmental passage.

Humans are born with innate curiosity that is progressively squashed in dominant educational design. With the current emphasis on imparting information, children graduate with loads of facts but little knowledge about themselves as the utilizers of that information. Two keys are missing that limit the ability of graduates to apply their knowledge. First, they are generally taught what to know and not how to know. Second, they have not been taught to learn about themselves; without knowing one's own strengths, weaknesses, traits, and passions, one is limited in knowing where or how to direct the use of information. And, since one has not been taught how to know, one lacks the skills for self-inquiry and interpersonal inquiry. Also, since people generally underestimate the size of their knowledge gaps, and since social rules limit what people provide as feedback to each other, faulty feedback can keep people looped in their own ignorance and truncate development. The two recommendations for educational

systems are to sustain students' innate curiosity and to teach to the process of effective self-inquiry and interpersonal inquiry.

One approach to sustaining curiosity is to teach the process of learning in addition to providing content. This approach involves more than giving research projects as assignments; it involves a broader approach to research. One suggestion is to teach and assign research based on intuitive inquiry. This teaches students to pay attention to uncommon inputs, such as intuition, and to use that intuition not only to select a topic for research, but to direct the subsequent path of inquiry. Intuitive inquiry familiarizes students with tacit ways of knowing and learning, which is assistive for surrender. Likewise, promoting research as a process of learning, rather than simply conveying information, honors the role of not knowing something and sanctions the process of looking at that which one intuitively recognizes as one's own gap in knowledge. Identifying and seeking to fill such gaps establishes the motivational basis for enacting surrender and promotes individualized personal development.

Another approach to sustaining curiosity focuses on personal and interpersonal research, rather than topical research. If practices that teach respectful interpersonal curiosity are introduced in youth, the upper levels of development are more inevitably attained and people will be less likely to have their development stop at maturity, which is the current ceiling of modal function. People are uninformed on how to properly give and receive useful personal information. It is recommended that school curricula integrate courses designed to teach socially effective means of expressing curiosity about Other and for

communicating useful feedback: feedback that is not just socially "nice" but is sensitively useful. It is also recommended that such courses involve a feedback loop so that learning about Other necessarily helps one learn about one's self; this would create a self-sustaining open system of personal and interpersonal development. While parents are partly responsible for teaching interpersonal skills, parents team with the educational system to help their children develop; schools need to sustain innate curiosity and teach communication skills that allow for respectful and authentic expression of thoughts and feelings, and the ability to genuinely give and receive sound feedback. The methods and etiquette of curiosity need to be taught.

In addition to helping students learn about their selves via Other, it is also recommended that courses be age-appropriately designed to help students learn what to look for in themselves. The field of positive psychology can inform the designing of courses that help students identify their strengths and learn how to build strengths of character overall. Students also need to be taught how to recognize their own skills and passions and means of expression; understanding themselves would give students a better sense of the container into which all of education's information is being poured. It is believed that this heightened understanding of self would empower students to feel more purposeful and find or create personalized methods by which to put their education to use.

While cultural sensitivity, personality assessment, and communication skills tend to be taught as adult education or via corporate training programs, this education needs to be shared with youth. Wisdom need not arise from age 50

onward; it can be surfaced in adolescence, providing heightened development and fulfillment for individual youths, and systemic benefits for collective well-being.

Business

Given that successful change agents rate high in being open to experience, corporations could integrate the information about curiosity into training programs. Additionally, where corporate training programs already address cross-cultural awareness, personality assessment, and conflict resolution, integration of the nature of surrender and the etiquette of meeting Other could enhance these programs; stand-alone programs could also be created around the topic of surrender and effectively meeting Other.

Businesses could also institute a pattern of implementing small changes to keep employees familiar with being flexible and effecting microsurrenders. This suggestion points to insignificant changes, like routinely moving water dispensers to different areas or routinely rearranging reception areas. The concept is to keep people familiar with change and seeing how easy it is to become habituated. Simple changes may prove beneficial; given that the world changes daily on a large scale, small-scale experiences of change can bring the larger world into proportion. Periodic meetings to debrief with employees can help to integrate the desired learning and keep the process fresh.

Advertising campaigns to promote wisdom are a very reasonable suggestion for corporate America. Greeting card companies already select random calendar dates and title them as uncommon occasions for celebration; they could create an annual date to celebrate wisdom, creating cards that acknowledge people

as exhibiting wisdom and prompting the senders to share how they apply that modeled wisdom in their own lives. Another suggestion is to create generalized campaigns that popularize the idea of *passage*: identifying personal moments of challenge and wisdom gained, and creating family or community celebrations around them. Campaigns of this sort would promote the attainment of wisdom as a culturally valued goal and begin to sanction and instigate the purposeful attainment of wisdom. In the same manner, advertising campaigns that creatively promote curiosity could have similar benefits: reacquainting people with their innate curiosity and promoting its utilization. Such campaigns could be strategic efforts at building corporate goodwill or be wrapped in association with product lines.

Legal and Political

Mediation is becoming more popular as a problem-solving process that can avoid the oppositional legal system. Mediators could be informed by the content in this dissertation and determine how it can enhance their capacities to help clients succeed via mediation. The more that problems can be resolved by meeting Other in curiosity and surrender rather than via oppositional sides of litigation, the more that character is developed and unity is promoted. Surrender is part of the process, but its presence does not require pronouncement.

If government came to understand squashed curiosity in terms of quantifiable negative outcomes in collective well-being, it is reasonable to believe that government would be interested in hastening to refresh the innate curiosity in people. Creative promotion of socially respectful curiosity could motivate the

surrenders that build community and help people reach the upper levels of development more easily; the building up of communities and actualizing of people's potential would add great benefits to the complex workings of today's societies. At a minimum, government educational reform designed to sustain and support innate curiosity could have far-reaching positive ripple effects.

A Closing Arc of Thought

The understanding about psychological surrender before this research can be described as undetermined. Alternatively, even though there are grounding tenets about defenses, the understanding about defenses before this research can be described as complicated. Ironically, where the topic of surrender had minimal literature and the topic of ego defenses had abundant literature, both topics lacked meta-theories that conceptually described their overall nature. Equally, there was no refined understanding of the interrelatedness of the phenomena.

This research has offered several contributions. Both phenomena—surrender and defenses—now have conceptual theories that depict their overall nature. The literature on surrender is more tightly bound. The theory and model of surrender provides a basic foundation for further research on the topic. It is hoped that the core nomenclature established about surrender will help to enable meaningful discourse on the topic. The expansive motives involved with psychological development have been highlighted and shown to be served by the act of surrender, which is motivated by the innate capacity for innocent curiosity. The relationship between surrender and defenses is understood as dynamically synergistic, not as oppositional to each other.

One is born in a state of surrender, but without a sense of self. Through the processes of development, defenses help to fashion and clothe an image of a self in one's psyche. Defenses serve to protect the self while surrender serves to expand the self toward ever higher levels of consciousness. Conscious, proactive surrender is required to reach the uppermost stages of development. At the stage of enlightenment, the image of the self becomes infused in the lens of one's enlightened eye: the eye that can witness events against the backdrop of the transcendent truths apprehended at this level. Surrender is the appropriate psychological attire for the occasion of respectfully meeting Other with curious regard and honoring one's innate impulse to learn and grow.

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