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WHEN IT FEELS GOOD TO BE BAD: THE EFFECT OF GUILT ON SELF-  
ENHANCEMENT

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science  
at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my committee members. Thanks to Dr. Jeffrey Green, Dr. Jennifer Joy-Gaba, and Dr. Edward Milner for your helpful comments, feedback, and support. I would like to thank Dr. Chelsea Reid, Brandon Griffin, and Rachel Garthe for their continued support and for providing consultation for data analyses for this project. I would also like to thank the undergraduate research assistants, Henry Jimenez, Camille Garcia, Eric Holtz, and Katie Perlowski, for the amount of time and care they put into helping with this project.

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## **Abstract**

### **WHEN IT FEELS GOOD TO BE BAD: THE EFFECT OF GUILT ON SELF- ENHANCEMENT**

By: Jaclyn M. Moloney, B. S.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science  
at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2014

Director: Dr. Jeffrey D. Green, Associate Professor of Psychology

The present study aimed to expand on previous research that explains when affect can influence subsequent judgments in an incongruent way. It also investigated a context where a negative emotion may have been maintained in order to achieve a subsequent goal. Participants in a guilt, shame, and control condition visualized past events. Those in the guilt and shame condition wrote about a time when they committed a moral transgression and were instructed to write an apology letter to a person they hurt. They then rated themselves on a number of interpersonal traits as a way to measure self-enhancement. I hypothesized that those in the guilt condition would self-enhance on interpersonal traits as a result of feeling guilt, which is a repair-focused emotion that has been shown to benefit interpersonal relationships. I also hypothesized that participants in the guilt condition would express a desire to maintain their feelings of guilt as a strategy to help them write an apology letter. The present findings do not support my hypotheses.

## When it Feels Good to be Bad: The Effect of Guilt on Self-Enhancement

Emotions and moods influence countless aspects of daily life. Positive and negative affects have implications for the self and interpersonal interactions. They also have an effect on cognition. People tend to learn and recall more information that is congruent with their affect. It has also been shown that affect can color subsequent judgments in a congruent way. If someone is happy, then he or she will positively evaluate certain aspects of his or her environment. Early work on moods supported mood-congruency by showing moods can increase the availability of mood-congruent thoughts or information in memory (Bower, 1981). Almost all theories of mood and emotion and their effects on judgments are theories about mood congruence.

However, some research suggests that moods are not always congruent with judgments. What if you want to watch a sad love story and it ends up making you happy? Your happy mood may lead to a negative judgment about the sad story (Martin, Abend, Sedikides, & Green, 1997). What if you are angry about a social injustice? Your negative mood may lead you to make more positive judgments about your concern for the disenfranchised because staying angry could be a way of showing your concern for justice. It is known that in some contexts mood will affect judgments in congruent ways, but research has begun to examine the contexts in which mood influences judgments in incongruent ways. More recent theories have begun to create frameworks that can explain congruent and incongruent judgments.

The present research will explore a context where affect may influence judgments in an incongruent way. It will specifically explore how self-judgments are influenced by affect. The current study will look at how a negative affective state heretofore unexamined empirically—guilt—may influence self-judgments in ways that may be self-enhancing. Specifically, I will be looking at how guilt influences self-judgments in an incongruent way and if people, at times,



choose to maintain feeling guilty.

## **Affect**

Moods and emotions are both affective states, but differ in important ways. Moods are more state-focused and do not have a salient object. Moods may be even more likely to relate to misattributions because their source is typically not known or salient. Emotions are affective states focused on the valence of events, actions, or objects relevant to the person feeling them (Clore, Wyer, Dienes, Gasper, Gohm, & Isbell, 2001). Emotions tend to be shorter-lived and more intense than moods (Larsen, 2000). As a result, people are usually conscious of the source of their emotions, but less sure why they are feeling a particular mood.

A situation where an emotion would be felt over a mood could be when someone performs well at work and is congratulated by his or her boss; he or she may feel pride as a result. The person would know where this feeling is originating. Moods can have many unknown sources. One early study on mood and helping behavior found that people helped a stranger more after they found a dime in a phone booth slot (Isen & Levin, 1972). The mild influence of the unexpected dime put them in a good mood.

## **Guilt and Shame**

The current study will look at how two emotions, guilt and shame, influence self-judgments. Specifically, I will investigate how people will rate themselves when they feel guilt and shame. Moreover, guilt and shame are part of a special class of emotions termed the self-conscious emotions. Shame, embarrassment, pride, social anxiety, nostalgia, and guilt are regarded as the self-conscious emotions. They require self-awareness and occur when people reflect on their self-representations. Self-conscious emotions are not only the result of self-reflection and self-evaluation; they can involve the individual assessing a situation from another

real or imagined person's point of view (Leary, 2007). Guilt and shame are the first self-conscious emotions to be studied from this approach of mood and emotion.

Empirically, guilt has been found to be an affective state with a focus on particular behaviors involving the perception that one has harmed someone or something (Lewis, 1971). It can also be thought of as a motivated state that contains thoughts or intended behaviors acknowledging a violation of social standards and a need to offer an apology or make amends (Tracy, Robins, & Tangney, 2007; Tangney, Dearing, Wagner, & Gramzow, 2000; Kugler & Jones, 1992). Shame is both similar to and different than guilt. Shame is defined as an affective state associated with negative evaluations of the global self after violating a moral standard.

Shame and guilt can both be felt across a number of situations; both are self-conscious moral emotions, and empirically there is overlap between the two emotions, yet they remain distinct. Some early research grouped guilt and shame together, but there is now strong evidence to the contrary (Tangney, 1995). Although it is often discussed along with shame, guilt has very different implications for the self. Guilt involves the self's negative evaluations of a specific behavior, whereas shame is a negative evaluation of the entire self (Lewis, 1971; Tracy & Robins, 2004). Guilt is comprised of negative behavior evaluations (e.g., thinking one's actions were wrong) and approach behaviors. Shame is comprised of negative self-evaluations and avoidance behaviors (Wolf, Cohen, Panter, & Insko, 2010).

Carver and Scheier have created a model of self-regulation that describes an approach system and an avoidance system that is helpful to differentiate between approach and avoidance behaviors (1990, 1998, 2008). The approach system, based on a model by Gray (1994), is termed the behavioral action system (BAS) and controls movement towards a goal or behavior. The

avoidance system, or the behavioral inhibition system (BIS), motivates inhibition of movements towards behaviors that may lead to negative outcomes.

Building off of the Carver and Scheier (1990, 1998, 2008) model, Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman (2010) propose a self-regulatory framework that helps to clarify the differences between shame and guilt. Proscriptive regulation and prescriptive regulation are two forms of moral regulation that are based on approach and avoidance motivations. They define proscriptive morality as a system that restrains immoral conduct and is based on the avoidance system (Janoff-Bulman et al., 2009). Under this system, people focus on avoiding bad behaviors such as harming someone or something. Prescriptive morality promotes moral conduct and is based on an approach system. Under this system, people promote moral behaviors such as helping someone. In other words, “proscriptive regulation focuses on what we *should not* do, whereas prescriptive regulation focuses on what we *should* do,” (Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010, p. 214). The two systems map onto the way shame and guilt are regulated. Shame is related to proscriptive regulation and is activated when we have done something we should not have. Guilt is related to prescriptive regulation and is activated when we have failed to do something we should have. A proscriptive failure, such as excessive gambling, activates shame. A prescriptive failure, such as failing to tip a good waiter, activates guilt.

The authors found that being higher on an avoidance orientation predicted more shame proneness, but not guilt proneness. Similarly, being higher on an approach orientation predicted guilt proneness, but not shame proneness. An experiment supported this pattern: priming an avoidance orientation increased shame, whereas priming approach orientation increased guilt (Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010). In addition, after recalling past events, participants reported

that transgressions that activated proscriptive regulation brought up more shame than guilt, whereas transgressions that activated prescriptive regulation engendered more guilt than shame.

What is the experience of someone feeling guilt or shame? Guilt is uncomfortable, but it is motivating because of its focus on reparative action. Shame tends to be more painful, because it focuses on criticizing the entire self. Interpersonal guilt is positive in the sense that it requires empathy (Hoffman, 1982) and is associated with approach-oriented, prosocial actions to make up for the transgression. A person needs other-oriented empathy in order to be aware that he or she is the cause of another's distress. It shows he or she has the cognitive capabilities to be successful at perspective taking and possesses the affective capabilities to experience the range of emotions that empathy requires (Feshbach, 1975).

When recalling experiences of shame, participants reported blushing, higher distress levels, and feeling self-conscious and small. When recalling experiences of guilt, individuals reported having done something wrong, wishing their actions could be undone, inflicting self-punishment, hoping for forgiveness, and the desire to reconcile the situation (Roseman, West, & Swartz, 1994; Wolf et al., 2010). Shame proneness is positively correlated with neuroticism, personal distress, and low self-esteem, whereas guilt proneness is positively correlated with empathic concern, perspective taking, and subscription to conventional morality (Wolf et al., 2010). Recalling instances of shame and having shame proneness as part of one's personality are maladaptive in several ways. Recalling guilt and guilt proneness are more adaptive. This idea supports the notion that guilt and shame affect the self in different and important ways. When feeling these emotions people they may think differently about themselves.

A study by Leith and Baumeister (1998) demonstrated that global empathy was correlated with guilt-proneness, but not shame-proneness. Guilt-proneness was strongly

correlated with perspective taking, and shame-proneness predicted personal distress. In additional studies, participants recalled their experience of an interpersonal conflict from the last six months. They were later told to think of themselves as the other person and relive the experience. Better perspective taking was associated with guilt-dominated stories and guilt-prone people. Shame had no significant effect. Guilt and shame appear to have different effects when it comes to thinking about interpersonal conflict.

When feeling guilty, a person is concerned with criticizing his or her own behavior. The self is not being criticized as it is when feeling shame (Lewis, 1971; Tracy & Robins, 2004). In other words, thinking “I am a bad person” is linked to shame, whereas “I did a bad behavior” is linked to guilt. A series of studies supports Lewis’s (1971) self-behavior distinction between shame and guilt. Researchers examined the two in terms of counterfactual thinking (Niedenthal, Tangney, & Gavanski, 1994). Participants in one study described a personal shame or guilt experience; they then counterfactualized the event by listing factors that may have caused a different outcome. After researchers coded responses for whether aspects of the self, behavior, or situation were “undone” they found that in shame experiences participants were more likely to want to undo aspects of the self, whereas in the guilt experience they were more likely to undo aspects of the behavior.

The evaluation of self or behaviors is just one way to differentiate between the two related emotions. Another theoretical distinction that early researchers focused on was distinguishing between the private and public context when referring to guilt and shame. They proposed that guilt is seen as a private emotion, whereas shame is seen as a public emotion (Benedict, 1946). Some think shame is contingent upon other people knowing about one’s wrongdoings, whereas guilt can be felt solely in the individual and other people may never know

one violated a social standard (Gehm & Scherer, 1988). The public-private distinction is commonly talked about, but until recently there was not much empirical support for it (Tangney, Marschall, Rosenberg, Barlow, & Wagner, 1994). Wolf and colleagues (2010) took a closer look at these distinctions.

Wolf and colleagues (2010) point out that Lewis (1971) does not dismiss the public-private distinction entirely. They state that the self-behavior distinction that Lewis makes for shame versus guilt indicates the type of evaluation the individual makes. The public-private distinction indicates the situation in which the transgression occurred. Wolf and colleagues (2010) tested whether the public-private and self-behavior theoretical distinctions both deserve attention. Many measures of guilt and shame proneness only look at self-behavior conceptualizations. They examined the relationships among five shame and guilt proneness inventories (each with a guilt and shame subscale) to assess the constructs the inventories measured in order to determine whether the different conceptualizations are compatible or incompatible. Four of the inventories followed the public-private distinction (Anxiety Attitude Survey, Perlman, 1958; Beall Shame–Guilt Test, Beall, 1972; Measure of Susceptibility to Guilt and Shame, Cheek & Hogan, 1983; Dimensions of Conscience Questionnaire, Johnson, Danko, Huang, Park, Johnson, & Nagoshi, 1987) and one followed the self-behavior distinction (TOSCA-3, Tangney, Dearing, Wagner, & Gramzow, 2000).

Wolf and colleagues (2010) conducted a confirmatory factor analysis and they found that the five guilt proneness subscales from each inventory were associated with a Guilt Proneness Factor and the five shame proneness subscales were associated with a Shame Proneness Factor. They also found that the two-factor model of the 10 subscales fit significantly better than the one-factor model. This indicated that the public-private and self-behavior distinctions could fit

together. These results show that the public-private and self-behavior conceptualizations empirically share much in common and that both help to show that shame and guilt proneness are distinct constructs (Wolf et al., 2010). These findings are in the context of measurement, meaning that shame proneness can be better measured if the scenario is public, whereas guilt proneness is best measured as the tendencies of making approach responses in private scenarios.

The topic of guilt in social psychology research was largely ignored up until the early nineties (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). Guilt gained more attention after it was considered from an interpersonal approach. Originally, Freud and other early psychologists viewed guilt as a predominantly intrapersonal emotion. Freud thought that intrapersonal conflicts were the source of guilt (1930/1961; 1933/1964). In Freud's theory, the superego acts as the conscience and is motivated to always be moral. The id motivates the desire to act on pleasure. The ego acts as a mediator between the two competing desires. Freud believed the superego used guilt to sway the actions of the ego. Guilt was seen as causing psychological distress and problems with adjustment because of needing to respond to one's unacceptable impulses. The focus was on the negative intrapersonal effects of guilt.

The work by Baumeister and colleagues (1994) highlights the positive interpersonal nature of guilt. They argue that guilt often results from an interpersonal interaction and it holds relationship-enhancing functions. There is no doubt that guilt is beneficial in terms of motivating reparative action towards the source of the tension. However, it is crucial that the intrapersonal aspects of guilt do not get ignored as the interpersonal ones once were. Restoring relationships, as a result of feeling guilt, indirectly benefits the self. The current study is focusing on the positive intrapersonal side of guilt by looking at the positive implications feelings of guilt can have on self-judgments. Guilt can lead to reparative action, but it also might lead to more

positive self-judgments under some circumstances. A person feeling guilt may recognize that he or she feels upset while also recognizing this feeling is the result of caring about another person or his or her own moral standards. That is, he or she may use his or her guilty feelings as input to render self-judgments and may in fact render more positive self-judgments relative to a situation in which he or she is not feeling guilt.

Recent evidence suggests that the interpersonal reparative actions that guilt motivates may also have great intrapersonal effects. Restoring interpersonal relationships indirectly benefits the self, but there may be more direct benefits as well. One study illustrated this point by examining how participants responded when they were denied the opportunity to compensate for damaging social bonds (Nelissen & Zeelenberg, 2009). Participants in a guilt condition imagined they were going to cost their parents more college tuition money after failing a final exam they did not study for before winter break. In a control condition, participants imagined failing the exam because the questions did not relate to the class. Those in a repair condition were told they could take the exam again in the spring semester. Those in a no-repair condition were told they would have to take the exam the following year after re-enrolling in the course. They then reported their intentions of going on a ski trip with their friends over the break.

Participants in the guilt condition with no opportunity to repair the harm they caused their parents were less likely to report joining their friends on the ski trip compared to those in the control condition who had a repair opportunity. Those in the control condition with a repair opportunity reported no more intention to go than those in the control without a repair opportunity and those in the guilt condition with a repair opportunity. The authors termed this effect of guilt causing self-punishment the “Dobby effect,” after a character in the Harry Potter series who punished himself for minor infractions by hitting his head against walls.



In a second study, participants showed evidence for the Dobby effect in a controlled experiment (Nelissen & Zeelenberg, 2009). Participants participated in three rounds of what they were told was a visual acuity task. Over 10 trials, they looked at a number of dots and circles that were impossible to count. They then were told to concentrate on the number of dots and make an estimate. Every accurate estimate earned them 10 points to use towards entrance to a lottery. The experimenter already predetermined whether or not they gave an accurate estimate for each trial in each round. In the first round, they were told they answered seven correctly (earning them 70 points). In the second round, they were told they were earning points for a partner. In the control condition, they and their partner both answered eight correctly. In the guilt condition, their partner earned them 80 points by answering eight correctly and they only earned their partner 20 points. In the third round, participants received 10 points for every correct answer and had points deducted for every wrong answer. Participants decided for themselves how many points would be deducted. In the No-Repair condition, the points were deducted from their total points. The more points they deducted indicated more self-punishment. In the repair condition, the number of points they deducted was given to their partner. They found higher levels of self-punishment by guilty participants in the No-Repair condition. The Dobby effect shows that guilt motivates positive interpersonal behavior, but it also has important implications for the self. If the opportunity for repair is not available, then the positive interpersonal effects are lost along with any benefit to the self. This evidence for how much intrapersonal distress guilt can cause when people cannot repair adds further support for the need to continue examining the positive intrapersonal effects of guilt when it is felt at a time where repair opportunities are not salient.

### **Affect and Information**

There are a number of theories positing how affect influences judgment. The vast

majority of these theories use a congruence approach to explain the influence of affect. They assume negative affect leads to negative evaluations and positive affect leads to positive evaluations. The current study explores a context where emotions can influence judgments in an incongruent way. Previous research has failed to study the ways that experiencing guilt and shame can influence judgments in congruent or incongruent way. The current study focuses specifically on how guilt and shame influence self-judgments.

**Affect-as-Information.** The affect-as-information approach is commonly used to explain how affect influences judgments. According to the affect-as-information theory, people have a tendency to misattribute their affect to the judgment at hand (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). When asking themselves “How do I feel about this situation?” people rely on the valence of their feelings to make an attribution. According to this theory, mood congruent evaluations are generated when individuals mistake aspects of their mood for their reaction to a target. An example of this would be if a person were to listen to a sad song on their way to work and subsequently be asked how their day is going. They may report having a bad day when in reality they just feel a negative mood from the song.

The affect-as-information theory only accounts for times when affect is used as information in a congruent way: positive affect is used as information to render more positive judgments, whereas negative affect is used as information to render more negative judgments. The theory takes the context of one’s mood into consideration only by allowing for the discounting of one’s mood to salient nontarget causes (Martin & Davies, 1998). One classic study supporting the affect-as-information theory had participants rate their life satisfaction in situations where they had an opportunity to attribute their mood to an external source (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). In the first study, happy or sad mood was induced by participants recalling vivid

descriptions of a happy or sad event in their recent past. Participants completed the experiment in a soundproof room. Some were told that the room might make them feel good and others were told they might feel bad. After the mood induction, they completed a bogus “sound-memory task,” life satisfaction and happiness scales, and present mood scales.

Participants reported more satisfaction and happiness with life in general when in a good mood than when in a bad mood. Those in a good mood were not influenced by the possible situational explanation. However, when those in the bad mood were able to attribute their feelings to the external source they were told would make them feel bad, the effect of the bad mood was eliminated. Those in the bad mood condition reported more happiness and life satisfaction when they were able to attribute these feelings to the room compared to those that were not told the room would make them sad. They also no longer differed from those in the good-mood condition. Those in the bad-mood condition that were told the room would make them feel good did not report significantly more happiness than those that were told nothing about the room. They also reported significantly less happiness than those in the good-mood condition with the same expectations that the room would make them feel good.

Schwarz and Clore (1983) replicated these findings using a more naturalistic setting as well. In a second study, participants answered questions about life satisfaction, happiness, and a desire to change over the phone on either warm, sunny days or rainy days. They were also randomly assigned to conditions in reference to the weather. Participants were either casually asked how the weather was, were told the study was specifically concerned with how weather affects mood, or no mention of the weather was made. Participants felt happier, satisfied, and showed less desire to change on sunny days compared to rainy days as a result of the weather influencing their mood. This was consistent across conditions. When participants were made

aware of the weather by experimenters, they were more likely to attribute their mood to the weather; consequently, the negative impact of the bad mood was eliminated. Those in the conditions in which attention was directed at the weather did not show differences on sunny compared to rainy days in life satisfaction, happiness, or desire to change. Participants' responses in both studies show support for the affect-as-information theory. Participants allowed their momentary affective states to influence judgments about their life satisfaction and happiness. By being able to attribute their negative mood to an external factor they were able to attenuate the negative effect of bad moods.

This example shows that the affect-as-information theory only mentions how affective states influence judgments in a congruent way. It is unable to explain judgments that are incongruent with affect. Guilt has been shown to have a number of interpersonal benefits. As a result of it benefiting interpersonal relationships, it may also have a positive influence on the self under certain conditions. The affect-as-information theory would not be able to account for feelings of guilt influencing self-judgments in a positive way. Most of the research has only focused on moods and use mood and affect interchangeably. It is unclear where they make the distinction between mood and emotion; as a result it is unclear how emotions act as information. As mentioned earlier, mood and emotion differ on a few dimensions. Emotions tend to be stronger, more fleeting, and have a known source. Moods are not as strong, last longer, and do not have a known source. As a result of not having a clear source, mood may be more likely to be misattributed. The affect-as-information theory is not able to account for the ways that guilt acts as information for the self since it is a complex emotion that typically has a known source, rather than a commonly experienced mood such as sadness that typically has an unknown source.

**Affect Infusion Model.** Another theory of mood and judgments is the affect infusion

model (AIM) (Forgas & George, 2001). While still unable to explain incongruent effects, this model identifies the conditions under which affect will or will not influence or shape cognition (affect infusion). Research has shown that affect can directly influence thinking (Clore & Byrne, 1974). The term affect infusion describes what happens when affectively charged information influences or becomes a part of a person's judgments of cognitions related to an outcome. According to the AIM, the type of cognitive processing necessary for a judgment task moderates the relation between mood and judgment. Different contextual needs require different processing strategies.

The four types of processing strategies the AIM identifies are direct access, motivated, heuristic, and substantive. Direct access refers to the direct retrieval of a preexisting response based on previous social situations. This strategy is likely to be used when constructive and extensive processing is not necessary, such as a familiar situation. Motivated processing is directed by a particular motivational objective; therefore, it involves a highly selective information search. Heuristic processing should be used when there is no prior response to access and no direct motivation that guides a response. It is more open ended and constructive. The same is true for substantive processing, which refers to individuals interpreting new information and relating it to their preexisting memory-based structures in order to find the proper response.

When using open-ended processing, such as heuristic or substantive processing, affect will influence judgments. These judgments can be generated either as a result of affect-priming mechanisms during substantive processing or as a result of affect-as-information mechanisms in the course of heuristic processing (Forgas, 2001). When using direct access processing or motivated thinking, affect will not influence judgments. Motivated thinking can lead to specific

social goals that will limit the affect infusion.

Judgments about the self (versus others) may be more susceptible to affect effects according to the AIM. Self-referent information may be more complex and require more processing than other-referent information (Forgas et al., 1984). It has been shown that mood effects are greater for peripheral self-traits over central traits (Sedikides, 1995). Peripheral self-descriptions are less salient and are held with less certainty and therefore require more constructive and substantive processing to be assembled. In contrast, central self-descriptions are held with high certainty so they are processed using direct access or heuristic strategies. Applying this theory to the context of this study, peripheral self-judgments seem likely to be affected by affect. It helps explain what sort of self-judgments may be influenced by feelings of guilt, and thus will guide my experiment design.

The AIM advances affect literature by describing the conditions under which affect will or will not influence or shape cognition. It falls short of providing a complete picture of the way affect influences cognitions because it only discusses times where the influence is congruent or there are not effects. It does not explain how affect influences cognitions in an incongruent way.

### **Mood-as-Input**

The mood-as-input model is more comprehensive than the congruence approaches to affect. It is largely assumed that mood-congruent judgments are much more common than mood-incongruent judgments (Martin, 2001). The congruence approaches assume that negative affect leads to more negative judgments and positive affect leads to more positive judgments. They assume that congruent judgments are the default and incongruent judgments are a very rare exception. The mood-as-input model suggests that moods elicit different effects in different contexts and that there is no context-free default. A positive or negative mood can have positive

or negative implications. Context is configural and the meaning of a mood can change in different contexts. The mood-as-input model does not assume that the valence of a mood implies an inherent relationship between the mood and subsequent cognitions. According to the model, it is the implications of one's mood, as well as the valence that influence one's behavior. The same could be said about the implications and valence of emotions. Since emotions are stronger and have a known source they offer a better way to test the model. Both the affect-as-information model and the mood-as-input model assume that affect provides a person with information and then that information can influence that person's motivations and evaluations (Schwarz & Clore, 1988).

Rather than simply asking, "How do I feel about it," the mood-as-input model asserts that people ask themselves "What does it mean that I am feeling this way in this context?" Moods or emotions serve as input into a configural processing system. People take their positive mood along with other contextual information and make a judgment about a target. The mood is processed in parallel with the other information so that the mood in the context provides evaluative and motivational implications.

One way to interpret whether or not a mood or emotion is desired in a certain context is if it fulfills a specific role. Higgins and Rholes (1976) discuss this role-fulfillment model as an approach to impression formation. A positive impression will be given if the target fulfills its role for what is expected. Negative evaluations happen when a target does not fulfill an expected role. A common example from the study is the target *careful surgeon* compared to *casual surgeon* (Higgins & Rholes, 1976). A surgeon is expected to be careful and by being described as careful the target, surgeon, is fulfilling that role. On the other hand, if the surgeon is described as casual the target is not meeting the expected role. *Careful surgeon* would receive a positive

evaluation and *casual surgeon* would receive a negative evaluation, even though *careful*, *casual*, and *surgeon* typically are all positive on their own.

An important set of studies by Martin and colleagues (1997) demonstrated how the mood-as-input model relates to the role-fulfillment view of mood (Higgins & Rholes, 1976). Participants watched happy or sad video clips (to induce mood) and then read what they thought was a story another participant had written. They were told the writer was asked to write about an event that either made them happy or sad. They then rated how effective the story was in inducing its intended mood, how much they liked the story, and what grade they would give it. Participant's evaluations of the story were more favorable when the participant's mood suggested role fulfillment. When evaluating the happy story, happy participants judged the story to be more effective, reported liking it more, and gave it a higher grade than sad participants. When evaluating a sad story, sad participants judged the story to be more effective, reported liking it more, and gave it a higher grade than happy participants. Happy stories that left participants happy and sad stories that left participants sad were rated more favorably than happy stories that left participants sad and sad stories that left participants happy. This was evidence against the "How do I feel about it?" heuristic because those in happy moods did not give more favorable evaluations regardless of the story. When they read a sad story and felt sad, the negative mood can be interpreted as role fulfillment. This finding is an example of when a negative mood can lead to positive evaluations. This study focuses specifically on moods. The current study adds to the literature by testing this model with emotions.

These findings were replicated in their second experiment by having participants watch a happy or sad video. Participants then immediately rated how much positive and negative adjectives reflected their current mood. After performing a filler task, participants read a happy



or sad story. They were then asked about the story, their current feelings, and completed an empathy measure. When reading the sad story, participants who had seen sad videos rated themselves much more favorably in terms of empathy than those who had seen positive videos. When evaluating the sad story, the sadder they felt after reading the story, the more positively they rated themselves on empathy. The research done by Martin and colleagues (1997) also shows that a participant's negative feelings can suggest the presence of a more positive trait than positive feelings do.

The mood-as-input model illustrates that negative moods can have positive implications in particular circumstances. The vast majority of theories of how affect influences judgments are congruency theories. The mood-as-input model suggests that in some situations affect may influence judgments in incongruent ways. Since guilt is an emotion rather than a mood, it may be a more stringent test of the mood-as-input theory. Emotions are harder to misattribute than moods. The mood-as-input model suggests that under certain circumstances, guilt may have positive implications, as individuals will use their feelings in a configural way as input to their self-judgments about particular traits.

### **Emotion Regulation**

If a negative emotion, such as guilt, can lead to positive evaluations, then there may be times when people may want to maintain negative feelings. When considering the valence of affect and emotion regulation, the hedonic approach is the dominant approach. The hedonic approach assumes people want to stay in positive moods and avoid negative moods. The hedonic approach has been more dominant in the literature and appears more intuitive. Assuming that people want to remain in a pleasant or positive state, people avoid things that make them feel bad and are drawn to things that make them feel good (Larsen, 2000). They want to increase pleasant

emotions and decrease unpleasant emotions. If they are angry at a sports game, they may turn the television off. If they are feeling stressed, they may go for a run. If people are driven solely by hedonic goals, how then are we able to explain why people would rate a sad movie more favorably than a happy movie? Or how can we explain why *Titanic*, a well-known tragedy, is still one of the highest grossing films of all time? A hedonic approach to emotions cannot answer these questions, but a functional or instrumental view (Frijda, 1986; Tamir, 2009) of emotions can. The functional view suggests the utility of the mood or emotion determines whether it is maintained or decreased.

In general, emotion regulation refers to individuals' attempts to influence their emotions to attain some goal (Gross, 2002; Tamir 2011). The hedonic view focuses on the motivation to attain feeling pleasure. Increasing pleasant emotions and decreasing unpleasant emotions are valid motivations because individuals prefer pleasure to pain (Freud, 1926/1959). The main argument of the functional view is that individuals may also be motivated by instrumental goals (Tamir, Mitchell, & Gross, 2008). Determining how emotions are regulated may depend on the balance of hedonic and instrumental benefits of those emotions in a specific context (Tamir, 2005; Tamir, Chiu, & Gross, 2007).

An increasing number of recent studies support a functional view of emotion regulation that goes against the dominant hedonic approach. In general, people want to feel good over feeling bad. In the short term, however, people may be motivated to feel certain emotions for instrumental reasons that may or may not be hedonic (Tamir, 2009). They may be motivated to consider the utility, meaning usefulness in achieving a goal, of an emotion over simply feeling good. A study by Tamir and colleagues (2007) examined the role of utility considerations in emotion regulation. First, participants demonstrated that they identified explicit and implicit

representations of emotional utility. They were asked to rate how much they agreed they should feel a certain emotion in order to optimize the pursuit of a certain goal. Explicitly, they reported they should feel an approach emotion when obtaining an approach goal, but not an avoidance goal. They also reported they should feel an avoidant emotion to reach an avoidance goal. Avoidant emotions are emotions such as worry, whereas an approach emotion they used was sadness. For example, they reported they should feel excited in order to get a good grade on a paper. They also reported they should feel worry in order to avoid failures. In a lexical decision task showing implicit representations, participant's scores favored approach emotions over avoidance emotions in the context of approach-related goals. In the context of avoidance related goals, participants favored avoidant emotions over approach emotions. The researchers also found that the more participants viewed unpleasant emotions as useful for avoiding an upcoming threat, the more likely they were to choose to experience them. These findings support the theory that utilitarian motives can take precedence over hedonic motives. People will endorse unpleasant or avoidant emotions if they are more appropriate for the context.

Tamir, Mitchell, and Gross (2008) conducted a study demonstrating that before engaging in confrontational tasks, individuals can be motivated to choose to engage in activities that are likely to increase anger over more pleasant options. Individuals were told they were either going to play a confrontational or non-confrontational game. Preferences for anger-inducing activities were higher than preferences for exciting or neutral activities when participants expected to play a confrontational game. Participants also showed improved performance on confrontational games after choosing to listen to anger-inducing music compared to excitement-inducing music. This shows that anger can be instrumental in certain contexts and it can be beneficial to maintain or elicit an angry feeling despite its unpleasant effects (Tamir et al., 2008). Similar to the

congruence theories, most of the work done using the instrumental view of emotions and moods focuses on moods rather than discrete emotions.

### **The Present Research**

The current study examined how guilt and shame influence self-judgments. Guilt is a reparative-focused emotion that signals the individual cares that they hurt the person they have wronged (Baumeister et al., 1994). A guilty person feels bad, but it is the result of the bad thing they have done or the standard that they did not live up to. Feeling guilty may indicate that a person believes he or she is a better person than his or her behavior demonstrates. This could lead a person to want to stay feeling guilty in order to attain a social repair goal. While it is unpleasant, I expected that guilt would lead to positive self-enhancement on traits relating to desired interpersonal qualities and in scenarios where a participant wrote an apology letter. I predicted that shame would not lead to self-enhancement, because it is accompanied by painful feelings about the self and a sense of worthlessness (Tangney et al., 2007).

Specifically, I expected that those in the guilt condition would rate themselves significantly higher on positive interpersonal traits compared to those in the shame and control condition. I also expected that those in the shame condition would show no difference in their ratings of interpersonal traits compared to the control condition. I predicted that before writing an apology letter, participants in the guilt condition would report wanting to stay in that affective state because it would be instrumental for them for the letter-writing task. I also predicted that after writing the letter, participants in the guilt condition would self-enhance when asked about the effectiveness of their letter compared to those in the shame and control conditions. As a secondary hypothesis, I predicted that the relation between the guilt condition and interpersonal

trait ratings would be moderated by guilt and shame proneness, religious commitment, and behavioral regulation tendencies.

**Hypothesis 1:** I expected participants in the guilt condition would self-enhance more on interpersonal traits compared participants in the shame and control conditions.

**Hypothesis 2:** I predicted that participants in the guilt condition would report a greater desire to stay in their current affective state before writing an apology compared to those in the shame or control conditions.

**Hypothesis 3:** I predicted that participants in the guilt condition would self-enhance more on the effectiveness of their apology letter (i.e., evaluate their apology letter more highly) compared to those in the shame or control conditions.

## **Method**

### **Design**

Participants reported trait level guilt and shame, state guilt and shame, religious commitment, and behavioral regulation tendencies. Each participant was randomly assigned to an emotion induction condition (guilt, shame, or control). This was in the form of a visualization activity. All participants were instructed to visualize events from their daily lives. The first two events were the same across conditions. Those assigned to the guilt and shame conditions visualized events related to past moral transgressions. All participants were then asked to rate themselves on interpersonal and agentic traits. Self-ratings of interpersonal traits across conditions were used as a measure of self-enhancement. For the second part of the study, all participants were told to write letters to a person they imagined in the visualization activity. They then answered questions about how they planned to use their current affective state to help write the letter. After writing their letter they answered follow-up questions. These included a second

measure of self-enhancement. Participants were asked to rate how effective they thought their letter was at apologizing. Participants were then debriefed and thanked for their participation.

## **Participants**

Seventy-nine undergraduates from the introductory psychology courses at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) were recruited through an online sign-up system to participate. They were compensated with partial course credit. The only requirement for participation was that they were over 18 years old. Participants were 20.71 years of age on average ( $SD = 2.55$ ). The sample was 57.5% female. Ethnicity was varied (43.8% Caucasian, 28.8% African American, 11.3% Asian American, 7.5% Latino, Hispanic, 7% Other).

## **Measures**

**Trait Measures.** I measured trait guilt and shame using the Guilt and Shame Proneness scale (GASP; Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011) in order to control for guilt and shame proneness and see if they act as moderators (see Hypothesis 4 below). I measured the tendency to use the Behavioral Activation System (BAS) and the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS) (Carver & White, 1994). I looked at the BIS/BAS as a moderator (see Hypothesis 5 below). I measured religious commitment using the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (Worthington, Wade, Hight, Ripley, McCullough, Berry, & O'Connor, L., 2003) to see if it acted as a moderator.

***Guilt and Shame Proneness.*** Arguably, the best way to assess trait guilt is through a scenario-based measure. The Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA, Tangney et al., 1989) is one of the most frequently used measures. The responses capture a number of behavioral, affective, and cognitive features related to guilt. A more recently developed scenario-based measure is the GASP (Cohen, Wolf, Panter, & Insko, 2011).

Scenario-based measures have more advantages than measures such as global checklists. Many people have not spent time studying shame and guilt, or even emotions in general, so they may not know or be able to articulate how guilt and shame are different. By using scenarios, the measure is able to get around using the terms shame and guilt. It is more conceptually consistent with current notions of guilt. The GASP ( $\alpha = .73$ ) typically has higher internal consistency than the TOSCA-3 ( $\alpha = .66$ ). It is able to incorporate both the self-behavior and public private distinctions between guilt and shame. The GASP is also able to differentiate emotional and behavioral responses to transgressions (Cohen et al., 2011).

To measure guilt and shame proneness, participants completed the Guilt and Shame Proneness scale (GASP; Cohen et al., 2011), a 16-item measure that contains two 4-item guilt subscales and two 4-item shame subscales (refer to Appendix B for full scale). The guilt subscales differentiate between negative behavior-evaluations and repair action tendencies. The shame subscales differentiate between negative self-evaluations and withdrawal action tendencies. Participants were asked to imagine themselves in a situation and respond with the likelihood that they would respond in the way described (1 = *very unlikely*, 7 = *very likely*). An example of a negative behavior-evaluation item from the guilt subscale is, “After realizing you have received too much change at a store, you decide to keep it because the salesclerk doesn’t notice. What is the likelihood that you would feel uncomfortable about keeping the money?”

**BIS/BAS.** As previously discussed, the behavioral action system (BAS) controls movement towards a goal or behavior. The avoidance system, or the behavioral inhibition system (BIS), motivates inhibition of movements towards goals that may lead to negative outcomes (Gray, 1994). Participants completed a scale measuring the tendency to use the BAS and the BIS (Carver & White, 1994). The BAS subscale measures dispositional differences in approach

motivation and the BIS subscale measures dispositional differences in avoidance motivation. The scale consists of 24 items: 13 BAS, 7 BIS, and 4 filler items. Participants were asked to read each statement and report how much they agreed or disagreed with it on a 4-point scale (1 = *very true for me*, 4 = *very false for me*). An example of a BAS item is “When I want something I usually go all-out to get it.” An example of a BIS item is “Criticism or scolding hurts me quite a bit.” For the full scale refer to Appendix C.

**Religious Commitment.** To measure religious commitment participants completed the Religious Commitment Inventory – 10 (Worthington et al., 2003). For 10 items, participants were asked to indicate how much they agreed on a scale from 1 (*not at all true of me*) to 5 (*totally true of me*) with a statement about being committed to their religion. An example item was “My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life.” For the full scale refer to Appendix D.

**Emotion Induction.** Affect has been successfully induced in the lab in a variety of ways. The difficulty of a successful induction depends on the desired mood or emotion. Clips of films such as *Galipoli*, *Sophie’s Choice*, *Splash*, *Bullitt*, and *Stripes* have been used to induce positive, negative, and neutral moods when demonstrating the mood-as-input model (Martin, Ward, Achee, & Wyer, 1993). When assessing emotional preferences, Tamir and Ford (2009) used different 30-second clips of music that induced excitement or fear. Preferences for watching particular movies that varied in emotional content have also been used as a measure to assess motives for emotion regulation (Tamir et al., 2007). Participants have also described the things that make them feel the most angry/sad/happy to specifically induce anger, sadness, and happiness (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Strack, Schwarz, & Gschneidinger, 1985). Like other self-conscious emotions, guilt is a relatively complex emotion, so it is trickier to induce than a simple



positive or negative mood. For example, there is no musical selection that is able to universally instill feelings of guilt. Guilt involves specific self-standards and requires a level of self-awareness; therefore what makes a person feel guilt is more complex (and perhaps more idiographic) than the tone of a musical piece.

There are many ways that guilt can be induced and measured in the lab. Guilt is commonly induced through recalling events or imagined scenarios. Mancini, Gangemi, Perdighe, & Marini (2008) and Cogle, Goetz, Hawkins, and Fitch (2011) asked participants to recall a recent life event about which they felt guilty. Participants relived the event and wrote about it in as much detail as possible. In another study, participants imagined they were in their last year at university after taking longer than expected (Nelissen & Zeelenberg, 2009). They imagined they just failed an exam they did not study hard for that would let their parents down and cost them more tuition money. Other inductions have used procedures that make the participant believe they had hurt another participant in some way, such as making participants believe their failure at an unknowingly unsolvable game meant a confederate posing as another participant did not get extra points on an exam score (Darlington & Macker, 1966; Xu, Begue, & Bushman, 2012; Regan, Williams, & Sparling, 1972). Some have gone so far as to make participants feel guilty for ostensibly breaking a confederate's camera (Regan et al., 1972).

Using a contrived situation with a confederate or multiple participants may be more naturalistic, but it is harder to determine whether or not the situation will make all participants feel primarily guilt. Some people may respond with more feelings of shame or different feelings towards the person they have wronged. It is much harder for the manipulation to remain consistent and strong across participants and confederates. In addition, there are many potential confounds. In order to ensure that guilt is induced, the current study used a recall task with

specific prompts. This method has advantages over an imagined scenario because it likely will strengthen the reaction to the induction. Given that guilt and shame are self-conscious emotions, I expected the participants' reactions would be stronger if they were based on their own past events. By providing prompts regarding their self-reported event, I was able to have some control over what participants thought about without losing the stronger emotions.

## **Procedure**

Participants came to a lab room located on the Monroe Park campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. They were seated in their own cubicle in order to avoid distractions from other participants. After they provided consent for participation, they were randomly assigned to the guilt, shame, or control condition. They first completed measures of guilt proneness, shame proneness, religious commitment, and a measure on the dispositional differences in the behavioral inhibition and behavioral action systems.

Participants were told the researchers were interested in how people visualize events from their daily lives. All participants were told they would visualize different events they had experienced and answer some questions about them. Similar to past research, the first two events were intended to make the cover story stronger and participants were simply asked to visualize a recent bus ride and a local movie theatre (Martin et al. 1997). They then answered the following questions about the visualization:

1. How vivid was your visualization?
2. How clear was your visualization?
3. How difficult was your visualization?
4. How long ago did the event happen?

Participants answered using a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all vivid/clear/difficult*, 7 = *very vivid/clear/difficult*) (See Appendix E for full scale).

Up until this point, the procedure was the same across participants. The third and final event was different based on random assignment of the guilt, shame, or control condition (See Appendix F). In order to induce guilt and shame, I modified prompts used to induced guilt and shame in past research (Manicini et al., 2008; Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010; de Hooge, Zeelenberg, & Breugelmans, 2011; Cogle et al., 2011): participants recalled a recent guilt-related or shame-related life event. Participants recalled a recent interpersonal event that made them feel guilt or shame, or they recalled a typical weekday (control condition). Participants were told they had 10 minutes to continuously write as much as they could about the event. For the first five minutes, they were told to write about *how* they were feeling, and for the last five minutes they were instructed to write about *why* they were feeling that way.

**Guilt.** The guilt induction read as follows:

We all fall short of our moral standards at times. We would like you to think back on a time when you felt **guilt** after **failing to act** *in a kind or moral way towards someone very close to you like a parent or friend, resulting in hurt and disappointment from your actions*. What behavior did you fail to do that you knew you should have? With this situation in mind, please **try to vividly relive this event** and describe it in as *accurate and detailed* way as possible (i.e., in all its details). What happened to make you feel guilty? What standard, value, or ideal didn't you meet? What did you think or feel in the situation? How disappointed in your behavior were you? Include also such details as to what your sensations were on the occasion and how you feel about it now.

Before you start writing, take a few moments to close your eyes and remember the event as clearly as possible. Remember that everything you write is completely confidential.

You will have 10 minutes to write. Please write for the full 10 minutes.

For the **first five minutes** write about *how you were feeling* in this situation. How did you feel about failing to do the right thing? What was your general impression of the event? Do you remember feeling anything in particular while the event was happening or afterward? What sensations did you experience?

For the **second half** of the visualization please write about *why you were feeling that way*. What explanation can you give for your experience? Was it common for you to feel this way? Why do you think you had these feelings? Write for the full five minutes including *as much detail* as possible.

**Shame.** The shame induction was the same except the word guilt was replaced with shame and the event was framed in a way that is more in line with the behavioral inhibition system. That is, rather than participants writing about failing to live up to a moral standard, they were describing a time they did something that violated a moral standard.

We all fall short of our moral standards at times. We would like you to think back on a time when you felt **shame** after *disappointing or hurting someone very close to you like a parent or friend* and it resulted in you feeling bad about yourself. What did you do that you should not have done? With this situation in mind, please **try to vividly relive this event** and describe it in as *accurate and detailed* way as possible (i.e., in all its details).

What happened to make you feel ashamed? What did you do that you knew was wrong?

What did you think or feel in the situation? How disappointed in yourself were you?

Include also such details as to what your sensations were on the occasion and how you feel about it now.

Before you start writing, take a few moments to close your eyes and remember the event as clearly as possible. Remember that everything you write is completely confidential.

You will have 10 minutes to write. Please write for the full 10 minutes.

For the **first five minutes** write about *how you were feeling* in this situation. How did you feel about the doing this bad thing? What was your general impression of the event?

Do you remember feeling anything in particular while the event was happening or afterward? What sensations did you experience?

For the **second half** of the visualization please write about *why you were feeling that way*.

What explanation can you give for your experience? Was it common for you to feel this way? Why do you think you felt so bad about yourself? Write for the full five minutes including *as much detail as possible*.

**Control.** For the control group, participants described a typical weekday.

We would like you to think back to a day that you would describe as a typical weekday.

With this situation in mind, please **try to vividly relive this event** and describe it in as *accurate and detailed* way as possible (i.e., in all its details). What happened on this typical day? What did you think or feel in the situation? Include also such details as to what your sensations were on the occasion and how you feel about it now.

Before you start writing, take a few moments to close your eyes and remember the event as clearly as possible. Remember that everything you write is completely confidential.

For the **first five minutes** write about *how you were feeling* in this situation. How did you feel on this typical weekday? What was your general impression of the event? Do you remember feeling anything in particular while the event was happening or afterward? What sensations did you experience?

For the **second half** of the visualization please write about *why you were feeling that way*. What explanation can you give for your experience? Was it common for you to feel this way? Why do you think you had these feelings? Write for the full five minutes including *as much detail as possible*.

After the 10 minutes was over, participants answered the following questions. Responses were indicated on 7-point likert scales (For full scale see Appendix F). The last three questions served as manipulation checks regarding their effort in visualizing the event and whether they were able to recall an appropriate recent event.

1. How vivid was your visualization?
2. How clear was your visualization?
3. How difficult was your visualization?
4. How easy was it for you to think of a recent situation as we asked?
5. How much effort did you put into visualizing this situation?
6. Were you honest about what you wrote down?
7. How long ago did the event happen?

For the guilt and shame conditions, I asked how severe the victim thought the offense was in order to look closer at the event severity.

**Affect manipulation check.** As a manipulation check, all participants completed the State Shame and Guilt Scale (Marschall, Sanftner, & Tangney, 1994). This consists of 15 items assessing in-the-moment feelings of shame, guilt, and pride (five items per subscale) (See Appendix A). I did not assess their ratings of pride since it is not in the interest of the current study. That brought the total number of items to 10. Past research has shown high inter-item reliability for each subscale (shame:  $\alpha = .89$ , guilt:  $\alpha = .82$ ). Respondents answered how they were feeling right at that moment (1 = *not feeling this way at all*, 5 = *feeling this way very strongly*), such that higher numbers reflected greater guilt and shame. An example guilt item is “I

feel like apologizing, confessing.” An example item of shame is “I want to sink into the floor and disappear.”

They then rated themselves on interpersonal traits and agentic traits on an 11-point scale (1 = *describes me not at all*, 11 = *describes me very much*). Some examples of interpersonal traits are kindhearted, moral, and nurturing. Some examples of agentic traits are ambitious, confident, and dominant (refer to Appendix G).

**Emotion Regulation.** After rating themselves on interpersonal and agentic traits, participants completed another writing task. Participants were told that they would write a letter of apology to the person who was the victim in their visualization. Participants in the guilt and shame condition were told they would then write a letter of apology regarding the offense they just visualized. They were asked to write about what they thought or felt during their visualization and apologize for either what standard they did not live up to or what they did wrong. Participants in the control condition were told to write a letter to someone close to them about their typical weekday that they visualized. They were instructed to write for five minutes.

Before writing the letter, participants indicated the extent to which they wanted to stay in their current affective state or escape from it (see Appendix I). Participants were asked how they planned to prepare themselves to be able to complete the task (i.e., write the letter). They responded to three questions and rated how much they planned on utilizing certain strategies (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*). They then answered the following questions:

1. To what extent do you plan to re-experience the offense while writing the letter?
2. How hard will you try to keep feeling the same way you are feeling right now while writing the letter?
3. How much do you want to stay in the same emotional state you are in as the result of

your visualization?

After writing the letter, as a second measure of self-enhancement, participants rated how well they thought they wrote their letter. They were asked to rate how effective they thought their letter was in communicating their apology, how well the victim would respond to the letter if he or she were to read it, and how sincere they think the letter sounds (see Appendix I).

## **Results**

### **Dependent and Moderating Variables**

The dependent variables I looked at were self-ratings of interpersonal and agentic traits, desire to maintain current feelings in order to write a letter, and perceived effectiveness of an apology letter. The moderators I planned to look at were guilt and shame proneness, religious commitment, and tendency to use the behavioral inhibition system (BIS) or behavioral action system (BAS). The means for all the variables separated by condition are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

The State Guilt and Shame scale items were all scored in a positive direction. I created the shame ( $\alpha = .86$ ) and guilt ( $\alpha = .83$ ) subscales by averaging five items for each emotion. To assess self-ratings on interpersonal and agentic traits, I averaged ratings on the 10 interpersonal traits ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and on the 10 agentic traits ( $\alpha = .87$ ). The desire to maintain current affective state and effectiveness of letter were both assessed using three items. Both were positively scored and the averages of the three items were used. The items assessing effectiveness of letter showed inter-item reliability ( $\alpha = .75$ ), but the items assessing a desire to maintain current feelings were not reliable ( $\alpha = .46$ ).



Table 1

*Mean Scores for State Feelings and Dependent Variables Separated by Condition*

	Shame	Guilt	Agentic	Interpersonal	Maintain	Effective
Control	1.61 (.93)	1.72 (.90)	8.03 (1.36)	8.58(1.51)	5.15(1.17)	5.60 (.85)
Guilt	1.78 (.81)	2.23 (1.03)	8.18(1.66)	9.29(1.03)	4.67(1.18)	5.35(1.35)
Shame	1.85 (.91)	2.50 (1.20)	7.86 (1.78)	8.91 (1.71)	4.65(1.12)	5.52 (1.23)

*Note.* Shame and Guilt were measured on a 5-point scale (1 = *not feeling this way at all*, 5 = *feeling this way very strongly*). Self-evaluations of traits were measured on an 11-point scale (1 = *describes me not at all*, 11 = *describes me very much*). Desire to maintain current affective state and effectiveness of letter were measures on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

As recommended by the scale authors, I created subscales for the GASP and BIS/BAS and planned to put the subscales into the models separately. Averaging the four items in each subscale created the four GASP subscales (Guilt- Negative Behavior Evaluation,  $\alpha = .70$ ; Guilt-Repair,  $\alpha = .69$ ; Shame – Negative Self-Evaluation,  $\alpha = .68$ ; Shame-Withdraw,  $\alpha = .44$ ). All items were scored in the positive direction. I created the BAS-Drive subscale by averaging four reverse-scored items ( $\alpha = .74$ ). I created the BAS-Fun Seeking subscale by averaging four reverse-scored items ( $\alpha = .55$ ). I created the BAS-Reward Responsiveness subscale by averaging five reverse-scored items ( $\alpha = .70$ ). I created the BIS subscale by averaging five reverse-scored items and two positively-scored items ( $\alpha = .81$ ). To assess religious commitment, I averaged all 10 items on the inventory ( $\alpha = .95$ ). All items were scored in a positive direction.

The BAS fun-seeking subscale and the GASP – Shame/Withdrawal subscale had inter-item reliability under .60 and were not included in analyses.

Table 2

*Mean Scores for Moderating Variables Separated by Condition*

	GASP-NBE	GASP-REPAIR	GASP-NSE	BIS	BAS-Drive	BAS-Reward
Control	4.96 (1.23)	5.42 (1.12)	5.10(1.37)	2.97 (.60)	3.07(.54)	3.56(.40)
Guilt	4.97 (1.59)	5.59 (.96)	5.23(1.20)	2.97 (.57)	2.90(.59)	3.52(.39)
Shame	5.26 (1.11)	5.81 (.73)	5.28(1.06)	2.81 (.56)	2.92(.49)	3.64(.32)

*Note.* The GASP was measured on a 7-point scale (1 = *very unlikely*, 7 = *very likely*). The BIS/BAS was measured on a 4-point scale (1 = *very true for me*, 4 = *very false for me*).

**Manipulation check.**

To determine whether the emotion induction was effective, the differences in state shame and guilt were assessed. To test whether the shame condition significantly increased shame over the guilt and control conditions, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine the effect of condition on state shame. The overall model was not significant,  $F(2, 77) = .52, p = .60$ . This means that there was no significant difference in state feelings of shame for the control ( $M = 1.61, SD = .93$ ), guilt ( $M = 1.78, SD = .81$ ), and shame ( $M = 1.85, SD = .91$ ) conditions. To further examine the differences between groups, Tukey HSD post-hoc comparisons were calculated. They revealed no significant differences in shame between the shame and guilt groups,  $p = .94$ , shame and the control groups,  $p = .54$ , and guilt and the control groups,  $p = .73$ . I ran a planned contrast comparing the combined feelings of shame for a combined shame and guilt group to the control condition. There was no significant difference between the feelings of shame for the control group and the combined shame and guilt group,  $t(77) = -1.07, p = .29$ . Thus, it appears that the manipulation was largely unsuccessful.

To check that the guilt condition significantly increased guilt compared to the shame and control conditions, a separate one-way ANOVA was calculated to determine the effect of condition on state guilt. The overall model was significant,  $F(2, 77) = 3.80, p = .03$ . This means that the average state feeling of guilt was significantly different when comparing the means of the control ( $M = 1.72, SD = .90$ ), guilt ( $M = 2.23, SD = 1.03$ ), and shame ( $M = 2.50, SD = 1.20$ ) conditions. To determine which groups significantly differed, a planned contrast was calculated based on a priori hypothesis that state guilt for the guilt group would be higher compared to other conditions. A contrast between guilt and all other groups indicated that there was a not significant difference between the weighted mean of guilt and the combined weighted mean of all other groups,  $t(77) = .49, p = .63$ .

To determine where the difference was, Tukey HSD post hoc tests were included in the ANOVA. These contrasts revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean of the shame group compared to the control,  $p = .02$ . The contrasts between the shame group and guilt group and the guilt group and the control group were not significant. This means that across conditions there was a difference in the state feelings of guilt. The post hoc test shows that those in the shame condition reported feeling the highest amount of guilt across conditions.

A planned contrast was calculated to determine if the weighted mean of state guilt for those in the combined guilt and shame group was higher compared to the control condition. The result of this contrast shows that the combined shame and guilt groups reported significantly more guilt compared to the control group,  $t(77) = -2.62, p = .01$ .

**Hypothesis 1:** I expected participants in the guilt condition would self-enhance more on interpersonal traits compared to participants in the shame and control conditions.

To test the effect of condition and sex on self-ratings for interpersonal and agentic traits a 3 (emotion condition: guilt, shame, control) X 2 (sex: male, female) X 2(trait type: interpersonal, agentic; within) mixed ANOVA was calculated. Participants were divided into the groups based on the condition they were randomly assigned to (shame, guilt, control) and self identification as either male or female. Results indicated a significant main effect of trait type,  $F(1, 73) = 24.91$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .22$ . There was also a significant interaction between sex and trait type,  $F(1, 73) = 10.11$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .09$ . Although both men and women rated themselves higher on interpersonal traits ( $M = 8.93$ ,  $SD = .16$ ) compared to agentic traits ( $M = 8.03$ ,  $SD = .18$ ) across conditions, the effect is more pronounced in women ( $M = 9.32$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ) compared to men ( $M = 8.55$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ). Women reported significantly higher ratings on interpersonal traits compared to men,  $t(77) = 2.44$ ,  $p = .02$ . The main effects of emotion condition and sex were not significant. The interaction between trait type and condition was not significant. The three-way interaction involving trait type, condition, and sex also was not significant. This means that participants were reporting higher self-evaluations on interpersonal traits compared to agentic traits. This was consistent across conditions and this effect was even more pronounced for females. Even though the crucial interaction was not significant, I proceeded to analyze the interpersonal traits in order to fully test Hypothesis 1.

A one-way between-groups ANOVA was calculated to explore the impact of emotion condition on the endorsement of interpersonal traits. The overall model was not significant,  $F(2, 77) = 1.68$ ,  $p = .19$ . This means that there was no significant difference on self-evaluations for interpersonal traits across the control ( $M = 8.58$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ), guilt ( $M = 9.29$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ , and shame conditions ( $M = 8.91$ ,  $SD = 1.71$ ). Those in the guilt condition did not report significantly higher ratings on interpersonal traits, and post-hoc comparisons did not reveal any significant

differences in the means among any of the conditions. As a result of the average feelings of guilt and shame not being significant for the guilt and shame group, I conducted an independent samples t-test to determine whether the control group compared to the shame and guilt group combined showed differences in ratings on interpersonal traits. The test revealed there was no significant difference between the control group and the combined shame and guilt group,  $t(78) = -1.60, p = .11$ . Although the model was not significant, it was important to determine if participants were self-enhancing on either types of traits and to see if their trait ratings differed across conditions. As a result of the relation between guilt and interpersonal traits being nonsignificant, I did not include the moderating variables in any models.

**Hypothesis 2:** I predicted that, before writing an apology letter, participants in the guilt condition would report a greater desire to stay in their current affective state and use their feelings to help them write and apology letter compared to those in the shame or control conditions.

Although the items used to assess a desire to maintain current feelings were not reliable ( $\alpha = .46$ ) I proceeded with the analysis, as it was one of my main hypotheses. A one-way between-groups ANOVA was run to explore the impact of condition on the desire to remain in a current affective state and specifically to test the hypothesis that there would be a statistically significant difference in the level of desire to maintain a current affective state for the three groups (guilt, shame, control). The overall model was not significant,  $F(2, 77) = 1.66, p = .20$ . This means that the average desire to maintain current feelings was not significantly different across the control ( $M = 15.46, SD = 3.50$ ), guilt ( $M = 14.00, SD = 3.55$ ), and shame ( $M = 13.96, SD = 3.36$ ) conditions. Tukey HSD post-hoc comparisons were calculated in order to further investigate differences among groups. They revealed no significant differences in desire to

maintain affect between the shame and guilt groups,  $p = .99$ , shame and the control groups,  $p = .26$ , and guilt and the control groups,  $p = .27$ .

In order to be consistent across hypotheses, I conducted an independent samples t-test to determine whether the control group compared to the shame and guilt group combined showed differences in ratings on desire to maintain affect. The test revealed there was no significant difference between the control group and the combined shame and guilt group,  $t(78) = .183$ ,  $p = .07$ .

**Hypothesis 3:** I predicted that participants in the guilt condition would self-enhance more on the effectiveness of their letter compared to those in the shame or control conditions.

A one-way between-groups ANOVA was run to explore the impact of condition on the endorsement of the effectiveness of their letter and specifically to test the hypothesis that there would be a statistically significant difference in the level of effectiveness ratings for the three groups (guilt, shame, control). The overall model was not significant,  $F(2, 77) = .33$ ,  $p = .72$ . This means that there were no significant differences in reported effectiveness of the letter participants wrote across the control ( $M = 5.60$ ,  $SD = .84$ ), guilt ( $M = 5.35$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ), and shame ( $M = 5.52$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ) conditions. Tukey HSD post-hoc comparisons were calculated and revealed no significant differences in effectiveness of the letter between the shame and guilt groups,  $p = .85$ , shame and the control groups,  $p = .97$ , and guilt and the control groups,  $p = .70$ . An independent samples t-test also revealed no significant difference on effectiveness of letter between the control group and the combined shame and guilt group,  $t(78) = .69$ ,  $p = .54$ .

### **Controlling for Overlap in Shame and Guilt**

In order to control for the overlap in shame and guilt, I included both state shame and guilt in a multiple regression and looked at the unique variance each one accounted for in

predicting each of the dependent variables. I analyzed these separately for the guilt and the shame condition.

Table 3

*Correlations with Shame and Guilt Separated by Condition*

	Shame	Guilt	Control
Guilt	Shame .80***	Shame .58**	Shame .62***

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted for the guilt and shame condition to examine whether guilt and shame predicted ratings on interpersonal traits. Guilt and shame were simultaneously entered into the models. The overall model for the guilt condition did not significantly predict ratings on interpersonal traits,  $F(2, 24) = .34, p = .75, R^2 = .02$ . Together, these predictors only accounted for 2.4% of the variance ratings of interpersonal traits. The overall model for the shame condition significantly predicted ratings on interpersonal traits,  $F(2, 22) = 3.71, p = .04, R^2 = .25$ . Together, these predictors accounted for 25.2% of the variance ratings of interpersonal traits. Shame was a significant predictor of interpersonal trait ratings,  $t(22) = -2.18, p = .04, \beta = -.68$ . This indicates that as shame increased by one standard deviation ( $SD = .19$ ), interpersonal trait ratings decreased by  $-.68$  standard deviations. Guilt was not a significant predictor,  $t(24) = .79, p = .44$ . This means that feeling more shame predicted lower self-ratings on interpersonal traits, but feelings of guilt did not predict self-ratings on interpersonal traits for those in the shame condition.

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted for the guilt and shame condition to examine whether guilt and shame predicted ratings on agentic traits. Guilt and shame were

simultaneously entered into both models. The overall model did not significantly predict ratings on agentic traits for those in the guilt condition,  $F(2, 24) = .70, p = .50, R^2 = .06$ . Together, these predictors only accounted for 5.5% of the variance ratings of agentic traits. The overall model for the shame condition significantly predicted ratings on agentic traits,  $F(2, 22) = 7.13, p < .01, R^2 = .39$ . Together these predictors accounted for 39.3% of the variance ratings of agentic traits. Shame was a significant predictor of agentic trait ratings,  $t(22) = -2.79, p = .01, \beta = -.78$ . This indicates that as shame increased by one standard deviation ( $SD = .19$ ), agentic trait ratings decreased by  $-.78$  standard deviations. Guilt was not a significant predictor,  $t(24) = .73, p = .47$ . This means that greater feelings of shame predicted lower ratings of agentic traits, but feelings of guilt did not predict ratings on agentic traits for those in the shame condition.

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted for the guilt and shame condition to examine whether guilt and shame predicted ratings on desire to maintain affect. Guilt and shame were simultaneously entered into the model. The overall model did not significantly predict ratings on desire to maintain affect for those in the guilt condition,  $F(2, 24) = .66, p = .53, R^2 = .05$ . Together, these predictors only accounted for 5.2% of the variance ratings on desire to maintain affect. The overall model for the shame condition significantly predicted ratings on desire to maintain affect,  $F(2, 22) = 8.11, p < .01, R^2 = .43$ . Together these predictors accounted for 42.5% of the variance ratings on desire to maintain affect. However, on their own, shame was not a significant predictor of desire to maintain affect,  $t(22) = -.56, p = .58, \beta = -.15$ , nor was guilt a significant predictor though the effect was marginal,  $t(24) = -1.92, p = .07, \beta = -.52$ . This means that greater feelings of guilt and shame combined, but not individually, predicted a lower desire to maintain current feelings for those in the shame condition.



A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted for the guilt and shame condition to examine whether guilt and shame predicted ratings on effectiveness of the letter participants wrote. Guilt and shame were simultaneously entered into the model. The overall model did not significantly predict ratings on effectiveness of letter for those in the guilt condition,  $F(2, 24) = 1.94, p = .17, R^2 = .14$ . Together, these predictors only accounted for 13.9% of the variance ratings of effectiveness of letter. The overall model for the shame condition did not significantly predict ratings of effectiveness of letter,  $F(2, 22) = 1.95, p = .17, R^2 = .15$ . Together these predictors only accounted for 15.1% of the variance of ratings of effectiveness of letter.

### **Correlations of Guilt and Shame with Dependent Variables**

Correlational analyses were performed to determine the relation between feelings of guilt and shame and self-ratings of interpersonal and agentic traits, effectiveness of letter, and emotion regulation (desire to maintain current feelings) (see Tables 4, 5, & 6). Results were separated by condition. There was a significant negative relation with interpersonal traits and feelings of shame for the control condition,  $r(26) = -.53, p < .01$ , and the shame condition,  $r(23) = -.45, p = .03$ . There was no significant relation for those in the guilt condition. This means that higher feelings of shame were related to lower self-evaluations of interpersonal traits when people recalled a time they hurt someone close to them and in general. This is similar to my hypothesis. When people are feeling more shame, they are more distressed and think of themselves as being a bad person. They focus on the thing they should not have done, rather than trying to repair their relationship with the person they hurt. This could be what is causing them to report lower self-evaluations on interpersonal traits.

There was a significant negative relation between state guilt and ratings of interpersonal traits for the control condition  $r(26) = -.55, p < .01$ . There was no significant relation for the guilt

and shame conditions. This means that lower feelings of guilt were related to higher ratings of interpersonal traits, but they were not significantly related in the shame or guilt conditions. There was a significant negative relation with feelings of shame and ratings on agentic traits for the control condition,  $r(26) = -.52, p < .01$ , and the shame condition,  $r(23) = -.57, p < .01$ . This means that higher feelings of shame were associated with lower ratings on agentic traits for those in the shame induction and in general.

There was a significant negative relation with feelings of shame and desire to maintain current feelings for those in the shame condition,  $r(23) = -.57, p < .01$ . There was also a significant negative relation with feelings of guilt and desire to maintain current feelings for those in the shame condition,  $r(23) = -.67, p < .01$ . This means that for those in the shame condition, higher feelings of guilt and shame were associated with a lower desire to maintain current feelings. There was a significant positive relation with ratings of agentic traits and effectiveness of letter for the guilt condition,  $r(25) = .54, p < .01$ , and the control condition,  $r(26) = .55, p < .01$ . There was also a significant positive relation with ratings of interpersonal traits and effectiveness of letter for the guilt condition,  $r(25) = .55, p < .001$ . This means that for those in the guilt induction, higher ratings of effectiveness of the letter they wrote were associated with higher rating of agentic and interpersonal traits. Higher ratings of agentic traits were also related to greater ratings of effectiveness of their letter for those in the control condition. There was a positive relation with ratings on interpersonal traits and desire to maintain feelings for those in the shame condition,  $r(23) = .43, p = .03$ , along with a positive relation between desire to maintain and ratings of effectiveness,  $r(23) = .45, p = .03$ . This means that for those in the shame condition, higher ratings on interpersonal traits were associated with a greater desire to maintain

their current affective state. Greater desire to maintain their affective state was also related to higher ratings of effectiveness of their apology letter.

Table 4

*Correlations among Dependent Variables for Guilt Condition*

---

	Shame	Guilt	Agentic	Interpersonal	Maintain	Effective
Shame	--	.58**	-.17	.03	-.19	-.32
Guilt		--	-.08	.05	.07	-.21
Agentic			--	.30	.10	.54**
Interpersonal				--	.06	.55**
Maintain					--	.29
Effective						--

---

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

Table 5

*Correlations among Dependent Variables for Shame Condition*

---

	Shame	Guilt	Agentic	Interpersonal	Maintain	Effective
Shame	--	.81**	-.57**	-.45*	-.57**	-.33
Guilt		--	-.42*	-.30	-.67**	-.09
Agentic			--	.65**	.38	.20
Interpersonal				--	.43*	.27
Maintain					--	.45*
Effective						--

---

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

Table 6

*Correlations among Dependent Variables for Control Condition*

	Shame	Guilt	Agentic	Interpersonal	Maintain	Effective
Shame	--	.63**	-.52**	-.53**	-.30	-.15
Guilt		--	-.20	.55**	-.01	.09
Agentic			-	.36	.48*	.55**
Interpersonal				-	.21	.37
Maintain					-	.29
Effective						--

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

**Correlations of Moderating Variables with Dependent Variables**

The correlations of moderating variables with dependent variables can be found in Tables 7, 8, and 9. There was a positive relation between agentic traits and BAS – drive for the guilt,  $r(25) = .64, p < .001$ , and shame condition,  $r(23) = .49, p < .01$ . There was no significant relation for the control condition. A possible explanation for the presence of correlations in the emotion induction conditions and not in the control condition is clearer after examining the items in the BAS – drive subscale. An example item is “When I want something I usually go all-out to get it.” This is similar to the agentic traits such as go-getter, confident, and ambitious. It is interesting that there was no correlation in the control condition. This could be due to the approach-orientation that is associated with feelings of guilt.

There was a significant positive relation with interpersonal traits and GASP – NBE scores for the guilt,  $r(25) = .53, p < .01$ , and control conditions,  $r(26) = .50, p < .01$ . There was no significant relation for the shame condition. There was also a significant positive relation with GASP – NSE scores and interpersonal traits for the guilt,  $r(25) = .47, p = .03$ , and control conditions,  $r(26) = .57, p < .01$ . This means that higher scores on guilt and shame proneness

were related to higher ratings on interpersonal traits for those in the guilt condition and control condition. Specifically, guilt proneness associated with negative *behavior* evaluations and shame proneness related to negative *self* evaluations. There was a significant positive relation between interpersonal traits and GASP-Repair for the control condition,  $r(27) = .54, p < .01$ . This means that higher scores on guilt proneness associated with a repair focus were related to higher ratings on interpersonal traits when there was no emotion induction.

There was a significant positive correlation among the BIS and agentic trait ratings in the shame,  $r(24) = -.67, p < .01$ , and control,  $r(26) = -.39, p = .04$ , conditions. This means a greater tendency to activate an inhibitory self-regulation system was associated with lower ratings on agentic traits for those in the shame induction and control group. The only variable significantly related to religious commitment was state shame in the shame condition. There was a significant negative relation with religious commitment and state shame in the shame condition,  $r(24) = -.62, p < .01$ . This means those who reported greater religious commitment reported lower feelings of state shame.

Table 7

*Correlations among Potential Moderators and Dependent Variables for Guilt Condition*

---

	Agentic	Interpersonal
Agentic	--	
Interpersonal	.30	--
GASPNBE	.07	.53**
GASPrepair	.01	.29
GASPNSE	-.18	.47*
BASDrive	.64**	.11
BASReward	.30	.26
BIS	-.24	.24

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*Note.* \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

Table 8

*Correlations among Potential Moderators and Dependent Variables for Shame Condition*


---

	Agentic	Interpersonal
Agentic	--	
Interpersonal	.65**	--
GASPNBE	-.02	.22
GASPrepair	-.03	.22
GASPNSE	-.28	-.13
BASDrive	.49*	.38
BASReward	.11	.11
BIS	-.67**	-.48*

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Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

Table 9

*Correlations among Potential Moderators and Dependent Variables for Control Condition*


---

	Agentic	Interpersonal
Agentic	--	
Interpersonal	.36	--
GASPNBE	.02	.50**
GASPrepair	.09	.54**
GASPNSE	-.13	.57**
BASDrive	.37	-.04
BASReward	.35	.12
BIS	-.39*	.31

---

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$

### Discussion

Affect has important implications for daily life. Not only does it make people feel a certain way, it also has the power to change a person's cognitions. Previous research has focused on congruence models of affect (Affect-as-Information, Schwarz & Clore, 1983; AIM, Forgas & George, 2001). Most theories of affect only account for times when the valence of the mood or emotion matches the valence of a subsequent judgment. Recent research has shown that is not

always the case (Martin et al., 1997). Mood or emotion can be used as information in a configural evaluative process. The current study aimed to further the literature on how affect influences judgments. The influence of affect on self-judgments has been understudied and previous research has failed to look at the ways guilt and shame may affect judgments. By studying the effects guilt and shame have on self-judgments, the field benefits from a better understanding of how moral emotions can influence the self.

Before now, no other study has considered the potential intrapersonal benefits of feeling guilt. Guilt and shame both arise after moral transgressions. Guilt and shame have shown conceptual overlap in the past, but they are distinctive emotions (Tangney et al., 2007). Guilt is typically associated with a negative evaluation of a behavior after a transgression. Shame is associated with a negative evaluation of the global self after a transgression. People feeling guilt have been found to be approach oriented. Guilt can have many interpersonal benefits because it is a signal that you want to repair an important relationship (Baumeister et al., 1994). Based on the different influences guilt and shame have on the self, previous research suggested that when people feel guilt they might think of themselves as possessing higher levels of interpersonal traits. As a result of the maladaptive nature of shame, previous research suggested that when people felt shame they would not identify as strongly with certain interpersonal traits.

Previous research has also shown that in certain contexts people use emotions in an instrumental way (Tamir, 2009). This means they may regulate their emotions in order to help achieve a goal. Most of the theories of emotion regulation suggest that people are driven by hedonic motives. Recent work has shown that people may choose to maintain negative emotions, such as anger, in order to achieve a goal. Guilt is a negative emotion, but it is also a repair-focused emotion. Previous research suggested that in certain contexts guilt might be maintained

in order to help repair an interpersonal relationship. No previous research had looked at guilt in this way.

I hypothesized that when feeling guilt, participants would rate themselves higher on interpersonal traits compared to those feeling shame or those who received no emotion induction. I also hypothesized that those feeling guilt would express a desire to maintain their feelings of guilt in order to help them write an apology letter. Additionally, I hypothesized that those feeling guilt would also self-enhance on how effective they thought their letter was compared to those in the shame or control condition. My hypotheses were not supported by the data. A main reason for the failure of present findings to support my hypotheses is that my guilt and shame manipulations did not work as I had planned. Those in both the shame and guilt condition reported feeling more guilt than shame. Those in the shame condition reported feeling the most guilt and there were no significant differences in feelings of shame across conditions. After conducting follow-up analyses, feelings of shame did not differ across any of the groups. By looking at the differences in feelings of guilt for the control condition compared to a combined guilt and shame group, I found that the combined guilt/shame group felt more guilt compared to the control group.

Past work suggested that there would be significant differences when guilt was framed as failing to do a good thing and when shame would be framed as doing a bad thing (Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010), but that was not supported by the present research. The current study combined this type of framing with writing prompts used in previous studies. As a result of using new writing prompts that tried to induce shame and guilt, the effects produced in previous work may have been diminished. Another possible reason for this could be the way that certain words were emphasized in the manipulation prompts. There was a great deal of text for participants to



read, so it is possible that when rereading the instructions, the individuals in the shame condition were focusing on thinking of their bad behavior rather than being a bad person as a result of their behavior.

Although none of my main hypotheses were supported, I was able to control for the conceptual overlap in shame and guilt by looking at whether or not they individually predicted ratings on interpersonal traits, agentic traits, desire to maintain affect, or effectiveness of the letter for the guilt and shame conditions. For the shame condition, greater shame predicted lower interpersonal and agentic traits ratings. Guilt was not a predictor of either. Although I was focusing on how feelings of guilt related to self-evaluations, it is consistent with past work that feelings of shame are related to negative self-evaluations. Together, feelings of guilt and shame predicted a lower desire to maintain current feelings for those in the shame condition. Neither guilt nor shame was a significant predictor of effectiveness of letter in either the guilt or shame conditions.

These findings are consistent with the theories accounting for how affect influences judgment and how affect regulation is driven by hedonic motives. Greater feelings of shame led to negative self-evaluations. Shame is a painful negative emotion that has been shown to be maladaptive. My findings suggest negative feelings of shame are being used as information for subsequent judgments on ratings of self-traits, which is consistent with the Affect-as-Information theory (Schwarz & Clore, 1983). The Mood-as-Input model (Martin et al., 1997) can also account for this finding. The negative feelings of shame are being considered in combination with the painful event the participant described. Configural processing of feelings of shame would also lead to negative self-evaluations. My finding that feelings of guilt and shame

predicted a lower desire to maintain affect is consistent with the hedonic approach to emotion regulation. Participants expressed a desire to reduce their negative emotions.

I was also able to examine some preliminary analyses that yielded interesting findings. Lower feelings of guilt were related to higher ratings of interpersonal traits in the control condition, but they were not significantly related in the shame or guilt conditions. This is interesting because it goes against what I hypothesized. In general, when people reported lower feelings of guilt there was an association with higher interpersonal ratings. Future research could look at why inducing guilt reduces this association. A close examination of the events participants wrote about could also lead to a greater understanding of how recalling and writing about past transgressions is influencing the relation between guilt and ratings of interpersonal traits. The content of their written descriptions of the events could provide insight for future research.

For those in the shame condition, higher feelings of guilt and shame were associated with a lower desire to maintain current feelings. This also goes against my hypothesis. Even though those in the shame condition felt the most guilt, perhaps the past events they imagined were more negative and that is why they wished to reduce their negative affect even if they were writing an apology letter. Future research and follow-up analyses could be done to assess the qualitative differences in the events described by those in the shame condition compared to the guilt condition.

For those in the shame induction, higher ratings on interpersonal traits were associated with a greater desire to maintain a current affective state. Greater desire to maintain an affective state was also related to higher ratings of effectiveness of their apology letter. This makes sense with what I hypothesized. The participants in the shame condition felt the most guilt; therefore

this relation shows that when people are feeling guilt, those that rate themselves higher on positive interpersonal traits also wish to remain in their affective state in order to write an apology letter. This is consistent with the instrumental view of emotion regulation (Tamir, 2009). This association shows that people are not always driven to reduce negative emotions. It suggests that people may be identifying with the positive interpersonal aspects of guilt and could be motivated to maintain their negative feelings in order to help them write an apology letter. These are simple correlations, but this suggests future research should continue to examine how guilt is regulated.

The current study also found variables significantly related to guilt and shame proneness that have not been discussed in previous research. Higher scores on guilt proneness were related to higher ratings on interpersonal traits for those in the guilt emotion induction and control condition. This suggests that there is some relationship between a tendency to feel guilt and more positive self-evaluations. This finding is consistent with a more configural view of how affect is influencing judgments. If the tendency to feel guilt is related to more positive self-evaluations this suggests an incongruence approach to determining the influence of affect on self-judgments. The congruence approaches assume negative emotions leads to negative judgments. This finding suggests that may not be what is happening with guilt, and therefore guilt and guilt proneness should continue to be investigated using a configural approach, such as the Mood-as-Input model, that can account for occasions when the valence of an emotion is incongruent with the valence of the subsequent judgment.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

A major limitation to the current study was the emotion induction. Neither condition elicited significant feelings of shame and the manipulation designed to induce shame induced the

most guilt. Guilt and shame have been found to overlap. The current study attempted to design a manipulation that would allow for random assignment to a control, shame, and guilt condition. Perhaps future research could improve upon the manipulation by focusing on simply guilt or shame. It is possible that since shame is a negative self-evaluation, when recalling moral transgressions people avoid recalling and writing about things that they know will cause them to feel bad about themselves. Future studies could benefit from finding ways to induce shame and guilt in real time in the lab.

Another potential limitation to the present research was the sample size. There were only approximately 25 people in each condition. The effect sizes for related affect induction studies are relatively small. A power analysis indicated that a sample size closer to 150 participants might be needed to find an effect. As a result of this, I plan on continuing data collection and reanalyzing the data at a later time. There were no significant differences on interpersonal trait ratings or desire to maintain affect for the control group compared to the combined guilt and shame group, but they were marginally significant. It is likely that collecting more participants (as originally planned) would allow me to determine whether these effects are reliable. If those in the combined guilt and shame group reported significantly higher ratings on interpersonal traits compared to the control group, this would support my hypothesis and the mood-as-input theory. If those in the guilt and shame combined group reported lower desire to maintain current feelings then this would be in support of the hedonic perspective of emotion regulation rather than the instrumental view.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Although the current study did not yield many significant findings, it has still made a valuable contribution to the literature. There is now some evidence as to whether or not guilt

influences self-enhancement. Present findings suggest that those that feel guilt do not self-enhance. This finding could be limited by the small sample size of the study. Past research has shown that specific affective states such as happiness, sadness, and anger can influence judgments in congruent and incongruent ways and may be useful to maintain in certain contexts. Although I was unable to find evidence to support guilt and shame influencing judgments or being used in instrumental ways, the present study suggests that more research needs to be conducted to discover what affective states do have these effects.

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Appendix A

### State Shame and Guilt Scale

The following are some statements which may or may not describe how you are feeling **right now**. Please rate each statement using the 5-point scale below. Remember to rate each statement based on how you are feeling **right at this moment**.

	Not feeling this way at all	Feeling this way somewhat	Feeling this way very strongly
1. I feel good about myself.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
2. I want to sink into the floor and disappear.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
3. I feel remorse, regret.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
4. I feel worthwhile, valuable.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
5. I feel small.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
6. I feel tension about something I have done.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
7. I feel capable, useful.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
8. I feel like I am a bad person.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
9. I cannot stop thinking about something bad I have done.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
10. I feel proud.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
11. I feel humiliated, disgraced.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
12. I feel like apologizing, confessing.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
13. I feel pleased about something I have done.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
14. I feel worthless, powerless.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5
15. I feel bad about something I have done.	1 -----	2 -----	3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Marschall, D. E., Sanftner, J. L., & Tangney, J. P. (1994)  
Appendix B

## The Guilt and Shame Proneness Scale

*Instructions:* In this questionnaire you will read about situations that people are likely to encounter in day-to-day life, followed by common reactions to those situations. As you read each scenario, try to imagine yourself in that situation. Then indicate the likelihood that you would react in the way described.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Very Unlikely</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>Slightly Unlikely</i>	<i>About 50% Likely</i>	<i>Slightly Likely</i>	<i>Likely</i>	<i>Very Likely</i>

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. After realizing you have received too much change at a store, you decide to keep it because the salesclerk doesn't notice. What is the likelihood that you would feel uncomfortable about keeping the money?

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. You are privately informed that you are the only one in your group that did not make the honor society because you skipped too many days of school. What is the likelihood that this would lead you to become more responsible about attending school?

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. You rip an article out of a journal in the library and take it with you. Your teacher discovers what you did and tells the librarian and your entire class. What is the likelihood that this would make you would feel like a bad person?

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. After making a big mistake on an important project at work in which people were depending on you, your boss criticizes you in front of your coworkers. What is the likelihood that you would feign sickness and leave work?

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. You reveal a friend's secret, though your friend never finds out. What is the likelihood that your failure to keep the secret would lead you to exert extra effort to keep secrets in the future?

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. You give a bad presentation at work. Afterwards your boss tells your coworkers it was your fault that your company lost the contract. What is the likelihood that you would feel incompetent?

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. A friend tells you that you boast a great deal. What is the likelihood that you would stop spending time with that friend?

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Your home is very messy and unexpected guests knock on your door and invite themselves in. What is the likelihood that you would avoid the guests until they leave?

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. You secretly commit a felony. What is the likelihood that you would feel remorse about breaking the law?

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. You successfully exaggerate your damages in a lawsuit. Months later, your lies are discovered and you are charged with perjury. What is the likelihood that you would think you are a despicable human being?

\_\_\_\_\_ 11. You strongly defend a point of view in a discussion, and though nobody was aware of it, you realize that you were wrong. What is the likelihood that this would make you think more carefully before you speak?

\_\_\_\_\_ 12. You take office supplies home for personal use and are caught by your boss. What is the likelihood that this would lead you to quit your job?

\_\_\_\_\_ 13. You make a mistake at work and find out a coworker is blamed for the error. Later, your coworker confronts you about your mistake. What is the likelihood that you would feel like a coward?

\_\_\_\_\_ 14. At a coworker's housewarming party, you spill red wine on their new cream-colored carpet. You cover the stain with a chair so that nobody notices your mess. What is the likelihood that you would feel that the way you acted was pathetic?

\_\_\_\_\_ 15. While discussing a heated subject with friends, you suddenly realize you are shouting though nobody seems to notice. What is the likelihood that you would try to act more considerately toward your friends?

\_\_\_\_\_ 16. You lie to people but they never find out about it. What is the likelihood that you would feel terrible about the lies you told?

## Appendix C

### BIS/BAS

Each item of this questionnaire is a statement that a person may either agree with or disagree with. For each item, indicate how much you agree or disagree with what the item says. Please respond to all the items; do not leave any blank. Choose only one response to each statement. Please be as accurate and honest as you can be. Respond to each item as if it were the only item. That is, don't worry about being "consistent" in your responses.

Choose from the following four response options:

1 = very true            2 = somewhat true            3 = somewhat false            4 = very false  
for me                    for me                            for me                            for me

1. A person's family is the most important thing in life.
2. Even if something bad is about to happen to me, I rarely experience fear or nervousness.
3. I go out of my way to get things I want.
4. When I'm doing well at something I love to keep at it.
5. I'm always willing to try something new if I think it will be fun.
6. How I dress is important to me.
7. When I get something I want, I feel excited and energized.
8. Criticism or scolding hurts me quite a bit.
9. When I want something I usually go all-out to get it.
10. I will often do things for no other reason than that they might be fun.
11. It's hard for me to find the time to do things such as get a haircut.
12. If I see a chance to get something I want I move on it right away.
13. I feel pretty worried or upset when I think or know somebody is angry at me.
14. When I see an opportunity for something I like I get excited right away.
15. I often act on the spur of the moment.
16. If I think something unpleasant is going to happen I usually get pretty "worked up."
17. I often wonder why people act the way they do.
18. When good things happen to me, it affects me strongly.
19. I feel worried when I think I have done poorly at something important.
20. I crave excitement and new sensations.
21. When I go after something I use a "no holds barred" approach.
22. I have very few fears compared to my friends.
23. It would excite me to win a contest.
24. I worry about making mistakes.

-----  
Items other than 2 and 22 are reverse-scored.

BAS Drive: 3, 9, 12, 21    BAS Fun Seeking: 5, 10, 15, 20    BAS Reward Responsiveness: 4, 7, 14, 18, 23

BIS: 2, 8, 13, 16, 19, 22, 24

Items 1, 6, 11, 17, are fillers.

## Appendix D

### Religious Commitment Inventory-10

Worthington Jr, E. L., Wade, N. G., Hight, T. L., Ripley, J. S., McCullough, M. E., Berry, J. W., ... & O'Connor, L. (2003).

Directions: Using the 5-point scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how much you agree with it.

- 1 = not at all true of me
- 2 = somewhat true of me
- 3 = moderately true of me
- 4 = mostly true of me
- 5 = totally true of me

- \_\_\_ 1. I often read books and magazines about my faith.
- \_\_\_ 2. I make financial contributions to my religious organization.
- \_\_\_ 3. I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith.
- \_\_\_ 4. Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about meaning in life.
- \_\_\_ 5. My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life.
- \_\_\_ 6. I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation.
- \_\_\_ 7. Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life.
- \_\_\_ 8. It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection.
- \_\_\_ 9. I enjoy working in the activities of my religious organization.
- \_\_\_ 10. I keep well-informed about my local religious group and have some influence in its decisions.



## Appendix E

### Visualization Prompts

We are interested in how well people are able to visualize events from their daily lives. We are going to have you visualize different types of events you've experienced and answer some questions about them. It is important that you try and visualize as many details as possible. Please respond as honestly.

We would like you to think back to your most recent bus ride. With this situation in mind, please **try to vividly relive this event** and describe it in as accurate and detailed way as possible (i.e., in all its details). What happened on this bus ride? Imagine you are watching the scene in person. Include in your thoughts such details as to what your sensations were on the occasion and how you feel about it now.

1. How vivid was your visualization?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all Vivid</i>	<i>Dull</i>	<i>Slightly dull</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat vivid</i>	<i>Vivid</i>	<i>Very Vivid</i>

2. How clear was your visualization?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all Clear</i>	<i>Unclear</i>	<i>Slightly Unclear</i>	<i>About 50% Clear</i>	<i>Slightly Clear</i>	<i>Clear</i>	<i>Very Clear</i>

3. How difficult was your visualization?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Very Difficult</i>	<i>Difficult</i>	<i>Slightly Difficult</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Easy</i>	<i>Easy</i>	<i>Very Easy</i>

4. How long ago did the event happen?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Under a week ago</i>	<i>About a month ago</i>	<i>A few months ago</i>	<i>Half a year ago</i>	<i>Almost a year ago</i>	<i>Over a year ago</i>

We would like you to think about your local movie theatre. With this situation in mind, please **try to vividly relive this scene** and describe it in as accurate and detailed way as possible (i.e., in all its details). What happens at the movie theatre? Imagine you are watching the scene in person. Include in your thoughts such details as to what everything looks like, what sounds you hear, and any other sensations you typically experience.

How vivid was your visualization?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all Vivid</i>	<i>Dull</i>	<i>Slightly dull</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat vivid</i>	<i>Vivid</i>	<i>Very Vivid</i>

How clear was your visualization?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all Clear</i>	<i>Unclear</i>	<i>Slightly Unclear</i>	<i>About 50% Clear</i>	<i>Slightly Clear</i>	<i>Clear</i>	<i>Very Clear</i>

How difficult was your visualization?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Very Difficult</i>	<i>Difficult</i>	<i>Slightly Difficult</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Easy</i>	<i>Easy</i>	<i>Very Easy</i>

How long ago did the event happen?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Under a week ago</i>	<i>About a month ago</i>	<i>A few months ago</i>	<i>Half a year ago</i>	<i>Almost a year ago</i>	<i>Over a year ago</i>

## Emotion Induction Prompts

We are interested in how well people are able to visualize events in their daily lives. We are going to have you visualize different types of events and answer some questions about them.

**Shame Induction.** We all fall short of our moral standards at times. We would like you to think back on a time when you felt shame after *disappointing or hurting someone very close to you like a parent or friend*. What did you do that you should not have done? With this situation in mind, please **try to vividly relive this event** and describe it in as accurate and detailed way as possible (i.e., in all its details). What happened to make you feel shame? What did you do that you knew was wrong? What did you think or feel in the situation? Include also such details as to what your sensations were on the occasion and how you feel about it now. Before you start writing, take a few moments to close your eyes and remember the event as clearly as possible. Remember that everything you write is completely confidential. You will have 10 minutes to write. Please write continuously for the full 10 minutes.

For the first five minutes write about *how you were feeling* in this situation. How did you feel about the bus ride/the movie theatre/ doing this bad thing/failing to do the right thing? What was your general impression of the event? Do you remember feeling anything in particular while the event was happening or afterward? What sensations did you experience? The experimenter will tell you when to finish writing about this part of the visualization.

For the second half of the visualization please write about why you were feeling that way. What explanation can you give for your experience? Was it common for you to feel this way? Why do you think you had these feelings? Write for the full five minutes including as much detail as possible.

1. How vivid was your visualization?
2. How clear was your visualization?
3. How difficult was your visualization?
4. How easy was it for you to think of a recent situation as we asked?
5. How much effort did you put into visualizing this situation?
6. Were you honest about what you wrote down?

**Guilt Induction.** We all fall short of our moral standards at times. We would like you to think back on a time when you felt guilt after **not** *being properly kind and caring towards someone very close to you like a parent or friend, resulting in hurt and disappointment*. What did you fail to do that you knew you should have? With this situation in mind, please **try to vividly relive this event** and describe it in as accurate and detailed way as possible (i.e., in all its details). What happened to make you feel guilt? What standard, value, or ideal didn't you meet? What did you think or feel in the situation? Include also such details as to what your sensations were on the occasion and how you feel about it now. Before you start writing, take a few moments to close your eyes and remember the event as clearly as possible. Remember that everything you write is completely confidential. You will have 10 minutes to write. Please write continuously for the full

10 minutes.

For the first five minutes write about *how you were feeling* in this situation. How did you feel about the bus ride/the movie theatre/ doing this bad thing/failing to do the right thing? What was your general impression of the event? Do you remember feeling anything in particular while the event was happening or afterward? What sensations did you experience? The experimenter will tell you when to finish writing about this part of the visualization.

For the second half of the visualization please write about why you were feeling that way. What explanation can you give for your experience? Was it common for you to feel this way? Why do you think you had these feelings? Write for the full five minutes including as much detail as possible.

7. How vivid was your visualization?
8. How clear was your visualization?
9. How difficult was your visualization?
10. How easy was it for you to think of a recent situation as we asked?
11. How much effort did you put into visualizing this situation?
12. Were you honest about what you wrote down?

**Control.** We would like you to think back to a day that you would describe as a typical weekday. With this situation in mind, please **try to vividly relive this event** and describe it in as accurate and detailed way as possible (i.e., in all its details). What happened on this typical day? What did you think or feel in the situation? Include also such details as to what your sensations were on the occasion and how you feel about it now. Before you start writing, take a few moments to close your eyes and remember the event as clearly as possible. Remember that everything you write is completely confidential. You will have 10 minutes to write. Please write for the full 10 minutes.

For the first five minutes write about *how you were feeling* in this situation. How did you feel about the bus ride/the movie theatre/ doing this bad thing/failing to do the right thing? What was your general impression of the event? Do you remember feeling anything in particular while the event was happening or afterward? What sensations did you experience? The experimenter will tell you when to finish writing about this part of the visualization.

For the second half of the visualization please write about why you were feeling that way. What explanation can you give for your experience? Was it common for you to feel this way? Why do you think you had these feelings? Write for the full five minutes including as much detail as possible.

1. How vivid was your visualization?
2. How clear was your visualization?
3. How difficult was your visualization?
4. How easy was it for you to think of a recent situation as we asked?
5. How much effort did you put into visualizing this situation?
6. Were you honest about what you wrote down?

Appendix G

## Self-Traits

### **10 Interpersonal traits**

caring  
charitable  
compassionate  
considerate  
generous  
kindhearted  
moral  
nurturing  
respectful  
responsible

### **10 agentic traits**

ambitious  
confident  
dominant  
go-getter  
independent  
leader  
original  
powerful  
self-reliant  
winner

## Affect Regulation Prompts

As an extension of the final visualization activity, we would now like you to write a letter to the person you imagined in the previous section.

### **Guilt:**

Think about the person close to you that you were **not** properly kind and caring towards that resulted in hurt and disappointment. With that person in mind, write them a letter of apology describing what you think or feel about the situation where you failed to meet a certain standard, value or ideal. Remember that everything you write is completely confidential. You will not be giving this letter to anyone. It will just help with the aim of current research to assess visualization of everyday events. You will have 10 minutes to write. Please write continuously for the full 10 minutes.

**Shame:** Think about the person close to you that you disappointed or hurt. With that person in mind, write them a letter of apology describing what you think or feel about the situation where you did something you should not have done. Remember that everything you write is completely confidential. You will not be giving this letter to anyone. It will just help with the aim of current research to assess visualization of everyday events. You will have 10 minutes to write. Please write continuously for the full 10 minutes.

**Control:** Think about the person close to you that interact with on a daily basis. With that person in mind, write them a letter describing what you think or feel about your typical weekday. Remember that everything you write is completely confidential. You will not be giving this letter to anyone. It will just help with the aim of current research to assess visualization of everyday events. You will have 10 minutes to write. Please write continuously for the full 10 minutes.

## Appendix I

Pre Letter Writing Questions (Desire to Maintain Affect)

The following questions assess how you plan to prepare to complete the letter-writing task.

Please circle the extent to which you plan to use each strategy on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much).

1. To what extent do you plan to re-experience the infraction while writing the letter?
2. How hard will you try to keep feeling the same way you are feeling now while writing the letter?
3. How much do you want to stay in the same affective state as now?

Post Letter Writing Questions (Secondary Self-Enhancement Measure)

The following questions will assess the effectiveness of your letter.

How effective do you think your letter is in communicating your apology?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Completely Ineffective</i>	<i>Ineffective</i>	<i>Slightly Ineffective</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Effective</i>	<i>Effective</i>	<i>Very Effective</i>

How well do you think the victim would response to the letter if he or she were to read it?

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Not well at all</i>	<i>Not very well</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Well</i>	<i>Extremely well</i>

How sincere do you think the letter sounds?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Very Insincere</i>	<i>Insincere</i>	<i>Slightly Insincere</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Sincere</i>	<i>Sincere</i>	<i>Very Sincere</i>

Vita

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