Relational Humility

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RELATIONAL HUMILITY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

by

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August 2011
My Gratitude

I would like to thank Dr. Ev Worthington, Dr. Jody Davis, Dr. Micah McCreary, Dr. Jeff Green, and Dr. Bob Andrews for their direction in this project and their contribution to my development as a psychologist and scientist. Thank you to my beautiful wife Kate. We did it. Also, thank you to my daughter Catherine for giving me a little time to finish my dissertation before reading Dora books—we did it, we did it! Thank you to my Mom and Dad for their loving sacrifice as parents.
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Abstract

The study of humility has progressed slowly due to lack of theory and measurement issues. In the present dissertation, I review the literature on humility and propose a theory of relational humility. The model conceptualizes humility as a personality judgment, aligning its study with a large literature that spans social and personality psychology. Then, in four studies, I examined initial evidence for the theoretical model. In Study 1 (N=300), I created the Relational Humility Scale (RHS) and evaluated its items using exploratory factor analysis. The RHS was found to have 3 subscales: Global Humility, Superiority, and Accurate View of Self. In Study 2, its structure was replicated on an independent sample (N = 196). In Study 3, I conducted a longitudinal study of undergraduate students (N =84) in forming groups. As predicated, trait humility was related to acceptance and status in the group, as well as other personality traits related to humility such as narcissism and agreeableness; however, self-enhancement of humility (i.e., overestimating one’s humility) was not related to other correlates of low humility. In Study 4 (N=123), I examined humility in the context of conflict and forgiveness. As predicated, humility judgments were related to changes in forgiveness over time, as well as viewing an offender as spiritually similar. I then discuss implications of these findings for the study of humility from a relational perspective.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Humility is a virtue that has been written about for millennia. A number of writers and leaders have referred to the importance of humility in the past century. In his best seller, *Good to Great*, Collins (2001) found that exceptional leaders, able to take their companies into an era of financial prosperity and growth that outlasted the leader’s tenure with the company, possessed two paradoxical qualities: relentless will and humility. Similarly, a number of popular writers have emphasized the theme of servant leadership, of which humility is a core quality (e.g., Blanchard, 2003; Greenleaf, 1977/2002).

Despite the popular interest in humility, the study of humility has been thwarted by definition and measurement problems. The aim of this current dissertation is to review the various approaches of studying humility and to suggest an alternative strategy, called relational humility, which defines and measures humility as a personality judgment—namely, the degree to which a person attributes humility to another person.

This dissertation is structured in three parts. In Chapter 2, I present a pointed review of how humility has been measured. I also describe a model of relational humility and use it to propose a research agenda. I intend Chapter 2 to be a stand-alone review paper modeled on a review that might be published in a journal like the *Journal of Positive Psychology*. I attempt to demonstrate my familiarity with the general literature in the area that informs my empirical studies.

From my review of the literature, I conclude that in order for the study of humility to advance, greater innovation is needed in both (a) theory and (b) measurement. To
address the former, in Chapter 3, I propose a theory of relational humility. I designed Chapter 3 to be a theoretical that might appear in a journal like *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. To provide research related to the latter aim (i.e., measurement), in Chapter 4, I present four programmatic empirical studies aimed at establishing the initial psychometric adequacy of the Relational Humility Scale (RHS), a measure of humility judgments, and at providing initial evidence for the proposed model of Relational Humility. I model Chapter 4 on a multiple-study article that might appear in a journal like the *Journal of Personality Assessment*. In Chapter 5, I provide a general discussion, which encompasses a discussion of Chapter 2-4.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The increased popularity of positive psychology in recent years has provided a platform to consider the study of virtues as a legitimate topic of psychological study (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Indeed, the study of many virtues such as altruism (Batson, Ahmad, Lishner, & Tsang, 2005), forgiveness (Fincham & Beach, 2007), gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2004; Tsang, 2007), hope (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002), courage (Lopez, 2007), and optimism (Carver & Scheier, 1994; Vollmann, Renner, & Weber, 2007) is thriving. In stark contrast, the study of humility has not been widely embraced (cf. Rowatt et al., 2006).

There are two reasons for the slow pace of humility research. The first reason is that researchers have not clearly defined humility. Typically, they have defined it in terms of what it is not, and they have not differentiated it from some closely related constructs. However, consistent with the philosophical assumption of positive psychology, I believe that the absence of something negative does not necessarily imply the presence of something positive. Thus, humility is not just the absence of narcissism, conceit, or arrogance (Tangney, 2005). Nor is it merely behaving meekly due to having a low self-esteem.

Likewise, most humility researchers have distinguished humility from modesty (cf. Rowatt et al., 2006). Peterson and Seligman (2004) described modesty as a style of presentation does not necessarily coincide with humility. They said, “[M]odesty … can be consistent with an inner sense of humility but can also arise for other reasons, such as situational demands or pressures” (p. 463). Tangney (2005) also differentiated modesty
from humility, because modesty only overlaps with one aspect of her definition of humility: having a moderate or accurate view of self. Modesty does not overlap much with the other five aspects of her definition of humility: acknowledging limitations, openness to new ideas, perspective of abilities and accomplishments in relation to the big picture, low self-focus, and a valuing of all things.

When it comes to defining humility in positive terms, definitions have included a wide range of qualities. Some definitions refer to humility as people’s view of themselves. For example, humble people are said to be those who have a moderate or accurate view of themselves (e.g., Baumeister, & Exline, 2002; Emmons, 1999; Rowatt, Ottenbreit, Nesselroade, & Cunningham, 2002; Sandage & Wiens, 2001; Tangney, 2000). Humble people are said to be less inclined to distort information to make themselves feel better (i.e., to self-enhance; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Such a definition overlaps with definitions of modesty. For example, Sedikides and colleagues (2007) define modesty as having a moderate or accurate view of oneself—not too high or too low, but just right (for a review on modesty, see Sedikides, Gregg, & Hart, 2007). Such just right definitions are difficult to measure in positive terms. For instance, measures of an accurate view of self tend actually to measure various degrees of self-enhancement or self-deprecation. However, as I will discuss later, the absence of self-enhancement does not necessarily imply the presence of humility.

Other definitions of humility discuss a variety of interpersonal qualities. For instance, humility has been said to involve the presence of empathy, gentleness, respect, equality, valuing of others, and the absence of controllingness (Sandage, 1999). Humility
has also be said to involve gratitude (Emmons, 2007); sharing the spotlight, and acknowledging mistakes (Exline & Geyer, 2004; Tangney, 2000; Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2000); openness to ideas of other people and cultures (Gantt, 1967; Harrell & Bond, 2006; Morris, Brotheridge, & Urbanski, 2005; Neuringer, 1991; Tangney, 2000; Templeton, 1995); and surrender and obedience to God or the transcendent (Emmons & Kneezel, 2005; Murray, 2005; Powers, Nam, Rowatt, & Hill, 2007). However, it is not clear which of these qualities constitute the core of humility, and which qualities are simply related to humility in some people some of the time (hence positively correlated).

The second reason that progress from the study of humility has been slow is that researchers have not agreed on an acceptable way to measure humility. Self-reports of humility are thought to suffer a problem that inherently threatens their validity. In Figure 1, I illustrate the problem. Three people with different levels of actual humility might report the same score on a humility measure. Someone with low to average humility may self-enhance, for people tend to self-enhance on evaluative traits (John & Robbins, 1993). In an extreme example, a narcissist is likely to self-enhance a great deal, for self-enhancement is a cardinal quality of narcissists (Wallace, Ready, & Weitenhagen, 2009). Conversely, people who are actually humble may sense that claiming to be humble would be immodest, not humble. Thus they may underreport their humility. This “modesty effect” has yet to be empirically demonstrated, but if it exists, it would severely undermine the validity of self-reports of humility, at least at the high end of the spectrum. Despite the lack of empirical evidence of the non-valid nature of self-reports of humility (e.g., what is the standard of true humility against which self-reports could be judged?).
Figure 1. *Illustration of the Modesty Effect for Humility Self-Reports*
some researchers have been skeptical about the validity of self-reports of humility. In fact, the problem led Tangney (2005) to conclude that humility may be a trait that cannot be measured validly with self-reports. Accordingly, researchers have explored alternative strategies.

We have two primary purposes of the current dissertation. First, I seek to provide a pointed review of the empirical literature on the measurement of humility. Specifically, I critique four methods that have been used to study humility: self-reports, social comparisons of self to others, an implicit association test of humility versus arrogance, and informant ratings of humility. Second, I seek to elaborate theoretically on the latter approach. The method of having informants make ratings of a target’s humility has sometimes been used reflexively to adduce evidence of criterion-validity for other measures of humility (e.g., de Vries, Lee, & Ashton, 2008; Rowatt et al., 2006). I think the approach deserves consideration in its own right. Namely, later in this dissertation, I will define humility as a personality judgment. The definition implies that familiar theory and methods of studying personality judgments can be used to study humility. I discuss some of the implications of the theoretical shift from thinking about humility as a trait—potentially accessible through self-reports, social comparisons, or implicit associations—to thinking about humility as a personality judgment. I conclude the dissertation by suggesting a program of research to accelerate our understanding of humility into a period of increased empirical exploration using different perspectives, measurement strategies, and conceptualizations than have been frequently employed in the past.
Methodological Critique of Measurement of Humility

In the current section, I review four methods that have been used to measure humility: self-reports, social comparisons of self to others, the implicit association test of humility versus arrogance, and informant reports of humility of a target person. For each method, I consider evidence for the reliability and construct validity of the specific measurement strategy as well as strengths and limitations of the approach.

Self-Report Measures of Humility

Self-report measures have been relied on heavily within personality research. In many studies they are the only measures used (Vazire, 2006). Self-reports are always suspect because motivations and self-presentational styles are not necessarily known and can distort the measurement of the “true” depiction of the trait. However, evaluative traits, in which there is high social value for being seen a virtuous, are particularly susceptible to distortion. A threat to the validity of self-reports is that individuals tend to self-enhance when they complete self-reports of evaluative traits such as humility (Asendorpf & Ostendorf, 1998). As illustrated in Figure 1, another issue even more troublesome, threatens the validity of humility self-reports. As I described above, because self-enhancement is a cardinal quality of narcissism, narcissists may report high humility (while in fact being almost the antithesis of being humble; Rowatt et al., 2006). In addition, people who are genuinely humble may not self-enhance at all (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In fact, they may under-report their humility because they sense that claiming to be very humble would be immodest, akin to bragging about their humility. Therefore, self-reports of humility might, in fact, be even more difficult to trust that self-
reports of other evaluative traits. For example, whereas reporting oneself as truthful is to report on an evaluative trait that is socially desirable, to report oneself as humble is also inherently paradoxical. Again, such problems with self-report measures of humility—distortion and inherent paradox of claiming humility—led Tangney (2005) to conclude that “humility may represent a rare personality construct that is simply unamenable to direct self-report methods” (p. 415).

Despite the strong warnings by humility researchers, self-report measures of humility have been developed. In the present dissertation, I review the two most frequently used measures: the modestly/humility subscale (MH) of the Values in Action (VIA) Strengths Inventory (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and the Honesty-Humility (HH) subscale of the HEXACO Personality Inventory (Lee & Ashton, 2004). Only the development of the HH has been published in peer reviewed articles.

The VIA Strengths Inventory (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) assesses 24 virtues, including the MH. Evidence for the reliability of the MH has been reported in a variety of samples. The MH lacks primary evidence of construct validity, though some evidence is found in Rowatt et al. (2006). Items illustrate the ironic predicament that respondents are placed in when they are asked to describe their own humility. For instance, how would someone who is truly humble answer items such as “I am proud that I am an ordinary person,” or “People are drawn to me because I am humble,” or “I am always humble about the good things that have happened to me”? People who strongly endorse such items might seem more narcissistic than humble. These items are certainly ironic: does being “proud” of being ordinary really constitute being humble? Does claiming that
one is “always humble” indicate humility? Furthermore, the remaining seven items refer explicitly to modesty, which is a set of behaviors (in response to recognition or public attention) that are often associated with humility but are not to be equated with humility: “I do not like to stand out in a crowd,” “I do not act as if I am a special person,” “I never brag about my accomplishments,” “I prefer to let other people talk about themselves,” “I rarely call attention to myself,” “I have been told that modesty is one of my most notable characteristics,” “No one would ever describe me as arrogant.”

The 192 item HEXACO-PI (Lee & Ashton, 2004) was derived through factor analysis. Previous lexical studies have typically extracted five personality factors (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Lee and Ashton (2004) extracted a sixth factor—honesty-humility (HH). The HH subscale (32 items) is most closely aligned with agreeableness from the traditional five-factor model (i.e., agreeableness, neuroticism, openness, extraversion, and conscientiousness). Scores on the HH have shown evidence of estimated reliability across a variety of samples. Likewise, the HH subscale on the HEXACO-PI has been found incrementally to predict constructs of low sociability (i.e., psychopathy, sexual restraint, Machiavellianism, boredom proneness, and social adroitness) above and beyond the five-factor model of personality (for a review, see Ashton & Lee, 2007). I found 29 studies that addressed HH through mid-2009 (for a list of references, please contact the first author).

My critique of the HH does not call into question the important contribution of the HEXACO-PI to personality psychology. However, as a humility researcher, I do invite a challenge to the name of the factor. As a measure of humility, items lack face-validity,
for they primarily refer to negative evaluative qualities (or their negation; i.e., indicating high scores on HH are unsly, uncunning, uncrafty, unfeigning, undevious, courtly, heroic, unmercenary, unpretentious, polished, slick, and undeceptive; indicating low scores on HH are affected, cunning, sugary, posed, unsophisticated, unwise, tricky, sneaky, sly, suave, ungraceful, pretentious, unpretending, unlearned, foxy, uneducated, and pompous).

In sum, the two self-report measures that I critiqued have items that do not align well with how humility has been defined. Items from the MH primarily assessed modesty, which researchers have differentiated from humility. Similarly, the HH subscale of the HEXECO-PI appears to assess negative, antisocial qualities or their opposites (formed by putting “un” before the adjective). In addition to these problems, research has yet to address the warning regarding the validity of self-reports of humility; namely that self-reports of high levels of humility may ironically indicate a lack of humility.

**Social Comparisons of Self to Others**

A second approach to measuring humility used an adapted self-enhancement measure. Rowatt et al.(2002) defined humility as having an accurate appraisal of one’s positive and negative characteristics. They had college students compare themselves to a reference group (e.g., the average college student) on how well they obeyed 12 commandments from Christian Scriptures. In prior research, such social comparisons have been used to measure self-enhancement in a sample. If everyone answers accurately, the mean ranking across a sample should be 50th percentile. Thus if the mean
rating is at the 70th percentile, this constitutes evidence of self-enhancement. However, social comparisons have difficulty detecting self-enhancement for individuals, because the measure confounds self-enhancement with actual differences (Kwan, John, Kenny, Bond, & Robbins, 2004). For example, Rowatt et al. (2002) found that participants with high intrinsic religiosity (e.g., defined as religiosity for its own sake, not for extrinsic motivations) reported greater adherence to biblical commandments than did those with less intrinsic religiosity. Rowatt et al. reported that highly intrinsically religious people were less humble than those with less intrinsic religiosity. An alternative explanation is that highly intrinsically religious people (in a highly Christian sample) accurately perceived that they did obey Christian commandments more than people who were less committed to Christianity or non-religious.

Since Rowatt et al. (2002) was published, important advancements have occurred within the self-enhancement literature that might be used to study humility. Although she studied self-enhancement per se and not humility, Kwan and her colleagues proposed a componential approach to measured self-enhancement in individuals (Kwan et al., 2004). Using a round-robin design, they have participants interact in a small group and then rate themselves and others on several traits. Then they derive a self-enhancement score that simultaneously accounted for how participants compare themselves to others (i.e., social comparisons) and the discrepancy between self-ratings and informant-ratings (i.e., self-insights). Granted, just because someone does not self-enhance does not necessarily suggest that one is humble—e.g., one may be a clinically depressed narcissist. However, Kwan’s use of round-robin design might eventually be employed in humility
measurement (e.g., humility researchers could use their method to study the modesty effect that has been hypothesized by Tangney [2005] for self-reports of humility), but this is not de rigueur for the present.

**Implicit Association Test of Humility versus Arrogance**

Rowatt and his colleagues have developed an implicit association test of humility versus arrogance (IAT-HA; Rowatt et al., 2006; Powers et al., 2007). IATs have been used to study constructs (i.e., traits and attitudes) that are prone to distortion by impression management or social desirability (see, for example, Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Rowatt et al. (2006) defined humility as a psychological quality characterized by more humble, modest, down-to-earth, open-minded, and respectful of others (and less arrogant, immodest, conceited, closed-minded, or egotistical).

The IAT test is given through a computer program in which words related to humility or arrogance flash on a screen (e.g., humble, modest, tolerant, down-to-earth, respectful, or open-minded; arrogant, immodest, egotistical, high-and-mighty, closed-minded, or conceited). Participants pair the words with either self or other, as quickly as possible, by pressing the corresponding letter on the keyboard (e.g., S = self; O = other). Participants complete several rounds. The researcher alternates pairings between rounds (i.e., either humble with self or humble with other). The rationale behind the method is that the task can be performed more quickly if associations (e.g., self and humility) are familiar or affectively congruent (as they would be for a person who internally perceived himself or herself as humble), and less quickly if associations are unfamiliar or
affectively incongruent (e.g., self and arrogant, for the person who perceives himself or herself as humble). The authors presented the IAT-HA as a measure of trait humility.

One strength of the IAT-HA measure is its design. Given the history of measurement problems, humility seems like a perfect fit for an implicit measure. At this point, the IAT-HA is a clever and promising innovation in the measurement of humility. The measure exhibited some evidence for estimated reliability. Estimated internal consistency between trials ranged from .87 to .89 (Rowatt et al., 2006). However, the two-week temporal stability estimates are lower than ideal ($r = .44$; scores at T1 accounted for 20% of the variance in scores two weeks later), given that Rowatt et al. treat humility as a personality trait. Recent innovations in IAT technology have made it quite portable: IATs have been placed on websites that can be accessed from any computer with internet access, and paper-pencil versions have even been created (Lemm, Lane, Sattler, Khan, & Nosek, 2008).

Despite the promise of the IAT-HA, some additional work is needed to firmly establish evidence for its construct validity. Currently, it is not clear what the IAT-HA actually measures. The scale did not correlate with previously developed measures of modesty or humility or with informant reports of humility (Rowatt et al., 2006). The measure was shown to predict academic grades—not a strong or obvious tie to humility. Currently, there is little evidence that the measure predicts humble behavior (or even behavior associated with low humility, such as immodesty; Tice, Butler, Muraven, & Stillwell, 1995). Whereas other researchers have successfully developed IAT measures that are supported by good validity evidence, the IAT-HA will, in the future, need to...
show that the measure is not actually assessing constructs that have been differentiated from humility, such as arrogance, narcissism, or self-esteem (Tangney, 2005). For instance, it is important to show that scores on the IAT-HA do not simply reflect participants’ aversion to seeing themselves as arrogant. It is certainly a plausible hypothesis that one could be averse to thinking of oneself as arrogant, yet not be humble at all. Clearly, the IAT-HA is an innovative effort to measure humility, but more work is needed to establish its strengths and weaknesses.

**Informant Ratings of Humility**

A fourth way researchers have measured humility is that they have asked informants to rate a target person’s humility. In each case, the method has been used to offer evidence of criterion validity for a measure being developed (e.g., Lee et al., 2009; Rowatt et al., 2006). Self-report measures, such as the MH or the HH, were adapted to assess an informant’s judgment of a target person’s humility (e.g., “People are drawn to him/her [instead of “me”] because he/she is [instead of “I am’’] humble.”

The findings using informant ratings have been inconsistent. Several studies showed weak relationships between the primary measure of humility and informant ratings. The IAT-HA was unrelated to informant ratings of humility on the adapted MH (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Teacher ratings of students were unrelated to student ratings of themselves on the adolescent version of the MH (Park & Peterson, 2006). Rowatt et al. (2006) found moderate correlations between self-reports and informant-reports using the MH and adapted MH (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Informants’ ratings of humility tended to be higher than did self-reports. This could be construed as evidence
of the modesty effect for self-reports of humility. However, other studies on the self-other agreement of evaluative traits have also found that informant-reports were higher than self-reports (e.g., Murray, Holmes, & Griffen, 1996). Furthermore, self-other agreement of humility ratings for the HH was as high as .60 when informants were romantic partners; however, ratings by casual acquaintances, co-workers, or friends were substantially lower ($r = .22, .28, \text{ and } .30$, respectively; de Vries et al., 2008).

An advantage of using informants is that the method bypasses what I have called the modesty effect (see Figure 1), which researchers think undermines the inherent validity of self-reports (e.g., Tangney, 2005). Namely, informants can rate another person as humble without violating modesty norms. Although it is generally immodest for an individual to claim to be humble, it would not be immodest to refer to someone else as humble. Furthermore, social considerations when one rates someone else might be minimized if one were relatively certain the attribution would not get back to the other person.

The method has several limitations that relate to how it has been used in prior research. First, existing measures of humility, when adapted to allow others to rate a target’s humility, still have issues of face-validity that I observed in discussing self-reports. Furthermore, no existing measure has strong evidence of construct and criterion validity in unadapted, much less adapted, format.

Second, using informants to rate someone’s humility can be a time intensive and expensive method, requiring researchers to collect multiple informants for each participant to achieve a valid assessment of trait humility. However, Vazire (2006)
recently challenged some common misconceptions regarding the use of informants. Critics have suggested that it is too labor intensive, yet researchers can use the internet to gather informant ratings rather efficiently, and taking certain precautions, Vazire has been able to achieve surprisingly high response rates (i.e., 76-95%).

Third, informants may report that a target person is more humble (or less humble) than he or she actually is. How can researchers know whether informants are accurate? And how should researchers handle discrepancies between ratings of different informants or between self-ratings and informant ratings? For example, Watson and Humrichhouse (2006) found that self-other agreement on the Big Five was initially high in newly married couples, but over time, decreases in marital satisfaction caused self-other agreement to diminish. Park, Krause, and Ryan (1997) found that agreement between informants did not increase over time for college roommates; however, agreement was highest for informants that liked the target person to a similar degree. Gill and Swann (2004) found that fraternity members tended to agree with each other when they predicted how a member would act within the group, but consensus between informants was substantially less when they predicted how a member would act with his or her family (the reverse pattern was found when target persons were rated by family members). Therefore it is not clear how researchers should interpret informant ratings.

Fourth, because the method has been used reflexively as an indicator of criterion-related validity for other primary measures of humility, the method has received little theoretical attention as a method of measuring humility in its own right. Nor has the method been elaborated by humility researchers.
These limitations are substantial. However, a rich theoretical and empirical literature in both social and personality psychology has accumulated on the nature of personality judgments (for reviews, see Funder, 1995; Kenny, 2004; Kwan et al., 2004; McCrae & Weiss, 2007). Given our point regarding the lack of theoretical elaboration on the method, I will propose a model of relational humility that actually defines humility as a personality judgment. I argue that treating humility as a personality judgment leads to a number of hypotheses that can be studied empirically.

**A Model of Relational Humility**

We propose a theoretical shift: instead of focusing on the humility of an individual, researchers can treat humility as a subjective personality judgment. Accordingly, I define *relational humility* as a relationship-specific judgment in which an observer attributes to a target person five qualities: (a) positive other-orientedness in the target’s relationships with others; (b) the ability for the target to regulate his or her self-oriented emotions, such as pride or excitement about one’s accomplishments; (c) a tendency to inhibit socially off-putting expressions of those emotions; (d) a tendency to express positive, other-oriented emotions in one’s relationships (e.g., empathy, compassion, sympathy, and love); and (e) an ability to down-regulate emotions that promote self-focus, such as guilt, shame, sadness, or excessive pride that may impair his or her relationship with others.

Based on this definition, judgments of humility are relationship-specific: they reflect a particular person’s perception of his or her cumulative experiences with a target person. Furthermore, I expect that judgments of relational humility will increase.
collaboration and trust and decrease conflict in a relationship. Individuals should be expected to feel safe initiating or deepening a relationship with someone they judge to be humble.

**Measuring Relational Humility**

Our definition of humility suggests a straightforward measurement strategy. First, *relational humility* is measured by having an observer who is in an actual relationship with a target person rate that person’s humility. (For example, researchers might adapt items of the MH. Given its problems with face-validity, however, I suggest that researchers initiate new scale development efforts—especially those informed by definitions like the one above.) This relationship-specific judgment—with the various distortions that may occur based on the observer’s relationship with the target person—is the construct of interest. Below, I will consider how researchers might begin to empirically investigate the various relational moderators I expect will influence humility judgments.

*Trait humility* is conceptualized as the inter-judge agreement of humility judgments across a target person’s relationships (Kenny, 1994). Note that this is not to be confused with inter-rater reliability. Reliability involves a common stimulus (such as a videotape) that is rated by different judges. However, the relationship between one informant and target is different from the relationship between another informant and the same target. Namely, they have different experiences than each other with the target. Hence, the correlation or computation of probability-adjusted inter-rater reliability (such as when using Cohen’s kappa) is not necessarily expected to be exceptionally high. In
fact, agreement between two informants’ ratings, even those who know a target well, tend to be rather low ($r < .20$), but ratings between aggregates of, for instance, four raters’ ratings tend to be much higher (Kenny, 2004). By aggregating a variety of judgments, one can smooth out idiosyncrasies in particular relationships and discern a reliable picture of the judgment of the trait of humility. Furthermore, prior research on personality judgments highlights some of the relationship factors that can artificially inflate agreement between informants, such as when informants are sampled from only people who tend to agree in how much they like the target person (i.e., friends; Kurtz & Sherker, 2003). According to Kenny (2004), the benefits of acquaintance occur rather early in a relationship—after about 100 observations of behavior. After that limited observation—which occurs surprisingly quickly—additional benefit in rating agreement does not occur.

**Application of a Realistic Accuracy Model to Relational Humility**

A relational definition of humility has a number of implications for the study of humility. To provide a theoretical template to begin thinking about these implications, I apply Funder’s (1995) realistic accuracy model (RAM) of personality judgments to the judgment of humility. Thus, I hypothesize that four steps must occur for an observer to accurately judge humility.

First, in some relationship context, the target must express behavior that is relevant to the trait of humility. For instance, based on our definition, I expect that immodest or arrogant behaviors will tend to promote low judgments of humility. In addition, for an observer to perceive high humility, he or she must interpret a target’s behavior as other-oriented; that is, as serving the interests of others more than or as much
as the target’s own interest. Such complex attributions occur as the observer intuits a target person’s internal motivations from his or her cumulative experience with the person.

Second, the judge must observe the behavior. This step emphasizes that an informant judges relational humility from his or her actual experiences with the target person. Some people will have access to more and different varieties of experiences than will others. For example, romantic partners observe each other across a range of relationships and situations. They may give each other access to many of their inner thoughts. They may know how the other person handles negative situations, such as conflict; or positive situations, such as receiving praise. On the other hand, romantic partners are not omniscient observers. A male spouse might not share with his mate how he deals with praise from his adult soccer-teammates, or how he handles successes at work, or even the private praise his children communicate to him.

Third, the judge must detect the behavior. At this step, too, the judge is prone to err. Detection may be influenced by the judge’s conscious and unconscious motivations. In addition, some observers may be more capable of detecting cues of humility than others are.

Fourth, the judge must correctly utilize the detected behavior (and not misuse irrelevant behavior). Accordingly, the informant’s relationship with the target person may affect how he or she tends to interpret information. For example, informants may discount arrogant or immodest behavior of friends, especially if it is rare. Alternatively, an observer with a competitive relationship with a target person might be highly
motivated to pick up on even hints of arrogant behaviors, but he or she might be less likely to perceive humble behaviors.

Based on these four steps, I hypothesize that there are four moderators (following Funder, 1995) that affect whether humility is judged accurately: a good judge, a good target, a good trait, and good information. A good judge: some informants will be more attuned to perceiving humility. For example, some informants are better than are others at intuiting the emotions and intentions of others. Likewise, some informants’ ratings will be less influenced by defensiveness or other information processing biases. A good target: targets who are generally authentic and consistently humble across relationships should be easier to judge as humble than are targets who self-monitor frequently and spend considerable effort managing the impressions they make on others. A good trait: humility judgments may be easier to make in the negative (e.g., that the person is non-other-oriented, immodest, arrogant, not prone to express positive other-oriented emotions, or not able to regulate self-focused emotions), drawing on only a few examples of very low humility. As Baumeister, Bratslavsky, and Finkenauer (2001) observed, the bad is stronger than the good. People are predisposed by evolutionary history to attend to negative behavior more than positive. To fail to attend to potentially harmful behavior in the other puts one at a survival disadvantage. However, attributions of high humility refer to subtle judgments of a target person’s motivations in relationships. Furthermore, humility is an evaluative trait, and evaluative traits tend to be more difficult than non-evaluative traits to judge accurately (John & Robbins, 1993). Good information: observers who know a target well are most likely to have access to information relevant
to humility. Knowing a person well does not just include the longevity of the relationship, but also the extent to which an informant has been able to observe the target across a variety of relationships and roles. In addition, informants who are more intimate with a target person are more likely to gain access and appropriately interpret the target person’s inner thoughts and feelings—at least those the target shares.

**Next Steps Based on a Relational Model of Humility**

Based on this model of relational humility—with its definition, methodology (formed around personality judgments within particular relationships), and related hypotheses—I have several recommendations for researchers. First, I suggest that researchers clarify their definitions of humility, as I have attempted to do. Importantly, definitions must include positive behaviors indicating humility, not just the absence of negative behaviors indicating lack of humility (e.g., arrogance, self-enhancement, and so forth).

Second, given the problems with face-validity of the MH (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and the HH (Lee & Ashton, 2004), I recommend that researchers develop simple, face-valid measures of humility judgments that align with the researchers’ definition of humility. If definitions are cast in behavioral terms, they will lead towards clear hypotheses regarding humility judgments that can be empirically falsified (e.g., my definition predicts that informants will judge a person as exhibiting humility when they perceive positive other-orientedness in the target’s relationships with others, evidence of attempted regulation of the target’s self-oriented emotions, evidence of inhibition of socially off-putting expressions of those emotions; expression of positive-other oriented
emotions in the target’s relationships, and efforts to down-regulate emotions that indicate self-preoccupation). In my model, relational humility consists of an informant’s ratings of a target person’s humility. Likewise, trait humility is estimated with the consensus of ratings among observers.

Third, researchers might explore the relational moderators of humility judgments—such as characteristics of the judge, the target person, and the information available to the judge (Funder, 1995). For example, researchers can explore the qualities that are hypothesized to be associated with high judgments of humility (e.g., presence of other-oriented emotions, absence of self-conscious emotions, agreeableness, gratitude in a relationship, etc.). In addition, researchers can explore the various behaviors that are relevant to humility (e.g., moderating attention when receiving praise or disarming conflict through effective empathy during conflict). Likewise, observers may rely on categorically different cues when judging humility in friends than they do strangers (McAdams & Pals, 2006). Previous theory and research on personality judgments provides a fertile ground for initial hypotheses.

Fourth, researchers might explore culturally contextualized humility. An aspect of my definition is that humble people express self-conscious emotions in ways that are socially acceptable. It would be interesting to explore how gender norms, cultural status, or power hierarchies affect humility appraisals. Furthermore, researchers could investigate how a person’s relationship with the Sacred (i.e., God, a transcendent cause, a deeply shared value, etc.) affects humility appraisals. I expect that people will be more likely to appraise humility in a person when rating someone they perceive as spiritually
similar (e.g., two people share a commitment to a similar understanding of the Sacred or to a similar spiritual community).

Fifth, as definitional disputes begin to be resolved and the literature on humility judgments expands, researchers can revisit other measurement strategies. For example, once more is known about when people attribute high humility to someone, researchers can investigate whether the IAT-HA, self-reports, or self-enhancement methods can accurately predict such criterion-related variables. Likewise, once measures of humility are established, researchers might use Kwan et al.’s (2004) componential approach to study self-enhancement methods of assessing of humility. The means are now available to test empirically the widely held assumption that humble people are likely to modestly report their own humility.

**Conclusion**

Virtue is becoming an important focus of study in psychological research; however, research on the study of humility has not kept pace with research on many other virtues. I believe that the lack of progress is because humility has been difficult to define and measure. In the present review, I critiqued the existing self-report measures of humility, as well as other measures that have tried to assess this construct. Then I proposed a theoretical model of relational humility that conceptualizes humility as personality judgment that occurs within a specific relationship. The model calls for straight-forward measurement of humility judgments. In addition, trait humility can be estimated by examining the consensus of ratings among raters of a target person. Once theoretically consistent measures are developed, the approach can be used to explore how
humility appraisals are affected by individual characteristics, situations, and cultures. As knowledge about humility judgments accumulates, researchers can apply this knowledge to examine evidence for other measurement strategies, such as the IAT-HA or self-reports, and to gain a better understanding of how humility is important to trusting, respectful, and collaborative relationships.
Chapter 3: A Story of Two Sisters—Modesty, Courted by Many Lovers and Humility, the Ugly Half Sister

Early in life, I had to choose between honest arrogance or hypocritical humility. I chose the former and have seen no reason to change.

--Frank Lloyd Wright

The study of modesty and humility—two traits that many consider closely entwined (e.g., Gregg, Hart, Sedikides, & Kumashiro, 2008)—have had radically different growth trajectories. The scientific study of modesty has fared well, according to a recent review (Sedikides, Gregg, & Hart, 2006), which surveyed an expansive body of research on modesty, self-enhancement, impression management, and narcissism. I conducted a Psych Info search on these respective literatures on March 5th, 2010 and found 136 on empirical studies on modesty; 445, on self-enhancement; 908, on impression management; and 754, on narcissism. In contrast, humility has not fared as well scientifically. I found fewer than 20 empirical studies on humility (excluding studies of the HEXACO, which includes a modesty subscale). Why has research on modesty fared so well, whereas research on humility has not?

In the first part of this dissertation, I suggest one possible answer to this question. In the second part of the dissertation, in order to bring the study of humility and modesty into greater alignment, I present a theory of relational humility, which conceptualizes it as a personality judgment. Personality judgments straddle the fence between social psychology and personality psychology. They are judgments of someone’s personality made by another in social context. Our theoretical model consists of five propositions:

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(a) humility is attributed in relationships; (b) humility strengthens social bonds; (c) people rely on three sources of information to judge humility; (d) humility is best judged in situations that make humility difficult to practice; and (e) humility information is communicated both verbally and non-verbally.

**Why the Study of Modesty Has Fared Better than the Study of Humility**

The study of modesty has flourished more than the study of humility because it has proved easier to define and measure. Definitions of modesty have focused on one of two types of modesty: interpersonal modesty and intrapersonal modesty. These two types of modesty have been studied in somewhat independently developing literatures. Definitions of *interpersonal modesty* have focused on behavior: the degree to which a person acts in ways that moderate recognition or attention, such as expressing gratitude or embarrassment to regulate envy in others (Gregg et al., 2008). Definitions of *intrapersonal modesty* have focused on beliefs toward self and others: the degree to which a person has an accurate view of his or her strengths and abilities (Gregg et al., 2008).

These two kinds of modesty may or may not coexist. For example, a person can behave modestly for entirely selfish reasons. An arrogant person might display modesty in public situations as a default strategy for easing envy. Furthermore, just because people have modest beliefs about themselves or accurate evaluative self-appraisals does not mean they will behave modestly. For example, Muhammud Ali probably was the greatest boxer alive when he claimed to be “the greatest.” Although his claim was likely accurate, not many considered it to be modest.
Conversely, humility has been harder to define and measure. Definitions of humility have called for integrity between behavior (e.g., interpersonal modesty), thought (e.g., moderate view of self), and motivation (e.g., other-orientedness rather than selfish; see Davis, Worthington, & Hook, in press, for a review of definitions of humility). For example, Tangney (2009) defined humility as involving the simultaneous presence of five qualities: (a) having an accurate view of self; (b) being able to acknowledge one’s limitations and mistakes; (c) being open to different ideas and keeping perspective of one’s accomplishments; (d) having a low self-focus; and (e) having an appreciation of and value for all things, especially other people.

Such multi-faceted definitions of humility have made it difficult for researchers to agree on a good way of measuring humility, whereas definitions of modesty have led to reasonably accepted measurement strategies for it. Studies on interpersonal modesty have generally employed experiments that manipulate behavioral expressions of modesty, such having participants describe their strengths to different audiences (Tice et al., 1995; Baumeister & Ilko, 1995). Also, most broad-band personality instruments include a modesty subscale (e.g., NEO, Costa & McCrae, 1992; HEXACO, Lee & Ashton, 2004; VIA-SI, Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Studies on intrapersonal modesty have generally assessed self-enhancement (i.e., the degree to which a person has an overly positive view of self), including measures of how individuals compare themselves to other people, or measures that compare self-reports to other-reports.

In contrast, humility researchers have not yet found a well-accepted way of assessing humility (perhaps unsurprising given the complex, multi-faceted definitions
that have been put forth). Humility researchers have been especially preoccupied with a paradox of measuring humility using self-reports (although this paradox strangely has not bothered modesty researchers). Namely, claiming to be humble seems like blatant self-promotion and aggrandizement. As the argument goes, truly humble individuals should be less likely to make such an audacious claim than arrogant individuals. Thus, to the degree that one is truly humble, one should modestly self-report one’s humility. This modesty effect on self-reports has not been empirically demonstrated, but should it exist, it would pose a problem. It is conceivable that three people with vastly different degrees of humility—high, medium, and low—might give similar estimates of their humility. Someone who is narcissistic would self-enhance a great deal; one moderate in humility would self-enhance some; and one high in humility would not self-enhance at all and may underestimate their humility.

Taking the existence of this problem for granted, humility researchers have been on a quest for an acceptable measurement solution, looking for a strategy to bypass the apparent paradox of self-reporting one’s own humility. Researchers have explored various alternatives, such as self-enhancement measures, implicit measures, or other-reports (for a review, see Davis et al., in press). However, the study of humility has remained in a preliminary stage of disputing definitions and looking for acceptable measures. For example, blaming intractable measurement issues for the lack of research on humility, Tangney (2009) recently wrote of humility, “If you can’t measure it, you can’t study it” (p. 483).
I note in passing that actually, one can study humility without measuring it if one is willing to accept the veracity of manipulating states of humility. This would require one to limit attention to humility states rather than traits, and it would make it difficult to employ an agreed-upon manipulation check for the state of humility that presumably is induced. The manipulation check would reduce to either accepting the face validity of the manipulation, relying on an other-judgment of humility, or employing a self-report that one felt humble.

**Toward Integrating the Study of Modesty and Humility: A Theory of Relational Humility**

Therefore, I argue that the core problem is not a measurement issue per se. Social psychologists have successfully studied a number of constructs that are not amenable to self-reports (i.e., constructs associated with the unconscious, sense of fragile or stable self-esteem, etc.) through experimental methods. Indeed, I believe many experimental studies on modesty or narcissism have experimentally manipulated behavioral expressions of humility, as I describe below. What is actually lacking, then, is a theory of humility that defines the construct, discusses how it is similar and different from other constructs, describes why it is important to study, and systematically lays out predictions of how humility should affect other constructs. Namely, I argue that various strategies of measuring humility cannot be evaluated until researchers define humility and clarify the behavioral expressions of humility.

To address the need for a theory of humility, I elaborate on a model described by Davis et al. (in press), who proposed a model of relational humility. This model of
relational humility conceptualized humility as a personality judgment. It thus aligned the study of humility with a large literature on personality judgments of other evaluative traits, including well-developed methods for examining the overlap between self-report, other-report, and behavioral expressions of a trait (e.g., Funder, 1995; Vazire, 2010). The theoretical model by Davis et al. consists of five propositions.

**Proposition 1: Relational Humility Is Attributed within Relationships**

The first proposition is that humility is attributed within relationships. *Relational humility* is defined as the degree to which one person attributes the following three qualities to a target person: (a) regulation of egotism (and self-oriented emotions) in socially acceptable ways; (b) accurate or moderate evaluative view of self; and (c) other-oriented, marked by a respect and value for others. Thus, humility involves integrity between behavior, thought, and motivation. Attributions of humility help people predict how they are likely to be treated in a relationship.

**Regulation of egoistic motives.** People are motivated to think well of themselves, which is gratifying to the individual. Egotism, however, can be interpersonally disruptive when it exacerbates competition for limited resources. Thus, egotism is beneficial for the individual (because it increases self-esteem), but may be damaging for dyadic or group relationships (because it increases conflict). Blatantly egoistic behaviors may eventually decrease self-esteem due to reduced social acceptance (see Leary, Tabor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995, who have theorized that self-esteem monitors the reactions of others and alerts the individual to the possibility of social exclusion). By
accepting humble behaviors and disapproving of egoistic behaviors, individuals and
groups can restrain egoistic behaviors and promote humility.

Although individuals generally seek an equilibrium that balances the wishes of
the self and others, certain situations can antagonize a person’s egoistic motivations (e.g.,
threats to self-esteem). Namely, ego threats can evoke self-focused emotions (e.g.,
shame, pride) that encourage individuals to act selfishly, which may put them at risk for
hurting their relationships and reputation with others. To decrease tension in
relationships, individuals can regulate their expression of such self-focused emotions.
For example, a person who has been publically shamed might down regulate his or her
self-focused shame and express this emotion using strategies (e.g., avoidance, direct
confrontation) that are preferred within the group. Or a person receiving public
recognition might regulate internal pride by expressing gratitude in a way that
successfully decreases envy and jealousy in others (Exline & Lobel, 1997; Exline, Single,
Lobel, & Geyer, 2004). Again, the person must effectively read the cultural context.
Expressing gratitude may be a generally effective strategy, but only if others do not view
the behavior as manipulative and self-promoting.

**Moderate evaluative view of self.** Individuals use behavioral expressions of
humility to infer a person’s state of mind, including attitudes about self and others.
Humility involves having a moderate evaluative view of self—not too high or too low.
(Note, that this is not a view of the self in terms of self-description; rather, it is a view of
one’s socially desirable characteristics. It is necessarily evaluative, and it evaluates
oneself accurately—at least in the view of the person who might make a personality
Having an arrogant view of self generally leads one to feel entitled to overprescribed resources and to regard one’s own needs more than those of others. However, having an overly negative view of self causes negative emotions that impede one’s performance and ability to contribute to the relationship or group. For example, consider several co-authors working on a psychology manuscript together. Having an inflated view of one’s skills will lead to tension and power struggle, but having a deflated view of one’s skills may cause co-authors to feel frustrated that one has not fairly contributed to the project. Traditionally, researchers have assessed this quality by comparing someone’s view of self to some criterion, such as how they view others (i.e., social comparisons) or are viewed by others (i.e., self-insights). In the present model, however, I assess the construct subjectively. Namely, people judge a target person’s attitudes towards self by observing their behavior, such as talkativeness, tone of voice, posture, or expressed beliefs as it is assumed to reflect on socially desirable attributes. The question of whether accurate, self-depleting, or self-enhancing views of self best predict behavioral expressions of humility is an empirical one.

**Other-orientedness.** Most individuals are able to act humbly with enough social pressure. The quality of other-orientedness is the glue that brings integrity to the other qualities. Namely, judgments of humility assess the extent to which a person tends to act in the interests of others across situations and relationships. If the person does not, modest behaviors may be viewed as manipulative or contingent on a particular social condition. More than just regulating egoistic behaviors, humility involves practicing other-oriented behavior, especially sacrificial behaviors. Sacrifice involves doing
something personally costly that benefits another individual. Sacrifices communicate commitment within a relationship.

Self-sacrifice and other-orientedness is not desirably in all cases. Groups generally value members who are willing to share resources and sacrifice for the needs of other in-group members. On the other hand, if a person is seen to value those in an out-group, he or she will likely not be perceived as humble but rather will likely be perceived with some mixture of having betrayed the in group, being foolish, or being a “sucker.”

**Proposition 2: Humility Strengthens Social Bonds**

The second proposition is that relational humility strengthens social bonds. To describe how individuals might come to act in other-oriented ways, I draw on Selective Investment Theory (Brown & Brown, 2006). The theory examined the problem of costly long-term investment (CLI), which has perplexed evolutionary psychologists studying altruism. Although other theories can explain some altruistic behaviors (e.g., reciprocity; kin-altruism), they have had difficulty explaining long-term sacrifices in a relationship that appear to hurt the person’s evolutionary fitness (i.e., ability to reproduce more effectively than one’s rivals). An example is an adult who takes care of an aging parent for many years. Care-taking depletes resources (e.g., psychological, physical, financial) that would be more fruitfully directed towards the adult’s own children. Other theories especially have trouble explaining the proximal mechanisms that regulate costly long-term investment.

According to Selective Investment Theory, social bonds regulate costly-long term investment. *Social bonds* are dynamic, emotionally loaded memory structures that
produce an affinity for another person or group. Social bonds motivate a person to look after another person’s well-being, even when the behavior is costly and may not be reciprocated (i.e., sacrifice behaviors). Namely, at the biological level (i.e., through neurohormonal events such as the release of oxytocin), social bonds make a person more likely to experience emotions that cause one to attend to the needs of others (e.g., empathy, sympathy, guilt) rather than to emotions that cause one to attend to one’s own needs. For example, in terms of moment-by-moment regulation of behavior, why would one faced with a predator ever put oneself in harm’s way for a friend as opposed to running? According to Selective Investment Theory, having a strong social bond causes the person to react to the threat as if it were a threat to self, even at the biological and physiological level.

If social bonds cause people to act not just in their own interests, but also in the interests of others with whom they are bonded, then the threat would be someone who would exploit this arrangement. Thus, individuals must effective regulate their social bonds. Brown and Brown (2006) argued that interdependency, valuing a relationship as essential to meeting one’s basic psychological or physical needs, is a core ingredient that allows social bonds to strengthen. Additionally, I posit that attributions of humility may regulate and strengthen social bonds.

To support this claim, I draw on recent theorizing on how emotions influence behavior (Baumeister, Vohs, DeWall, & Zhang, 2007). Conscious emotions generally occur somewhat slowly (i.e., a few minutes after an event), and cause a person to think about what just happened, in order to learn from the experience. After an interpersonal
hurt, a person may ruminate angrily about the offense, viewing the offender as less humble and more egotistical. After observing a sacrifice, the recipient may feel gratitude or relief, leading the person to view the target person as more humble. Generally, negative emotions cause individuals to ruminate on the details of an unwanted event, as though to prevent it in the future, whereas positive emotions cause individuals to place a general stamp of approval on what just happened (i.e., it was most likely not one thing that led to valued outcome, but the sum of the parts), allowing them to turn their focus to the future. Viewing someone as less humble may cause one to change strategies of engaging with the person (e.g., becoming more defensive and self-protective). In valued relationships, one may communicate social feedback to the person, which if ignored may result in further adjustment in one’s view of that person’s humility. If deterioration continues, the bond may weaken until both persons are acting primarily in their own interests.

Consider the following examples consistent with this theorizing. Humility is likely important for social bonds in close, intimate relationships such as marriages. Most likely, the positivity ratio (Gottman & Levenson, 1992; 5:1 ratio of positive to negative interactions tend to have viable relationships, but those that do not meet this ratio tend to divorce) indirectly causes gradual deterioration in a couple’s social bond. Negative interactions lead couples to view their partner in globally negative ways (including attributions of low humility), which results in a downward cycle of negative interactions, negative emotions, and negative attributions in the marriage. At the group level, humility should promote cohesion. Strong social bonds allow group members to devote
themselves to the group in exchange for a sense of self-esteem, purpose, and identity within the group. Accordingly, humility can enhance a leader’s ability to provide vision, shared goals, and clear roles that cultivate group cohesion. For example, group leaders may model humility by devoting themselves to the team, sacrificing for the group, casting a vision that inspires group members to feel a sense of purpose, preserving justice and fairness, and not letting individual agendas threaten group cohesion.

Proposition 3: Three Sources of Information that Help People Judge Humility

Individuals rely on three sources of information to judge humility and determine whether they are likely to be treated with respect and value in a relationship (Baumeister et al., 2007; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). First, individuals assess their own emotions towards the person. Positive emotions (e.g., love, compassion, empathy) signal the presence of a strong social bond, whereas negative emotions signal threat of exploitation. Second, individuals consider their past experience with the person. For example, past egregious transgressions followed by stubborn and selfish behavior should be associated with attributions of low humility, whereas past behaviors that communicate value and respect, such as sacrifices for the relationship, should be associated with high attributions of humility. Third, individuals may appraise the target person’s current behavior and emotions. Emotions signal a person’s current state of mind, including what they are likely to do in the near future (Baumeister et al., 2007; Johnson & Fredrickson, 2005; Tangney et al., 2007). For example, negative emotions such as fear or shame suggest increased threat of aggressive or avoidance behaviors. Contempt or disgust are signs of deterioration in a relationship (Tangney et al., 2007). Conversely, positive,
other-oriented emotions should generally signal humility in a relationship. Positive emotions (e.g., joy, interest, gratitude) have been shown to broaden a person’s social categories of self and other and eliminate within-race bias (Johnson & Fredrickson, 2005). Thus, they should signal that a person is ready to form or strengthen a relationship.

**Proposition 4: Humility Is Best Judged in Situations that Make it Difficult to Practice Humility**

The fourth proposition is that humility is best observed in situations that antagonize egotism, making it harder for people to practice humility. A person cannot judge humility accurately without observing behaviors relevant to the trait (Funder, 1995). In this way, humility is analogous to the virtue of courage. Courage, which has been defined as the degree to which a person exercises moral strength to act heroically in the midst of a dangerous circumstance (Shelp, 1984), cannot accurately be assessed in the absence of danger. Similarly, humility is difficult to assess in situations that do have the potential for egotism. I propose that humility is best judged in the following three situations: (a) engaging in conflict; (b) receiving recognition or honor; and (c) experiencing enhanced attention to hierarchical roles (i.e., positional authority) due to being involved in power struggle. To the degree that people can act in other-oriented ways, regulate egotism, and maintain a moderate view of self in these situations, they should be attributed with high humility.

The first situation that strains a person’s ability to act humbly is conflict. Conflict often leads to a variety of negative emotions (e.g., shame, contempt, disgust,
unforgiveness) that cause individuals to devalue each other, viewing themselves as morally superior to each other, and thus deteriorating the relationship. When a target person has offended someone, humility allows the person to moderate one’s shame and defensiveness, cultivate empathy for the victim’s perspective, and perhaps offer a sincere effective apology. Furthermore, when a target person has been offended, humility helps one regulate shame, anger and contempt, and cultivate empathy and other positive-other oriented emotions towards the offender.

The second situation that strains a person’s ability to act humbly is receiving recognition or praise. Humility involves handling the spotlight well. When someone receives honor publicly, it disrupts the status hierarchy, which may provoke greater competition and jealousy within a group. Even group members with a positive relationship with the honoree may fear that the recognition will negatively affect their relationship with the person. For example, if one member of a team receives a promotion, other members may fear that the new status difference will hurt their relationship with that person. Humility helps people effectively sense and respond to the anxiety, fear, or envy of others. Humble people effectively choose from a variety of strategies that best align with the modesty norms for the particular situation. For example, they might express gratitude or embarrassment, or make self-deprecating jokes. Gratitude, authentically expressed, shows that a person recognizes as the honor as valuable, costly, and gratuitous (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001). Gratitude evokes enjoyment in both the giver and receiver, strengthening the social bond between them.
The third situation that strains humility is dealing with power struggle in a hierarchical relationship. Many social roles are hierarchical in nature (e.g., children and parents, managers and employees, teachers and students). Norms of a group govern how individuals are expected to act in higher or lower status roles. For example, teachers are expected to prepare and become experts, express their thoughts clearly, give grades fairly, and so forth; whereas students are expected to work hard, listen, do their best, and respect and value the teacher’s expertise. Managers are expected to provide opportunities and training, handle mediation of conflict fairly, devote themselves to the success of the team, and so forth, whereas employees have their own set of expectations. Although leaders have been endowed with status and power, they are expected to act in the interest of those they serve. Groups may passively or even actively rebel when the leader fails to act in the best interests of the group. Whether in a position of higher or lower status, the humble person handles the power struggle in a way that decreases conflict in the group. For example, a humble leader may resist the urge to put lower status individual in their place, sacrificing some power to treat people with respect and value. For example, Mother Teresa did not claim the rights of a higher social class, but rather she excluded herself from the benefits of her role. A humble person in a position of lower status might express dissent respectfully, and refuse to employ strategies to seize power illegitimately (e.g., passive-aggressiveness), which undermine group cohesion.

**Proposition 5: Humility Information Is Communicated Verbally and Non-verbally**

The fifth proposition is that humility information is communicated both verbally and non-verbally. In addition to using information from their own experience with the
target person, individuals also judge humility using information they glean from hearing stories or observing non-verbal reactions of other people to the target person. They thus draw on information from the entire social environment to arrive at a personality judgment—or even a situational judgment (i.e., “She’s humble in this situation, although I know that generally she’s pretty conceited”). Humility reputations are valuable, because they afford a person opportunities to forge and deepen social bonds in the future. Namely, people should generally want to strengthen relationships with people who act humbly, even in situations that make humility more difficult.

Consider the following example. A psychology department is considering Jeff for a faculty position. His credentials are excellent. His letters of recommendation are pristine. Furthermore, on his interview, Jeff was respectful, polite, and a delight to talk to. However, before making a final decision, the committee contacts Jeff’s references, as well as other people who have worked with him. As expected, Jeff’s research mentor spoke highly of him. However, other faculty members describe him as aloof and out for himself, giving several specific examples of how he was inconsiderate of others (e.g., not volunteering for his share of service roles within the program).

I hypothesize that humility reputations are more quickly lost than formed. One highly visible, selfish behavior may soil a person’s humility reputation indefinitely. The transience of humility is an important social motivator. Given the value of a humble reputation, people can generally assume that a person will be motivated to conserve a good reputation by continuing to act humbly.

**Implications for Future Research**
The proposed model has at least four important implications for the study of humility and modesty. First, researchers should seek greater consensus in their definitions of humility. To that end, I have suggested that humility is a broad construct that involves integrity between behavior, thought, and motivation. One might act modestly for selfish reasons, and one might have an accurate view of self without acting interpersonally modest, but humility involves being other-oriented in one’s motivations. That is, modest behavior can be enacted for any number of selfish reasons; however, behavior is not typically considered humble if the motivations behind the behavior are thought to be self-aggrandizing or self-promoting. Interpersonal modesty involves regulating self-oriented emotions (e.g., pride) and one’s expression of such emotions in order to moderate envy and jealousy in others. A person may choose many strategies to express modesty, but one’s success depends on how one’s behavior is interpreted by observers, which in turn depends on the social norms, history of personal interactions with the person, and other aspects of the social situation. Because modesty behaviors occur within a cultural and relational context, the same behavior might appear modest to one and extremely arrogant to another.

Second, our theory clarifies some of the measurement issues that have plagued the field of humility. I conclude that the two types of modesty (i.e., intrapersonal and interpersonal) have been reasonably measured. The constructs, however, do not necessarily overlap. A person with an accurate evaluative view of self might fail to act modestly. A person who generally acts modestly may have an arrogant view of self paired with strong motivation to be accepted and admired by others. Thus, the person
may have learned to conform to modesty norms without actually being other-oriented or having an accurate view of self.

Humility involves integrity between action, belief, and motivation. Although it may be difficult to measure whether this actually exists objectively, I believe that I can examine whether people attribute humility within their relationships. To assess humility, especially the elusive construct of being other-oriented, I suggest that researchers employ a multi-method approach that includes self- and other-reports.

Third, I implore researchers to return to the roots of social and personality psychology and study humble behaviors within the context of real relationship situations. To move forward, researchers must use multi-modal measurement strategies and examine how the various methods relate to each other. Namely, researchers should experimentally manipulate situations that make humility difficult to practice (i.e., conflict, recognition, power struggle), thus enhancing differences in humble behavior. At the same time, researchers should examine how differences in behavior are related to attributions of humility, both by participants within the study and by trained observers. Only by triangulating behavior, social perception, and self-perception can I deal with the complexity involved in the measurement of humility. Thankfully, for such a task, social psychology has a rich resource of paradigms that can be used to influence behavioral expressions of humility.

Fourth, armed with innovations in theory and measurement, researcher should begin testing the various hypotheses implied by the model. For example, are other-reports better at predicting behavioral expressions of humility than self-reports? When?
When are they not as good? Do humility attributions indeed strengthen social bonds (e.g., commitment, relationship satisfaction, intimacy). Supporting this proposition will help catalyze research on humility, lending evidence that humility plays an essential role in the formation and maintenance of relationships (e.g., romantic, teams, leader-subordinate, etc.).

**Conclusion**

For years, the study of humility has been stagnant, presumably due to measurement issues. I argued, however, that the greater need is for a more cohesive theory of humility. Indeed, a number of paradigms within social psychology manipulate humility-relevant behaviors; however, a theory of humility is needed in order to clarify definitions and measurement strategies. To that end, I developed a theory of relational humility that calls for the triangulation of self-report, other-report, and manipulation of behavioral expressions of humility. The proposed solution to studying humility is not a simple one, but the proposed model does translate some of the issues that have held-up the study of humility into questions that can be empirically tested.


Chapter 4: Development of the Relational Humility Scale and Investigation of Theoretical Model

In the current chapter, I present four studies that describe the development of the Relational Humility Scale (RHS) and investigate initial evidence for the proposed theoretical model of relational humility. I first offer a general statement of the problem, and then I describe the method, hypotheses, results, and discussion of each study.

General Statement of the Problem

As I discussed in Chapter 2, there are two reasons for the slow growth in research on humility. First, researchers have developed no consensus on how to define or measure humility, and many have been unwilling to measure self-reported humility given the inherent paradox in reporting on one’s own humility. Some definitions have focused on intrapersonal qualities (e.g., accurate or moderate view of self), whereas others definitions have focused on interpersonal qualities (e.g., empathy, respect, lacking a sense of superiority over others, or non-manipulative). Second, researchers have struggled to measure humility. They strongly suspect that self-reports of humility are invalid because truly humble people would probably rate their own humility modestly, whereas those low in humility would probably rate their own humility generously. Although this effect has not been empirically demonstrated, should it exist, it would undermine the validity of self-reports of humility, particularly at the high end of humility scales. As I discussed in Chapter 2, researchers have explored alternative measurement strategies, but each has substantial limitations.
To begin addressing these two problems, I introduced a theoretical model of relational humility in Chapter 3, which included five propositions (P):

- **P1.** Humility is ascribed in relationships
- **P2.** Humility strengthens social bonds.
- **P3.** Three sources of information that help people judge humility
- **P4.** Humility is important in situations threaten relational hierarchies
- **P5.** Humility information is communicated verbally and non-verbally

For researchers to study relational humility, two objectives must be met: (1) a measure of humility judgments that aligns with the proposed definition of humility should be developed; and (2) initial evidence for the tenets of the proposed model should be provided.

To contribute to Objective 1, I developed the Relational Humility Scale (RHS). The RHS was designed to assess humility judgments from the perspective of a third-party within a specific relationship. I have provided evidence supporting its reliability, construct validity, and criterion validity. In Study 1, I created a pool of 71 items to assess humility based on previous definitions (e.g., accurate view of self, lack of superiority). The 71-item version (called the RHS-71) was given to a sample of undergraduates, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the structure of the scale and to evaluate its items. The final version yielded a three-factor scale with 16 items, called the Relational Humility Scale (RHS). In Study 2, I replicated the factor structure of the RHS on an independent sample using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).
To contribute to Objective 2, I adduced evidence for the proposed model of relational humility. In Study 3, I examined humility in the context of forming group relationships. The use of a round-robin design (i.e., participants rated themselves and other group members on measures) allowed me to examine two measure of humility derived from the RHS: trait humility and self-enhancement of humility. I examined several hypotheses designed to provide initial support for the proposed theoretical model. Specifically, I examined whether (1) people tend to self-enhance when reporting their humility, (2) self-enhancing was associated with other correlates of low humility, and (3) a measure of trait humility (derived by using consensus among multiple informants) predicted other theoretical constructs, such as personality traits that should be related to humility (i.e., narcissism or agreeableness) or relationship acceptance or status in the group.

In Study 4, I focused on how attributions of humility can affect specific relationships, particularly in the context of conflict and forgiveness. In a 7-week longitudinal study, college students who had recently been hurt in a romantic relationship completed measures of forgiveness, humility, and spiritual similarity. I examined how attributions of humility affected the victim’s degree of forgiveness towards an offender and arrayed initial evidence for the contextual nature of humility attributions, testing whether appraisals of spiritual similarity affected attributions of humility.

Study 1: Scale Refinement

The purposes of Study 1 were (a) to use EFA to determine the factor structure of the RHS-71, (b) to winnow items to create a brief, face-valid measure of humility
judgments; and (c) to provide initial evidence of internal consistency of the scale and subscales.

**Method (Study 1)**

**Participants.** Participants were 300 undergraduate students (166 females) from a large urban university. The mean age was 18.1 years ($SD = 5.0$). The sample was ethnically diverse (57.3% White/Caucasian, 15.3% Black/African American, 18.0% Asian/Asian American, 4.0% Latino/Latina, and 4.7% Other or did not report).

**Measures.**

**Humility judgments (RHS-71).** I generated a list of 71 face-valid items that corresponded with my proposed definition of relational humility and with previous definitions of humility (see Appendix A). Participants rated the humility of a parent by indicating their agreement with items using a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Example items include “He/she has a humble character,” “He/she has a big ego,” and “He/she knows him/herself well.”

**Procedure.** Participants were recruited from undergraduate classes and participated in exchange for partial course credit. After giving consent, participants rated the humility of one of their parents using the RHS-71 through a secure online medium (i.e., Sona-Systems©). A parent was chosen as the target, because this is a relationship in which participants likely know the target person very well, but depending on the nature of the relationship, they may not necessarily get along with the person or view the person as humble. After completing questionnaires, participants were debriefed and given the contact information of the researcher should they have any questions.
Hypotheses and Analyses (Study 1)

Hypothesis #1.

Statement. The RHS will have simple factor structure.

Justification. I did not have *a priori* predictions on the number of factors that would best explain the variance in RHS-71 items. I used empirical methods to determine whether items’ variances were caused by one or several latent factors.

Analysis. To determine the factor structure of the RHS, I conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using principal components analysis (PCA) on the covariance matrix of items of the RHS-71. The number of factors was determined by using the scree test (Cattell, 1966) and the Eigenvalue rule (Kaiser, 1960). Factors were rotated using an oblique rotation so that each item was more likely to load substantially on only one factor (DeVellis, 2003). I dropped items that did not load strongly on one factor (at least .50) or that cross-loaded too high on a second factor (.25 or higher). Also, I dropped items that were highly redundant with other items.

Hypothesis #2.

Statement. The RHS will show strong estimated internal consistency, both for the overall scales and the individual subscales.

Justification. Scale items were created to assess the degree to which one attributes humility to a target person. To the extent that items measure that construct, they should be highly correlated with each other. DeVellis (2003) recommended that Cronbach’s alphas of research instruments be in the vicinity of .80 (with somewhat
higher or lower, .7 to .9 being satisfactory). Alphas that are .95 might have too many items or assess a narrow latent construct.

**Analysis.** A Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was computed for the RHS and its two subscales.

**Results and Discussion (Study 1)**

The correlation matrix for all humility items was analyzed using an EFA with Maximum Likelihood estimation (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999) with an oblique (OBLIM) rotation. A three-factor solution best fit the data based on the Scree test (Cattell, 1966). After examining the content of items, the factors were named *Global Humility* (e.g., “He/she has a humble character”), *Superiority* (e.g., “He/she has a big ego”), and *Accurate View of Self* (e.g., “He/she knows him/herself well”). Items were dropped that did not load at least .50 on their primary factor, or that loaded over .25 on any secondary factor. In addition, two items were dropped from the Global Humility factor because they were highly redundant with other items.

The final version of the RHS consisted of 16 items, with three factors that are theoretically consistent with the proposed definition of relational humility. These were named Global Humility—5 items; Superiority—7 items; Accurate View of Self—4 items. Descriptive statistics and factor loadings for RHS are listed in Table 1. The three factors accounted for 63.9% of the variance in items. The Cronbach’s alphas for the full scale and subscales were .89 for the full scale, .92 for Global Humility, .87 for Superiority, and .82 for Accurate View of Self. The intercorrelations among the
### Table 1

**Factor Loadings for Relational Humility Scale (RHS; Study 1; N = 300)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>GH</th>
<th>LS</th>
<th>AVS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He/she has a humble character.</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He or she is truly a humble person</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people would consider him/her a humble person.</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His or her close friends would consider him/her humble.</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even strangers would consider him/her humble.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she thinks of him/herself too highly.</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.86</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she has a big ego.</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.78</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she thinks of him/herself as overly important.</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.74</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certain tasks are beneath him/her.</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.67</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel inferior when I am with him/her.</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.60</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she strikes me as self-righteous.</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.57</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she does not like doing menial tasks for others.</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.52</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she knows him/herself well</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she knows his/her strengths.</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she knows his/her weaknesses.</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/she is self-aware</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Bold = loaded on primary factor; GH = Global Humility subscale; LS = Superiority subscale; AVS = Accurate View of Self.
subscales were $r = -.45$ for Global Humility and Superiority; $r = .40$ for Global Humility and Accurate View of Self; and $r = -.26$ for Superiority and Accurate View of Self.

These findings provide initial evidence that the RHS has a simple, three-factor structure, composed of face-valid humility, low expression of superiority, and knowledgeable accuracy in one’s view of self. Because items were winnowed based on the characteristics of one sample, I replicated the factor structure in a different sample in Study 2.

**Study 2: Replication of the Factor Structure on an Independent Sample**

The findings of Study 1 yielded a three-factor solution for a 16-item scale of humility. The purposes of Study 2 were (a) to replicate the three-factor structure of the RHS in a different sample and (b) to provide additional evidence of the internal consistency of the scale and subscales.

**Method (Study 2)**

**Participants.** Participants were 196 undergraduate students (122 females) from a large urban university. The mean age was 19.1 years ($SD = 2.95$). The sample was ethnically diverse (55.1% White/Caucasian, 16.8% Black/African American, 17.3% Asian/Asian American, 4.1% Latino/Latina, and 6.7% Other or did not report).

**Measures.**

**Humility judgments.** Participants completed the RHS, as winnowed to 16 items and three subscales—Global Humility, Superiority, and Accurate View of Self—from Study 1 (see Appendix A).
Procedure. Participants were recruited from undergraduate classes and participated as part of a course requirement or in exchange for partial course credit. After giving consent, participants rated the humility of a parent using the RHS through a secure online medium. After completing questionnaires, participants were debriefed and given the contact information of the researcher should they have any questions.

Hypotheses and Analyses (Study 2)

Hypothesis #1.

Statement. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) will result in a good fit of the three-factor model of the RHS to the data.

Justification. It was important to replicate the factor structure found in Study 1, because items were dropped based on the characteristics of that sample. Replication would provide initial evidence that the factor structure will be stable in other samples.

Analysis. I computed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). I sought a CFI of .95 or higher, an RMSEA of .06 or less, and other indices of good fit of the model to the data.

Hypothesis #2

Statement. The RHS will show strong estimated internal consistency, both for the overall scales and the individual subscales.

Justification. Scale items were created to assess judgments of the target’s humility. To the extent that items measure that construct, they should be highly correlated with each other.

Analysis. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were computed for the RHS and its three subscales for the sample.
Results and Discussion (Study 2)

The covariance matrix was analyzed with Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation using MPLUS 8.1. Items of the RHS were used as indicators of the Global Humility, Superiority, and Accurate View of Self factors, which were modeled as correlated factors. For each model, several fit indices were examined to evaluate the overall fit of the model—the Chi-square value, the comparative fit index (CFI), the square-root-mean-residual (SRMR), and the root-mean-square-error-approximation (RMSEA). As a rule of thumb, a CFI around .95 and an RMSEA equal or less than .06 suggest good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The three-factor model showed good fit, $\chi^2(101) = 168.21, p < .001$, $CFI = .96$, $SRMR = .05$, $RMSEA = .06$. For the current sample, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were .90 for the Full Scale, .92 for the Global Humility subscale, .82 for the Superiority subscale, and .79 for the Accurate View of Self subscale. Thus, the results of Study 2 provide additional evidence for the factor structure and internal consistency of the RHS as I replicated the factor structure of the scale with an independent sample.

Study 3: Adducing Initial Evidence for the Model of Relational Humility

In Study 3, I sought to provide initial evidence for the proposed theoretical model of relational humility as well as evidence of construct validity for the RHS. Namely, using round-robin design, I investigated evidence of construct validity for measures of humility derived from the social relations model (Kenny, 1994): (a) trait humility, derived using consensus among several raters; and (b) self-enhancement of humility, derived using the componential approach proposed by Kwan et al. (2004). The ad hoc groups were portrayed as groups to assess “leadership.” One self-presentational and two
mildly competitive tasks were used in each group, providing a variety of pressured situations for individuals to act in within each group. It was expected that humility (or its absence) would be seen within the groups. Each of the group members rated himself or herself and all group members after the group tasks were complete.

To estimate trait humility, SOREMO (Kenny, 1995) was used to estimate social relations model (Kenny, 1994). The model requires round-robin designs, wherein participants meet in groups of at least three and complete measures for all group members including themselves. The program generates two scores for each participant: (a) a target effect, how a person is generally seen by others; and (b) a perceiver effect, how a person generally sees other people. The perceiver effect was used to measure trait humility, as it represents the consensus in how a person was perceived by group members. This is consonant with our approach to understanding relational humility as a personality judgment.

To estimate the target’s self-enhancement of humility, I used a componential approach (Kwan et al., 2004; 2008). The approach is a methodological innovation that combines, and thus adjusts for confounds in, the two ways that self-enhancement has been traditionally studied (i.e., social comparisons and self-insights; see Chapter 2). Humility researchers have theorized that as actual humility decreases, individuals should give increasingly inflated ratings of their own humility (modesty hypothesis for self-reports of humility; see Chapters 2 and 3). To examine this hypothesis, I examined whether self-enhancement of humility was related to other measure that should correspond with low humility (e.g., narcissism, low agreeableness).
Method (Study 3)

Participants. Participants \((N = 84)\) were recruited through Sona-Systems© from Virginia Commonwealth University. The mean age was 21.2 \((SD = 5.6)\). Participants were 51.2% male, 41.7% White/Caucasian, 25.0% Black/African American, 7.1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 6.0% Hispanic, and 20.2% Other. In terms of religious affiliation, the sample was 52.4% Christian, 27.4% Atheist/Agnostic/None, 8.3% Muslim, 6.0% Hindu, 1.2% Jewish, and 4.8% Other.

Overview of Measures. Below, I describe the measures that participants and informants completed in Study 3, including round-robin measures that participants completed at three time-points (see Appendix B), and personality measures that participants completed once at the beginning of the study (see Appendix C). Means, Standard deviations, alphas, skewness, and kurtosis for all measures are included in Table 2.

Round-robin Measures. Because numerous measures had to be completed on each group member several times, it was necessary to use brief assessments. I employed those used in previous research to provide continuity across the literature.

Humility. After each of the three group activities, each participant privately rated the humility of every other group member including themselves using the 5-item Global Humility subscale of the RHS.

Brief five-factor model. The 15 items used in Kwan et al. (2008) were used to assess the big five personality traits (3-items for each trait; see Appendix B).
Table 2

*Means, SD, Alphas, Skewness, and Kurtosis of Variables used in Study 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skew</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18.12</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-reports</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcissism</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>38.64</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31.02</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>29.04</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34.81</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20.94</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious Attachment</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>64.46</td>
<td>21.87</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant Attachment</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>53.95</td>
<td>17.08</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Commitment</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23.10</td>
<td>11.33</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>-.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Round-robin measures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness (3 items)</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.34</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness (3 items)</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.75</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion (3 items)</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.23</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>-.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness (3 items)</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.98</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>-.45</td>
<td>-.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism (3 items)</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.61</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status (6 items)</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23.79</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>-.88</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance (5 items)</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18.11</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>-.53</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acceptance. The five-item measure used by Anderson et al. (2006) was used to assess acceptance in the group (see Appendix B).

Status. The six-item measure used by Anderson et al. (2006) was used to assess status in the group (see Appendix B).

Target scores round-robin measures. The software program SOREMO (Kenny, 1995) was used to implement the social relations model analysis of round-robin ratings (i.e., humility, status, acceptance, and big five). SOREMO calculated two scores for each participant: a target score, which measures how that person was generally perceived by others in the group, and a perceiver score, which measures how that person generally perceived others. The program removed group differences so that target scores and perceiver scores were independent of group membership (Kenny & LaVoie, 1984).

Relative variances for target scores, perceiver scores, and relationship scores are listed in Table 3; reliabilities of estimates are listed in Table 4.

Self-enhancement of humility. The round-robin design was used to calculate the measure of self-enhancement recently developed by Kwan and colleagues (Kwan et al., 2004). The method helps minimize confounds associated with the two traditional ways that self-enhancement has been studied (i.e., self-insights or social comparisons) by combining both approaches using target scores, perceiver scores, and self-scores derived through SOREMO. The self-enhancement index was calculated as: SE = S-T-P-G (SE = self-enhancement; S = self-perception; T = group-deviated target score; P = the group-
deviated perceiving score; G = the group mean). The SE ranged from -25.05 to 24.67, with high scores signifying higher levels of SE.

Table 3

*Relative Variances Calculated Using SOREMO in Study 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>.65*</td>
<td>.05*</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.55*</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.55*</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.30*</td>
<td>.35*</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.54*</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.43*</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.38*</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>.42*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

Note. Relative variance should be significant in order to interpret actor or partner scores, but the relationship variance is a residual of 1 minus actor and partner estimates, and significance tests were not computed on these estimates.
Table 4

Consensus among Raters Calculated using SOREMO in Study 3 across an Average of 3.84 Raters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. These estimates represent the reliability of scores across raters. For example, the partner score of .31 for humility is an estimate of consensus among raters. Above .50 suggests strong agreement; above .30, moderate agreement; less than .30, weak agreement.
Measures of personality Completed as Self-Reports

**Narcissism.** The 16-item version of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16; Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2005) was used to assess narcissism. Respondents chose between paired response options (e.g., “I know that I am good because everyone keeps telling me so” or “When people compliment me, I sometimes get embarrassed”). The NPI-16 showed evidence of estimated reliability, with alphas ranging from .65 to .72 across five studies (Ames et al.) of construct validity. It was related strongly to the 40-item version ($r = .90$; Raskin & Terry, 1988). In addition, it was correlated with other constructs such as agreeableness, self-esteem, and reported power and attractiveness.

**Five factor model.** The 44-item Big Five Inventory (Johnson, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991) was used to assess the five-factors personality model (i.e., neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness). Items were completed on a five-point rating scale from $1 = \text{strongly disagree}$ to $5 = \text{strongly agree}$. John and Srivastava (1999) reported Cronbach’s alphas for the subscales ranging from .75-.80 and estimates of 3-month temporal stability ranging between .80 and .90. The subscales were found to be highly correlated with longer versions of the five-factor model such as the NEO (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

**Adult attachment.** The 36-item Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) Scale was used to assess adult attachment styles. The ECR has two subscales: Anxiety and Avoidance. Items are completed with a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from $1 = \text{strongly disagree}$ to $7 = \text{strongly agree}$. An example item is “I worry about being abandoned.” The measure demonstrated strong estimated
internal consistency, and evidence for discriminant and concurrent validity through cluster analysis and comparisons with other attachment measures (Brennan et al., 1998).

**Procedure.** Participants signed up for a study on leadership through Sona-Systems©. They came to the research lab and completed an initial survey that included demographics and personality measures. Then, they completed three activities in groups of 3 to 5 participants. There were 22 groups. For the first activity, participants were told to each describe their strengths and weaknesses as a leader. For the second activity, they completed the Man on the Moon Task (Robins & Beer, 2001), in which they imagined being members of a space crew that, originally scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the moon, was forced to land 200 miles away due to mechanical difficulties. For the 15 undamaged items, they group had to agree on how to rank the importance of each item for the crew’s survival. The task is often used to assess leadership or group/team dynamics. In the present instance, the task provided a mildly competitive venue in which a cooperative solution had to be arrived at. This was expected to give humility and other personal qualities a chance to manifest and be observed within the group. For the third activity, participants completed GRE questions as a group, and they had to agree on the answer to each item before moving on to the next. The rationale of all of these three activities was to allow participants ample opportunity to observe humility-related behaviors in group members.

According to Kenny (2004), the benefits of knowing a target person are achieved rather early within a relationship (somewhere around 100 observations of behavior). The first activity had participants explicitly present themselves to the group, giving group
members an initial chance to judge the modesty and sincerity of the person’s self-
presentation. Given that the study was presented as an investigation of leadership, the
second activity presented an opportunity for participants to vie for influence within the
group. The third activity included a clear performance task, which might intensify group
dynamics and struggle for status within the group. After each activity, participants
completed round-robin ratings of themselves and other group members. Thus, data were
collected at 3 time points.

Hypotheses and Analyses (Study 3)

Hypothesis#1.

*Statement.* There will be evidence of a modesty effect for self-reports of
humility. Namely, I examined whether humble individuals would modestly under-
report their own humility, whereas low humility individuals would self-enhance their humility.

*Justification.* The purpose of Hypothesis 1 was to investigate whether, when rating their own humility, people tend to rate themselves modestly. Some
researchers have theorized that humility should be inversely related to self-enhancing
behavior (e.g., Peterson & Seligman, 2004); however, little empirical research has
examined this assertion. Rowatt et al. (2006) found that other-reports of humility were
negatively related to self-reports of their humility, but this may be a characteristic of self-
other agreement for evaluative traits in general (e.g., Murray et al., 1996).

*Analysis.* I tested this hypothesis in two ways. First, I examined elevation
accuracy, which is the difference in mean scores between self-ratings and informant-
ratings (Cronbach, 1955). To avoid interdependence of individual data, I examined mean
self-report and other-report scores for the 22 groups. I conducted a 2 x 2 mixed groups ANOVA on personality judgment scores at Time 3 (I used ratings at Time 3 because Kenny, 2004, has demonstrated that consensus among raters tends to plateau at around 3 hours of observation). Second, I examined differential accuracy, which was estimated by examining the correlations between self-reports and informant reports of humility (Time 3). Namely, I examined the correlation between self-reports and other-reports (aggregated) for ratings of humility and agreeableness, controlling for group membership (21 dummy coded variables for N-1 groups).

**Hypothesis #2.**

**Statement.** Self-enhancement of humility ratings will show evidence of construct validity. Self-enhancement of humility will be associated positively with narcissism, avoidant attachment, and anxious attachment, and negatively with agreeableness.

**Justification.** I have conceptualized self-enhancement of humility as a form of immodest behavior. Accordingly, I predicted that self-enhancement of humility would be associated with correlates of low humility, such as narcissism, attachment style, or low agreeableness.

**Analysis.** Pearson’s \( r \) correlations were conducted between self-enhancement of humility and narcissism, agreeableness, and attachment style (each at Time 3).

**Hypothesis #3.**
**Statement.** Self-enhancement of humility will be negatively associated with acceptance and status target scores (Time 3).

**Justification.** If self-enhancement of humility is a form of immodest behavior, then it should be associated negatively with relationship qualities in developing groups (i.e., lower status and acceptance).

**Analysis.** I conducted Pearson’s r correlations of self-enhancement with status and acceptance target scores (each Time 3).

**Hypothesis #4.**

**Statement.** Trait humility (target scores) will show evidence of construct validity, being predictably related to other personality traits, such as narcissism (-), agreeableness (+), openness (+), and neuroticism (-).

**Justification.** To the extent that aggregating humility judgments is a valid way to estimate a person’s trait humility, the estimate should predict constructs that are theoretically related to humility. Accordingly, in prior research, humility or modesty measures have been positively associated with agreeableness (see Ashton & Lee, 2007, for a review) and openness to experience (i.e., akin to ideological humility), and negatively associated with narcissism (e.g., Rowatt et al., 2006).

**Analysis.** Pearson’s r correlations were conducted between trait humility (target scores at Time 3) and other personality constructs.

**Hypothesis #5.**

**Statement.** Trait humility will be positively associated with positive relationship in developing groups, namely higher acceptance and lower status.
Justification. An important contribution of the proposed model is that it contextualizes the study of humility within actual relationships. In this hypothesis, I examined the proposition that humility strengthens social bonds. Support for this hypothesis would provide initial evidence that humility is important in forming collaborative relationships.

Analysis. Pearson’s $r$ correlations were conducted between trait humility and other measures of relationship quality (Time 3). In addition, I conducted multi-level modeling to examine how humility (Time 3) was related to growth curves of status and acceptance (i.e., scores nested within individuals across three time-points).

Results and Discussion (Study 3)

Preliminary analyses. Before conducting the primary analyses, I checked the data for outliers and normality. There were only a few outliers, and they fell within the expected range of the variable and were thus retained. Variables had no problems with normality (see skewness and kurtosis in Table 2).

Test of Hypothesis #1. I hypothesized that there would be evidence that people tend to modestly rate their own humility. First, I examined the elevation accuracy (i.e., whether means were similar for self-reports compared with other reports) of humility and agreeableness. I conducted a 2 x 2 (agreeableness or humility by self or other) mixed groups ANOVA on personality judgments scores. The hypothesized interaction was not found. Group means for self-reports and other-reports were not different for humility, $t(21)=.474, p = .64$, or for agreeableness, $t(21)=.25, p = .801$. 

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Second, I examined evidence of differential accuracy. Namely, I conducted Pearson’s $r$ correlations between self-reports and other-reports of humility and agreeableness, controlling for group membership (i.e., 21 dummy codes were entered for groups N -1). The self-other agreement for humility was -.31 ($p=.013$), whereas the self-other agreement for agreeableness was -.18 ($p=.154$).

**Test of Hypothesis #2.** I hypothesized that self-enhancement of humility would show evidence of construct validity by being related to other personality traits associated with low humility (i.e., agreeableness, narcissism, attachment style, neuroticism). Pearson’s $r$ correlations were conducted between self-enhancement of humility and measures of other personality constructs. Results are reported in Table 5. Self-enhancement of humility was not related to self-reported agreeableness, narcissism, neuroticism, or openness to experience, but it was associated with anxious attachment ($r = .29, p = .012$).

**Test of Hypothesis #3.** I hypothesized that self-enhancement of humility would be associated with lower status and acceptance in a forming group. Pearson’s $r$ correlations were conducted between self-enhancement and target scores for acceptance and status. Self-enhancement of humility was not related to current status or acceptance in the group (see Table 5).

**Test of Hypothesis #4.** I hypothesized that trait humility would show evidence of construct validity by being associated with personality traits related to humility. Pearson’s $r$ correlations were conducted between trait humility and other personality traits. Trait humility was negatively related to self-reported anxious attachment style,
### Table 5

**Correlations of Humility Self-enhancement and Trait Humility with Other Measures (Study 3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>HSE</th>
<th>TH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humility Self-Enhancement</strong></td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trait humility</strong></td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-.52*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-reports</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoidant Attachment</td>
<td>53.95</td>
<td>17.08</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious Attachment</td>
<td>64.46</td>
<td>21.87</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>-.29*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Commitment</td>
<td>23.10</td>
<td>11.33</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcissism</td>
<td>6.14</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Openess</td>
<td>38.64</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>31.02</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
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<td>6.02</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>34.81</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>20.94</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Round-robin measures at Time 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
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<td>1.72</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
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<td>1.06</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
<td>0.56*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>84</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status in group</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<td>84</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>0.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance in group</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** HSE = humility self-enhancement, measured using the self-enhancement index developed by Kwan et al. (2004); TH = trait humility, measured by using target scores estimated with social relations model (Kenny, 1994). *Round-robin measures were estimated at Time 3, because according to Kenny (2004), consensus among raters plateaus after around 3 hours of interaction, consistent with the design of this study.
narcissism, and neuroticism, and was positively related to conscientiousness and agreeableness (see Table 5). Likewise, trait humility was negatively related to neuroticism target scores, and was positively related to target scores for agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness (see Table 5).

**Test of Hypothesis #5.** I hypothesized that trait humility would be related to positive relationship qualities in a developing group (i.e., acceptance and status). Pearson’s $r$ correlations were conducted between trait humility and target scores for status and acceptance at Time 3. As predicted, trait humility was positively related to status and acceptance in the group.

I used multi-level modeling to examine how trait humility (estimated at Time 3 because according to Kenny, 2004, consensus in personality judgments plateaus around 100 observations, or around 3 hours) was associated with growth curves of status and acceptance in a forming group.

I tested a series of models with status as the dependent variable. Several preliminary models were tested in order to confirm that variability existed in the intercepts and slopes. Then I tested a model with trait humility as a level-2 covariate. The interaction of trait humility with time was marginally significant (est = 0.08, $SE = 0.04$, $p = 0.067$), suggesting that people with higher trait humility increased more in acceptance than those with lower trait humility. Trait humility accounted for 4% of the unexplained variance in slopes from the unconditional growth curve model.

Next, I examined a series of models with acceptance as the dependent variable. After ensuring that variability existed in both intercepts and slopes, I examined a model
with trait humility as a level-2 covariate. As predicted, there was a significant interaction between humility and time (est = .06, SE=.03, p = .018), suggesting that people with higher trait humility increased more in acceptance over time than those with lower trait humility. The addition of trait humility to the model accounted for an additional 14% of the variance in slopes from the unconditional growth curve model.

**Summary and discussion of findings in Study 3.** In sum, in Study 3, I empirically tested several propositions that were put forth in Chapter 3. First, I empirically investigated the evidence of a modesty effect for self-reports of humility and whether self-enhancement of humility is related to low humility. Consistent with Rowatt et al. (2006), I found that self-reports of humility were negatively related to other-reports. However, I found little evidence that self-enhancement of humility was associated with correlates of low humility, such as narcissism, agreeableness, group status, or group acceptance.

I hesitate to over-interpret these null findings. I might tentatively conclude that these findings cast doubt on Tangney’s conclusion that self-reports of humility are inherently doomed (Tangney, 2000). To address this issue more definitively, additional empirical investigations are needed that compare the ability of self-reports and other-reports to predict behavioral expression of humility.

Second, I found initial support for the proposed model of relational humility, as well as for using multiple raters to estimate trait humility. Consistent with the hypothesis that negative emotions in the target would be related to lower relational humility, both neuroticism and anxious attachment style were negatively related to trait humility. Also,
consistent with the proposition that humility strengthens social bonds, I found trait humility predicted both status and acceptance in forming groups. Also, trait humility was predictably related to agreeableness, consistent with studies that have measured humility with the HEXACO-PI (for a review, see Ashton & Lee, 2007).

**Study 4: Humility and Forgiveness**

In the previous study, I used the RHS to estimate trait humility, as well as self-enhancement of humility. The focus of the present study was on how attributions of humility affect specific relationships. Namely, I examined the proposition that humility is best judged in situations that make it difficult to practice humility, such as during conflict, while receiving recognition, or being in hierarchical relationships that are involved in a power struggle.

One time when such conditions might occur is when romantic partners hurt or offend each other. Specifically, this study investigated how attributions of humility influenced a victim’s forgiveness of a romantic partner. One might hypothesize that a person who has been offended by his or her partner would be more likely to forgive the partner if the partner is perceived to be humble. Namely, judging the offender as humble might indicate contrition and an intention to behave differently in the future, whereas judging the offender as low in humility might indicate stubbornness and the likelihood of future exploitation (Baumeister et al., 2007). In addition, I attempted to provide initial evidence that relational factors can influence the attribution of humility. To provide one example, I examined whether victims who saw the offender as more spiritually similar
tended to view the offender as more humble than those who saw the offender as less spiritually similar.

Method (Study 4)

Participants. Undergraduates (N = 123) were recruited through Sona-Systems©. The mean age was 20.11 (SD = 1.99). Participants were 74.4% female, 28.1% White/Caucasian, 43% Black/African American, 9.9% Asian, 7.4% other, 11.6% missing.

Measures. Means, standard deviations, alphas, skewness, and kurtosis are described in Table 6.

Humility judgments. Participants described the offender’s humility using the RHS (described above).

Unforgiveness. The 12-item Transgression Related Interpersonal Motivations (TRIM; McCullough et al., 1998) was used to assess state unforgiveness. The TRIM has two subscales: Revenge (5 items; e.g., “I’ll make him/her pay”) and Avoidance (7 Items; e.g., “I keep as much distance between us as possible”). Items were completed on a 5-point rating scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. McCullough and colleagues reported Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for scores on both subscales ranging from .85 to .93 and estimates of three-week temporal stability ranging from .44 to .65. Scores on the scale showed evidence of construct validity, and scores were found to be negatively correlated with other measures of forgiveness, relationship satisfaction, and commitment.
Table 6

Descriptive statistics for all variables (Study 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alphas</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skew</th>
<th>Kurt</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relational Humility Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global humility</td>
<td>.95-.97</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superiority</td>
<td>.85-.90</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18.12</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate view of self</td>
<td>.88-.89</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.41</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Similarity Appraisals</td>
<td>.85-.93</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>29.06</td>
<td>13.46</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious commitment</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28.52</td>
<td>11.58</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenge</td>
<td>.92-.95</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.35</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>.81-.93</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.93</td>
<td>8.77</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>-1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unforgiveness(^a)</td>
<td>.87-.90</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>26.29</td>
<td>11.70</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Unforgiveness = Revenge + Avoidance
**Similarity of an Offender’s Spirituality.** The 9-item Similarity of an Offender’s Spirituality (SOS) Scale (Davis et al., 2009) was used to assess whether victim’s appraised the relationship of the Sacred to an offender in order to deal with a transgression. Participants responded to items on a 7-point rating scale ranging from 0 = *completely disagree* to 6 = *completely agree.* The scale has two subscales: Spiritual Similarity and Human Similarity. An example item for the Spiritual Similarity is “I thought about how similar my basic religious beliefs were to his/hers,” and for the Human Similarity is “I thought to myself that this person was a brother/sister human.” Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .87-.93 for Spiritual Similarity and from .79-.86 for Human Similarity (Davis et al.). Furthermore, scores on the SOS also showed evidence supporting construct validity, as it was correlated with religious commitment and other measures of religiosity. In addition, scores showed evidence supporting criterion validity. They were correlated with empathy and forgiveness.

**Procedure.** Participants who had recently been hurt in a romantic relationship signed up for the study through Sona-Systems©. They came into the lab and completed a survey, including a description of the transgression and several measures regarding the offense and their relationship with the offender (i.e., RHS, SOS, TRIM). After completing the lab visit, participants were emailed a weekly survey, which included repeated measures of the RHS, SOS, and TRIM, once a week for the following six weeks.

**Hypotheses and Analyses (Study 4)**

**Hypothesis#1.**
Statement. Humility judgments will predict forgiveness over time.

Justification. Several theorists have claimed that humility is important to whether a victim forgives. Prior research on humility and forgiveness has focused on whether the victim’s humility is related to the victim’s forgiveness of an offender (e.g., Exline, Baumeister, Zell, Kraft, & Witvliet, 2008; Powers et al., 2007, Rowatt et al., 2006; Shepherd & Belicki, 2008). However, in the present study, I examined how relational humility (i.e., the degree to which the victim attributes humility to the offender) affected the victim’s forgiveness of the offender over time.

Analysis. Multi-level regression models were conducted with unforgiveness scores (i.e., revenge and avoidance) nested within individuals over time, and with humility entered as a level-1 covariate. In order to provide some evidence of the causal direction between humility and unforgiveness, unforgiveness scores were lagged by one week (Kenny & Campbell, 1999).

Hypothesis #2.

Statement. Spiritual similarity will be positively related to relational humility.

Justification. The proposed model suggests that people attribute humility based, in part, on their particular relationship with the target person. Accordingly, similarity in spiritual worldview may influence how individuals attribute humility to a target person. To provide initial evidence for this proposition, I examined whether people attributed greater humility to offenders that they deemed as more spiritually similar.
**Analysis.** Multi-level regression models were used to examine how appraisals of spiritual similarity (at Time 1) were related to relational humility (RHS global scores) nested within individual over time. After testing several base models (i.e., unconditional growth curve model; constraining variance components to be zero), I examined a model in which spiritual similarity scores (Time 1) were entered as a level-2 predictor.

**Results and Discussion (Study 4)**

**Preliminary analysis.** Before conducting the primary analyses, I checked the data for outliers and normality. There were only a few outliers, and they fell within the expected ranges of the variables and were thus retained. Variables had no problems with normality (see Table 6).

**Hypothesis #1.** I hypothesized that attributions of humility would be positively associated with unforgiveness. To test this hypothesis, I conducted a series of multi-level regression models with unforgiveness scores nested within individuals over time. In several preliminary models, I established that there was variability in the intercepts and slopes and that a linear model—not a curvilinear one—best fit the data. I then entered relational humility as a level-1 covariate. Forgiveness scores were lagged by one time-point, so that models reflected how humility scores were related to subsequent levels of forgiveness across the course of the study. Both Global Humility (est = -.28, *SE*=.10, *p* = .007) and Superiority (est = .19, *SE*=.08, *p* = .019) were significant predictors of lagged unforgiveness scores. These findings suggest that, across the course of the study, viewing the offender as more humble was related to lower unforgiveness the following
week, and that viewing the offender as more superior was related to higher unforgiveness the following week.

**Hypothesis #2.** I hypothesized that appraisals of spiritual similarity (Time 1) would predict initial humility status and also changes in relational humility. To test this hypothesis, I conducted a series of multi-level regression models with relational humility scores nested within individuals over time. In several preliminary models, I established that there was variability in the intercepts and slopes and that a linear model—not a curvilinear one—best fit the data. Then, I entered relational humility as a level-2 covariate. There was a main effect for SOS (est = .17, $SE=.02$, $p < .001$), suggesting that higher appraisals of spiritual similarity were associated with higher relational humility across the study. There was a marginally significant interaction term (est = -.002, $SE=.0009$, $p = .052$), suggesting that relational humility declined over time for those attributed with higher spiritual similarity, whereas it increased over time for those attributed with lower spiritual similarity.

In sum, Study 3 offered initial evidence that relational humility is important in the context of conflict. Namely, in a sample of undergraduates who had recently suffered a transgression in a romantic relationship, relational humility predicted lagged unforgiveness scores. A number of studies have found humility in the victim to be associated with forgiveness; however, this was a first study to show that relational humility (i.e., a victim’s attribution of humility to an offender) was related to the unfolding of forgiveness. Likewise, a key implication of a relational approach to studying humility is that contextual factors may affect whether people attribute humility.
Offering initial support for this notion, I found that appraisals of spiritual similarity were associated with judgments of relational humility. Spiritual similarity is one of many relational factors (e.g., cultural norms regarding modesty or gender) that may influence attributions of humility.
Chapter 5: General Discussion

The purpose of the present dissertation was to present initial theorizing and empirical work that might help catalyze research on humility. In my review of the literature in Chapter 2, I called for greater innovation in theory and measurement are needed in order for the study of humility to advance. Also, I suggested that conceptualizing humility as a relational construct and using informant raters might provide avenues for studying humility. Towards that end, in Chapter 3, I elaborated on a theoretical model of relational humility consisting of five propositions. Then, in Chapter 4, I presented four empirical studies that described the development of the Relational Humility Scale (RHS) and offered initial evidence for the proposed model of relational humility. Here in Chapter 5, I provide a general discussion that considers evidence for the proposed model of relational humility, the status of the RHS in its development, limitations of the presented studies, and directions for future research.

Evidence for the Proposed Model of Relational Humility

P1: Humility is ascribed within relationships. I suggested a conceptual shift that aligned the study of humility with a vast literature on personality judgments. Relational humility was defined having an integrity between thought, behavior and motivation, including intrapersonal modesty (i.e., having an accurate view of self) and interpersonal modesty and humility (i.e., lack of superiority; regulating self-oriented emotions in socially acceptable ways; acting in other-oriented ways, such as showing respect, sacrificing for others, expressing empathy, and so forth). Study 3 provided initial evidence for Proposition 1. Trait humility, as measured by consensus among several
raters in an ad hoc relationship with a target, was associated with consensus ratings of agreeableness and conscientiousness, factors of the big-five that have been associated with self-control (McCullough et al., 2009). Trait humility as ascribed to a target was also negatively associated with narcissism ascribed to that target within the ad hoc relationship. Furthermore, as predicted, trait humility was negatively associated with traits related to expression of negative emotion (i.e., neuroticism and anxious attachment). Note that in the Kwan design, every person was a target and all others rated them. Thus, in the present set of studies, Study 3 supports P1—that people rating each other within relationships ascribe humility when humility is due and it is related to other traits theorized to be related to humility.

Furthermore, an implication of the proposed model is that relational factors—including characteristics of the judge, the target, or information available to the judge—can affect attributions of humility. In Study 4, I provided an example, showing that appraisals of spiritual similarity by a person who had been offended by his or her romantic partner were associated with attributions of humility.

I also examined the hypothesis that self-enhancement of humility by the target may undermine the validity of self-reports of his or her own humility. I found limited evidence for this hypothesis in Study 3. Although self-reports of humility were negatively correlated with other-reports of humility, the effect was small and was not present when controlling for self-enhancement on agreeableness. Furthermore, self-enhancement of humility (Kwan et al.’s, 2004) showed little evidence of being related to low humility. The measure was unrelated to narcissism, agreeableness,
conscientiousness, status, or acceptance. An important question, which I did not consider in the present studies, is whether other-reports predict behavioral expressions of humility better than do self-reports (Vazire, 2010). The evidence from Study 3 suggested that, while other reports of humility are indeed predictive of relationship-derived personality judgments, self-reports of humility might not be as vexing and contradiction-laden as Tangney (2009) had concluded. Perhaps a combination of other- and self-reported humility will provide the most robust picture of humility.

**P2: Humility helps strengthen social bonds.** In Chapter 3, I elaborated on the importance of humility for strengthening social bonds. The findings in Studies 3 and 4 provided indirect support for this proposition. Namely, in Study 3, being viewed as humble by others (trait humility) was associated with being more accepted and having greater status in a forming group. In addition, forgiveness is an important to the maintenance of a relationship bond. In Study 4, victims who saw the offender as humble reported less unforgiveness towards that person over time. One way to test this proposition more directly might be to assess the strength of a social bond with a measure of relationship commitment. For example, one might test whether judgments of humility mediate the relationship between sacrifice behaviors and increases in commitment of partners.

**P3: Three sources of information help people judge humility.** I proposed that people judge humility drawing from their current emotions, past behavior of the target person, and the current emotions of the target person. This proposition was not tested directly, although Study 3 provided initial evidence that having greater negative emotion
was associated with being viewed as less humble. Namely, participants who rated themselves as more neurotic and anxious were viewed as less humble by others. A more direct test of this hypothesis would involve experimental designs, such as manipulating emotions in the judge or the victim.

P4: Humility Is Best Judged in Situations that Make it Difficult to Practice. I did not test this proposition. To do so would have tested a variety of situations against each other. But I provided initial evidence that in one of the situations—conflict as shown by a transgression within romantic partnerships—humility judgments are important. Initial evidence supported the proposition that relational humility is important in the context of conflict. Namely, in Study 4, I examined humility in the context of conflict in romantic relationships. Previous theory and research on forgiveness has focused on humility of the victim, proposing that humility can promote empathy and dissipate feelings of disgust and moral superiority towards the offender (e.g., Sandage, 1999; Worthington, 1998). For example, self-reports of humility have been positively associated with trait forgivingness (Rowatt et al., 2006; Shepherd & Belicki, 2008). Moreover, victims are more likely to forgive an offense if they can imagine themselves committing a similar offense (Exline, Baumeister, et al., 2008; Exline, Zell, Malcolm, DeCourville, & Belicki, 2008). This study was the first to investigate how relational humility—a victim’s attribution of humility to an offender—affects the unfolding of forgiveness.

P5: Humility information is communicated verbally and non-verbally. Evidence for this proposition was not examined in the present studies; however this is an
important area for future study. For example, researchers might manipulate individuals access to information about a target person to study how judges prioritize humility-related information (e.g., direct observation, negative/positive reports from friends/rivals).

**Status Report on the Development of the RHS**

The RHS was developed as a face-valid measure of humility judgments. In contrast with other self-report measures of humility—e.g., the Modesty-Humility subscale of the Values in Action Inventory (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) or the Honesty-Humility subscale of the HEXACO-PI (Lee & Ashton, 2004)—its items were evaluated while being used for other-reports rather than self-reports. Given the paradox of reporting one’s own humility, it was important to evaluate items being used for other-report rather than self-report.

In Study 1, the RHS was found to have a three-factor structure, including subscales that assess Global Humility (5-items), Superiority (7-items), and Accurate View of Self (4-items). Consistent with the proposed definition, the instrument includes both intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of humility, as well as a subscale that reflects an overall integrity between these two aspects. The factor structure of the RHS was replicated in an independent sample, and the subscales showed acceptable estimates of internal consistency.

As discussed in the prior section, the RHS showed initial evidence of construct validity. In Study 3, trait humility was predictably related to other personality traits and group status and acceptance. Furthermore, RHS subscales were used to study relational
humility, a victim’s attribution of humility to an offender. As predicted, relational humility was related to forgiveness over time and appraisals of spiritual similarity. Although this initial evidence is promising, evidence of a scale’s psychometric properties accumulates over time. An important next step in the development of the RHS is to establish evidence of its incremental predictive validity compared with other measures of humility, such as the HH (Ashton & Lee, 2004) or the MH (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

**Limitations of the Empirical Studies**

The present set of studies had several limitations. First, only college students were studied. It is important to examine humility judgments in other populations—particularly in relationships involving hierarchical roles (e.g., supervisor-subordinate, or teacher-student relationships). Second, only one method of measurement was used (i.e., survey ratings by self or other). In the future, it will be important to show how humility judgments (as measured by the RHS) are related to physiological (e.g., are RHS ratings related to more emotional calmness during, for example, discussions of relational trust?), behavioral (e.g., are RHS ratings related to fewer uses of personal pronouns, fewer defensive verbalizations, and fewer non-verbal defensive behaviors?), or cognitive (e.g., are RHS ratings related to scores on the IAT-HA) measures.

**Future Research**

*Resolving definitional disputes and developing measures.* Given that humility research is in an early phase, I expect other researchers will put forth alternative definitions of humility and develop associated measures. By conceptualizing humility as relational, I have emphasized that individuals attribute both internal and interpersonal
qualities of humility based on a person behavior within relationships, as well as communication between individuals within a community. The RHS provides one example of a measure developed primarily for other-reports. To provide assurance in measurement, it is necessary to continue to add to construct and criterion-related validity of the RHS, as well as other measures.

The present dissertation certainly did not resolve the measurement issues that have thwarted the study of humility; however, it clarified some promising directions for future research. For example, in Study 3, I employed one approach of testing the widely held assumption that humility self-reports are inherently flawed. This initial inquiry did not find strong evidence for such a conclusion. As with other psychological constructs—and perhaps more so—the study of humility requires that researchers adopt multiple methods of measurement.

A crucial next step is for researchers to reach consensus on behavioral expressions of humility. This has proven to be a difficult task, because whether a behavior is humble might depend highly on context. For example, expressing modesty after receiving an honor might be considered very humble by some but as manipulative by others. Or the same behavior in one setting or community (e.g., publically expressing thanks to God during a religious service) might be seen as arrogant in another (e.g., a politician publically expressing thanks to God during a campaign address at a religious convention in view of highly secular audience). A relational approach suggests a different strategy. Rather than researchers trying to decide what behaviors are humble—across all people and situations, using their own pet theories—a more humble approach might be to begin
studying humility as a social judgment: what behaviors are generally seen as humble, in what situations, by what people?

Once researchers have reached some agreement on behavioral expressions of humility (e.g., apologizing after a transgression or other conciliatory behaviors; expressing gratitude or other stances that communicate interpersonal lowering), an important next step is to compare the predictive validity of self-reports and other-reports of humility. I suspect researchers will continue to search for a strong and easily admissible trait measure. That said, I encourage researchers to keep in mind the importance of relational humility, one person’s subjective judgment of another’s humility, which is contextually most important to outcomes for a particular relationship (e.g., whether a victim sees an offender as humble is most important to forgiveness and reconciliation for that relationship; whether an employee sees a manager as humble is most important to collaboration and trust in that relationship).

Theory testing. Now that initial measures of relational humility exist, researchers should turn to testing some of the many implications of the proposed model of relational humility. For example, when do other-reports of humility out-predict self-reports? Also, when are self-reports most likely to be biased? Accordingly, perhaps researchers could develop a self-report measure that includes a validity scale based on criterion-keyed items, validated using other-reports.

Aspects of the definition should be experimentally tested. For example, I suggested that positive or negative emotion in the judge (or target) may influence
attributions of humility. Accordingly, does priming positive or negative emotions—in either the judge or target—change attributions of humility?

Also, the proposed definition suggests that humility is related to self-regulation. As such, do ego depletion tasks inhibit a person’s ability to act humbly (e.g., participants could be assigned to an ego depletion task before engaging in a videotaped argument with a confederate, and several coders could then rate the participants humility based on their behavior during the video).

Accordingly, researchers should continue to acquire evidence regarding the benefits of humility, both for the target and the perceiver. Namely, researchers should begin studying humility in a variety of relationships (e.g., managers, teachers, couples), particularly in situations that challenge the hierarchy of relationships, such as during conflict, while receiving praise or recognition, or in hierarchical relationships involved in a power struggle.

Finally, once some of the low hanging fruit has been gathered, researchers should examine some of the more nuanced hypothesized implied by the proposed model. For example, the model implies that humility is subjectively easier (and less ambiguous) to assess in others than in oneself. Modesty norms are likely more salient when describing one’s own humility than when judging someone else’s humility. This should be tested. Moreover, researchers might use previous research on personality judgments to explore what relationship factors moderate how humility is judged (see Funder, 1995, for a review). For example, convergence between self-and observer-reports should be higher in relationships between people who know each other well than in relationships between
strangers (Kenny, 2004); people may consider different qualities when judging the
humility of close friends versus acquaintances (McAdams & Pals, 2006); cultural or
spiritual factors may affect how people judge humility (Sandage, 1999; Emmons &
Kneezel, 2005); and humility judgments should be less stable than judgments of traits
such as extraversion or agreeableness.

Conclusion

For some time, the study of humility has been hampered by measurement
problems. Researchers have sought the Holy Grail of measures that can side-step the
paradox of self-reported humility. However, I conclude, at least on the basis of the
present limited dissertation, that the quest for the Holy Grail perhaps be laid aside or even
called off. Before researchers could ever know that they had found such a measure, they
would first need to be able to identify the behaviors that the trait of humility should
predict. Given the highly contextual nature of humility, this task alone is daunting.
Rather, I have conceptualized trait humility as a person’s reputation across relationships
and even communities. The approach aligns the study of humility with an expansive
body of research on personality judgments, providing an array of empirical questions that
will keep researchers, including myself, busy for years to come. I hope the introduction
of this model and scale will be an important step in catalyzing research on humility.
References


Greenleaf, R. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness.* Mahwah, NJ.


Appendix A

RHS-71 and RHS-16
Relational Humility Scale-71 Item Version (RHS-71)

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate the extent to which the following statements describe the person being rated.

1 = strongly disagree
5 = strongly agree

1. He/she is a humble person.
2. Most people would consider him/her a humble person.
3. He/she has a humble character.
4. He or she is truly a humble person.
5. His or her close friends would consider him/her humble.
6. He/she is humble.
7. He/she is not a humble person.
8. He/she acts humbly with me.
9. Even strangers would consider him/her humble.
10. Not many would consider him/her humble.
11. I consider him/her one of my “heroes of humility.”
12. He/she is a great example of humility.
13. Humility is one of this person’s main characteristics.
14. He/she thinks of him/herself as overly important.
15. He/she has a big ego.
16. He/she thinks of him/herself too highly.
17. He/she seems aware of others’ needs.
18. He/she has the freedom to not be selfish.
19. He/she is free to think of others first.
20. He/she tends to share the credit with others.
21. He/she shares the spotlight.
22. He/she accepts deserved praise without making a big deal of it.
23. He/she likes to call attention to his/her accomplishments.
24. When he/she accomplishes something, he/she tells everyone right away.
25. He/she tries to impress others with false modesty.
26. He/she likes to talk about him/herself.
27. He/she does not like to talk about him/herself too much.
28. He/she is modest.
29. He/she is pretentious.
30. He/she is self-aware.
31. He/she knows his/her weaknesses.
32. He/she knows him/herself well.
33. He/she knows his/her strengths.
34. He/she is able to accept him/herself.
35. He/she is able to accept his/her own flaws.
36. He/she handles success well.
37. He/she deals with failure well.
38. He/she prefers not to ask for help.
39. He/she likes to be seen as tough.
40. He/she likes to be seen as invulnerable.
41. He/she does not like to show weakness.
42. He/she has a humble lifestyle.
43. He/she lives a humble life.
44. He/she lives a modest life.
45. He/she lives a down to earth life.
46. Certain tasks are beneath him/her.
47. He/she prefers to let others do the hard work.
48. He/she does not like doing menial tasks for others.
49. He/she strikes me as self-righteous.
50. I feel inferior when I am with him/her.
51. He/she is condescending.
52. He/she is arrogant.
53. He/she acts better than me.
54. He/she acts better than others.
55. It is refreshing to be around him/her.
56. He/she treats me with dignity.
57. I trust him/her.
58. He/she treats me with respect.
59. I admire him/her as a person.
60. I am drawn to his or her humility.
61. I want to be more humble like him/her.
62. His or her humility is attractive to others.
63. He/she is a moral person.
64. He/she is a good person.
65. He/she is an honest person.
66. He/she is authentic.
67. He/she enjoys serving others.
68. He/she often is in power struggles.
69. He/she often causes power struggles.
70. He/she has a disarming manner.
71. He/she is gentle with others.
Relational Humility Scale (RHS)

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate the extent to which the following statements describe the person being rated.

1 = strongly disagree
5 = strongly agree

1. He/she has a humble character.
2. He or she is truly a humble person
3. Most people would consider him/her a humble person.
4. His or her close friends would consider him/her humble.
5. Even strangers would consider him/her humble.
6. He/she thinks of him/herself too highly.
7. He/she has a big ego.
8. He/she thinks of him/herself as overly important.
9. Certain tasks are beneath him/her.
10. I feel inferior when I am with him/her.
11. He/she strikes me as self-righteous.
12. He/she does not like doing menial tasks for others.
13. He/she knows him/herself well
14. He/she knows his/her strengths.
15. He/she knows his/her weaknesses.
16. He/she is self-aware
Appendix B

Round-Robin Measures
**Time 1: After brief introduction:** Please indicate the extent each item describes the person—either yourself or other members in the group.  
1 = not at all; 5 = completely

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraverted</td>
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<td>Talkative</td>
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<td>Sociable</td>
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<td>Diligent</td>
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<td>Careful</td>
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<td>Cautious</td>
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<td>Unworried</td>
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<td>Relaxed</td>
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<td>Carefree</td>
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<td>Eager to change the status quo</td>
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<td>Prefer novel ways</td>
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<td>Prefer variety</td>
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<td>Unselfish</td>
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<td>Kind</td>
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<td>Generous</td>
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<td>Receive respect from other group members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Made valuable contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrated high ability</td>
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<td>Influenced group decisions</td>
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<td>Led the groups activities</td>
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<td>Participated and contributed in the group, overall</td>
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<td>I would want to work with the person again</td>
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<td>Earned trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Similarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt a lot in common with him/her</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt different from him/her</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would want to work with him/her again</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earned other group members trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>He/she has a humble character.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He or she is truly a humble person</td>
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<td>Most people would consider him/her a humble person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>His or her close friends would consider him/her humble</td>
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<td>Even strangers would consider him/her humble.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He/she tends to share the credit with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He/she shares the spotlight.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He/she accepts deserved praise without making a big deal of it</td>
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<tr>
<td>He/she is one of the most modest people I know.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He/she likes to call attention to his/her accomplishments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He/she tries to impress others with false modesty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He/she likes to be the center of attention.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Dispositional Measures
Big Five

**DIRECTIONS:** Please describe the extent to which you agree the following statements describe the person you are rating.

1 = strongly disagree
5 = strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is talkative</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tends to find fault with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does a thorough job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is depressed, blue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is original, comes up with new ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is reserved</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is helpful and unselfish with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can be somewhat careless</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is relaxed, handles stress well</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is curious about many different things</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is full of energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starts quarrels with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is a reliable worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can be tense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is ingenious, a deep thinker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generates a lot of enthusiasm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has a forgiving nature</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tends to be disorganized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worries a lot</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has an active imagination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tends to be quiet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is generally trusting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tends to be lazy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is emotionally stable, not easily upset</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is inventive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has an assertive personality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can be cold and aloof</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perseveres until the task is finished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can be moody</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Values artistic, aesthetic experiences</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is sometimes shy, inhibited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is considerate and kind to almost everyone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does things efficiently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remains calm in tense situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Narcissism

**DIRECTIONS:** Select which response is most true of you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A or B</th>
<th>Response A</th>
<th>Response B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so</td>
<td>When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I like to be the center of attention</td>
<td>I prefer to blend in with the crowd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think I am a special person</td>
<td>I am no better or nor worse than most people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I like having authority over people</td>
<td>I don't mind following orders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I find it easy to manipulate people</td>
<td>I don’t like it when I find myself manipulating people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I insist upon getting the respect that is due me</td>
<td>I usually get the respect that I deserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am apt to show off if I get the chance</td>
<td>I try not to be a show off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I always know what I am doing</td>
<td>sometimes I am not sure of what I am doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>everybody likes to hear my stories</td>
<td>sometimes I tell goods stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I expect a great deal from other people</td>
<td>I like to do things for other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I really like to be the center of attention</td>
<td>it makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>people always seem to recognize my authority</td>
<td>being an authority doesn't mean that much to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am going to be a great person</td>
<td>I hope I am going to be successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I can make anybody believe anything I want them to</td>
<td>people sometimes believe what I tell them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am more capable than other people</td>
<td>there is a lot that I can learn from other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am an extraordinary person</td>
<td>I am much like everybody else</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Relationship Measures
Forgiveness

DIRECTIONS: For the following questions, please indicate your current thoughts and feelings towards your partner who wounded you. Use the following scale to indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements. (Rate these items about the specific event you described above).

1 = strongly disagree
5 = strongly agree

1. I’ll make him or her pay.
2. I wish that something bad would happen to him/her.
3. I want him/her to get what he/she deserves.
4. I’m going to get even.
5. I want to see him/her hurt and miserable.
6. I keep as much distance between us as possible.
7. I live as if he/she doesn’t exist, isn’t around.
8. I don’t trust him/her.
9. I find it difficult to act warmly toward him/her.
10. I avoid him/her.
11. I cut off the relationship with him/her.
12. I withdraw from him/her.
Similarity of an Offender’s Spirituality

DIRECTIONS: In trying to get over the serious harm done to you by your partner, you may or may not have considered how you and your partner have related to the Sacred.

For each statement, please indicate the degree to which you would disagree or agree whether it has played a part in how you dealt with the offense by your partner.

0 = completely disagree
6 = completely agree

1. Our beliefs overlap in important ways.
2. I thought about how similar my basic religious beliefs were to his/hers.
3. I thought, we are basically committed to the same belief system.
4. I recalled how similar we were in fundamental values.
5. I believe that he/she is a similar spiritual person to me.
6. I thought to myself that this person was a brother/sister human.
7. Even though our bond as humans was broken, I knew we were both the same under the skin.
8. I reminded myself that I was no better as a person than the one who hurt me.
9. I said to myself that he/she was no worse as a person than I am.
Vita

Don Emerson Davis, Jr. was born on January 5, 1981, in Tomball, Texas. He is a United States citizen. He graduated from Harrison High School, Kennesaw, Georgia in 1999. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Yale University in 2003 and his Master of Arts in Counseling from Richmont Graduate University in 2006 and his Master of Science in Counseling Psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University.