

A FRAMEWORK OF SPIRITUALITY FOR THE FUTURE OF NATURALISM

by John Calvin Chatlos 

Abstract. William James wrote that the life of religion “consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto.” Naturalism organizes our experiences of the universe within a science-grounded philosophical and/or religious framework aligning it with what is supremely good for our lives. This article describes a science-grounded specific “Framework of Spirituality” identifying part of this unseen order that opens a “spiritual core” within persons as a source of healing and happiness. A cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) expanded process shows how experiences of human worth and dignity are keys to this new awareness and provides speculation for a brain function and evolutionary explanation. Details of this knowledge are related to various perspectives and authors of naturalism—scientific, religious, ecstatic, and ecological—to contribute to a future direction for the understanding, development, and further expression of naturalism.

Keywords: brain function; CBT; evolution; humanism; naturalism; spirituality; worth and dignity

INTRODUCTION

William James (James [1902] 1970, 59) wrote that the life of religion “consists of the belief that there is an *unseen order*, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto. This belief and this adjustment are the religious *attitude* in the soul.” As James’s use of “religious” is roughly equivalent to our use of the word “spiritual,” he connects spirituality and this unseen order with our “supreme good.”

Writers of naturalism (see Papineau [2007] 2020; Drees 2018), including varieties of religious (Drees 1998; Goodenough 1998; Stone 2017, 2018), ecstatic (Corrington 2016, 2018), ecological (Fellows 2019), and other (Crosby and Stone 2018) forms of naturalism, all pursue our

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Table 1. Framework of Spirituality (FOS)

Domain of Being	Experience of Self-Worth	Expression of Dignity	Creative Forces/ Creative Openings
Think	Self-Confidence	Choice/ Reason / Wisdom	Truth
Feel	Self-Esteem	Empathy/ Compassion / Caring (Justice)	Love
Do	Self-Competence/ Self-Efficacy	Honesty/ Courage / Giving (Generosity)	Faith

Each of the elements of this framework is described in the text. This illustrates the full FOS including the expansion of the expression of dignity socially as wisdom, justice, and generosity. The expansion to the Creative Forces/Creative Openings occurs as the spiritual core is opened.

“supreme good.” These forms of naturalism all attempt to bring understanding of spiritual/religious experiences and practices into secular settings, with a grounding in the order described by science within the natural (i.e., non-supernatural) world.

“Unseen order” in this regard is likened to the situation within the history of science, whereby the force and laws of gravity were present, but not “seen” or identified until Isaac Newton identified their order. Newton pursued this unseen order within the objective world. James and contemporary naturalism attempt to extend this unseen order to the personal, subjective world of experience, assuring that it is also connected to the objective world of scientific knowledge.

This article presents a “Framework of Spirituality” (FOS) (Table 1) that provides a description of an “unseen order” of subjective experience and identifies key experiences of self-worth and dignity (as operationalized in this article) that open a spiritual core within persons. This FOS provides a guide that is grounded in science to explore the nature of this spiritual core, relate it to personal experiences, and demonstrate its usefulness in personal growth and clinical applications. The framework or model described in this work is presented as a previously unseen, unknown, or unrecognized order of experience. The results of using this FOS are well suited to address questions arising in each of the pursuits of naturalism.

The process described in this article is grounded in cognitive behavioral theory and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and is a phenomenologically derived process with replicability, and direct clinical relevance that must be further scientifically investigated. In this article, speculation as to the role of specific brain function and theory will be discussed, and a hypothetical explanation of its evolutionary source will be outlined. These findings are presented here in early development to promote discussion and form a common foundation for future scientific study, as well as

integration in all of these areas for the future of naturalism. These ideas and this process were developed over a 20-year period of leading groups for personal growth, spiritual exploration and clinical application in religious settings, and mental health and addiction treatment. As such, references to “we” in this article refer to many participants in many groups over the years that have contributed to the development of these ideas and applications.

NATURALISM

“There is no single, agreed upon meaning of ‘naturalism’” (Stone 2018, 8), though the common core of various types of naturalism is the idea that there is no being or beings, and no forces or powers, that are outside of our natural world. Essentially, there is only a natural world, and no supernatural world exists. However, even within this narrow definition, there are multiple perspectives of naturalism varying by definitions of the word “supernatural,” or descriptions of what is meant by “divine” or “god,” and even disagreements as to what is meant by “supreme,” or of the different relationships between humanity and the world (Stone 2018).

Each of these pursuits of naturalism as noted earlier has its own development with:

- historical frameworks (Santayana [1942] 1972; Schopenhauer [1819] 1966; Dewey [1934] 1980; Emerson [1848] 1981; Dietrich 1989; Spinoza [1677] 1996; Heidegger [1927] 2010);
- centers of organization (Institute on Religion in an Age of Science, International Society for Science and Religion, Center for Advanced Study in Religion and Science, Religious Naturalist Association, Unitarian Universalist Religious Naturalists, World Pantheist Movement, Spiritual Naturalist Society, naturalism.org, Brights, American/British/International Humanist Associations, American Ethical Union, Naturalist Druids, Humanist Institute);
- perspectives of personalities involved (Drees 1998; Goodenough 1998; Cavanaugh 2000; Rue 2005; Hogue 2010, 2011; Corrington 2016; Stone 2017; Fellows 2019; Grassie 2019); and
- a summary attempt to develop an integrated perspective (Crosby and Stone 2018).

It is hoped that both readers new to naturalism and those already familiar or personally connected with naturalism of any perspective will be able to expand their personal understanding as well as the larger understanding of the multiple perspectives of naturalism through this article.

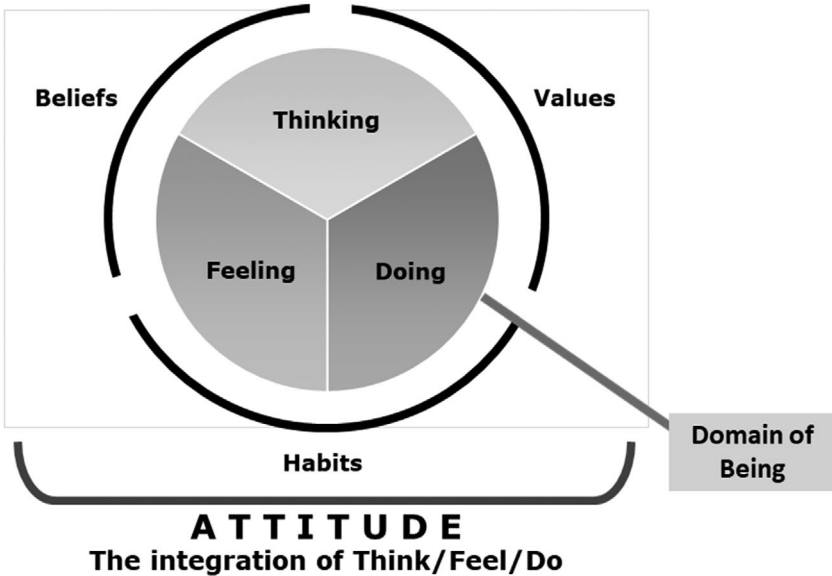


Figure 1. The integration of thinking, feeling, and doing (the domain of being) opens awareness of the experience of “being,” which is captured by the focus on “attitude.” See text for discussion of limitations of beliefs, values and habits in discussions of spirituality.

CBT AS A THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The scientific grounding of this framework begins with the psychological foundation of thoughts, feelings, and actions as the focus of CBT (Figure 1). This tripartite division of experience into thoughts, feelings, and actions can be considered a Western distinction that guides current efforts, though likely requires future adjustment for other cultures, for instance, Indian/Hindu writings describe “body, mind and intellect” as similar distinctions (Parthasarathy 2017). Despite the Western tripartite model being simplistic, many people have personal limitations in experientially distinguishing these separate categories of experience. Often, people believe and act as if they “are” what they feel, or “are” what they think, rather than realizing that feelings and thoughts occur automatically until conscious choice occurs. Conscious awareness of our human ability to “choose” our response to our feelings, thoughts and urges to act is necessary for the transition from the outside objective world into the awareness of “being” as described in the rest of this article, which continues with an assumption that these separate experiences have been distinguished by the reader.

Beyond thoughts, feelings and behaviors, discussions related to spirituality usually include an expanded focus on beliefs, values, and habits (Grassie 2019, 1–39; McCauley 2020); the interconnection between these

aspects is shown in Figure 1. However, discussions on this often only include two of the three domains, resulting in an inadequate representation of the topic. Beliefs may focus on emotionally laden thoughts often disconnected from action, as seen in hypocrisy. For example, someone with a stated belief in the equality of all people (“All God’s children are good”) may act in a way that shows inequality, or discrimination. Values are thoughtful behaviors generally with neutral emotional experience, until they are challenged, at which time they become very emotional. A person may value taking care of others before themselves—until it is pointed out how this has led to financial or emotional losses, and anger and sorrow arise. Habits are emotionally driven behaviors disconnected from thought, especially seen with harmful habits, such as in addictions and self-destructive behaviors.

Part of this inadequacy to capture full experience may be accounted for by the recognition of “implicit cognition” described as intuitive, automatic, instantaneous, unconscious, and nonlinguistic, and “explicit cognition” described as reflective, deliberative, time consuming, conscious, and articulate. The disconnect in some experiences of beliefs, values, and habits can be accounted for by lack of integration between the explicit and implicit part of beliefs, values, and habits, which may even be contradictory as identified in the Cognitive Science of Religion (McCauley 2020). As with the examples in the previous paragraph, an explicit “belief” in the equality of all people may have implicit “actions” showing inequality or discrimination. In addition, an explicitly stated “value” of taking care of others before themselves may have implicit resentments or regrets emotionally. This incomplete integration of experience in our language and awareness is often what leads discussions of naturalism, religion, and spirituality that focus on values, beliefs, and habits to be interminable with often contradictory and fruitless endings.

Therefore, integration of the three domains of thinking, feeling, and doing as the “Domain of Being” is mandatory to bring us into the ontological experience—the study of “being.” We enter this domain with a focus on “attitude” as an integrated experience of thoughts, feelings, and actions. An attitude of pessimism may include a thought of “life never works out,” a feeling of discouragement or hopelessness, and an action of withdrawal or avoidance. A “know it all” attitude may occur with a thought of “I know all of this,” a feeling of disappointment, possibly mixed with feeling superior, and an action of dismissal or withdrawal. Often, the focus on attitudes about religion, spirituality, and spiritual experiences lead discussion directly into the next section as self-worth and dignity are so closely connected with these experiences.

SELF-WORTH AND DIGNITY AS EXPERIENCES OF “BEING”

These exploratory efforts into spiritual experience serendipitously highlighted how experiences of “worth” and “dignity” are key to opening a spiritual core within persons and disclosing the structure of this unseen order. Worth (as self-worth) and dignity were operationalized as experiences of “being” that integrate all three domains of thinking, feeling, and doing (Table 1). Looking at the personal experience of self-worth, starting from the Webster’s Dictionary definition of “worth”:

Worth: that *quality* of a person or thing that lends importance, value, merit and that is measurable by the esteem in which the person or thing is held (Neufeldt 1997, emphasis added).

It is noted that the process described here explores “quality” of experience, which is what makes spirituality ineffable but nonetheless a real and powerful experience. This is demonstrated when we try to put the real quality of “soft” into words!

Self-worth (Table 1) is composed of self-confidence in the domain of thinking, self-esteem in the domain of feeling, and self-competence or self-efficacy in the domain of doing. Each of these has been defined and measured in the social psychological sciences, including self-worth (Bracken 1996).

Research shows that there is a developmental progression from self-competence/efficacy (age 1–2 years), progressing to self-esteem (3–4 years), self-confidence (5–8 years), and becoming integrated as self-worth (8–10 years) (Harter 1990). Additionally, this process reveals that shame is not just an emotion but an ontological reaction (affects all of being) to injury of self-worth resulting in being “unworthy,” which is what makes it have such a profound impact on all of “being.”

Operationalizing dignity (Table 1) in our work requires that it is not used as a noun, as something we have, but as an “expression of being,” requiring integration of all three domains:

Dignity: the *quality* of being worthy of esteem or honor (Neufeldt 1997, emphasis added).

Again, note that dignity is also a quality of “being” and the critical element distinguishing it is “honor.” Historically, philosophers (Descartes [1637] 2004) and scientists have exclusively honored the unique characteristic in the domain of thinking as “reason,” beginning with our ability to make conscious choices and with experience progressing socially to wisdom. In distinguishing characteristics of dignity, each domain includes three aspects—a defining characteristic (i.e., reason), its initial expression (i.e., choice), and its expansion to social expression (i.e., wisdom)—since dignity has both personal and social connectedness.

In the domain of feeling, we honor compassion (Dalai Lama 2011, 45), expressed uniquely from our incredible capacity for empathy due to language and mirror neuron functionality, and expanding to caring with its social expression of “justice.”

In the domain of doing, we honor courage, in its fundamental form being honesty with ourselves and with others determining the basis of social reality, and with its social expression of giving or generosity. Additionally, this process reveals that guilt is also not just an emotion, but an ontological reaction to injury of dignity related to a powerlessness in self-expression in each of its domains.

OPENING TO SPIRITUALITY

Empowering a person’s experience of self-worth and dignity leads to a spontaneous opening into new awareness as described by phenomenology (Winnicott 1953; Bauer 2018) and similar to Eastern religious traditions (Kaza 2018). This in turn results in opening to an immanent spiritual experience, an experience that occurs within a person as distinct from an alleged experience of something transcendent, which occurs apart from a person or even apart from the material or “natural” world.

To guide our efforts, the below definition of spirituality was drawn upon:

Spirituality: a *quality* of the relationship with whomever or whatever is most important (supreme) in life (Bjorklund 1983, emphasis added).

Spiritual experience may be ineffable, but as noted above, a *quality* of experience and spiritual experience is absolutely real! This definition also includes the idea of supreme, connecting our grounding of spirituality with the opening quote from William James and highlighting the aspect of relationship as necessary to spirituality. In exploring the quality of the relationship to the supreme, we heuristically used five characteristics (not exclusive, or exhaustive) from multiple sources that identify that quality:

- (1) Connectedness: A sense of connection with something greater outside of oneself or outside of our usual experience;
- (2) Aliveness/vitality: An energy and alertness not present before the experience;
- (3) Wholeness/integrity: A sense of wholeness that may be with the world and with ourselves, including our present life and past life experiences;
- (4) Peacefulness/serenity/joy/awe: An emotional response that may include peace or serenity, but it may include joy, or awe or other strong emotions depending on the situation; and

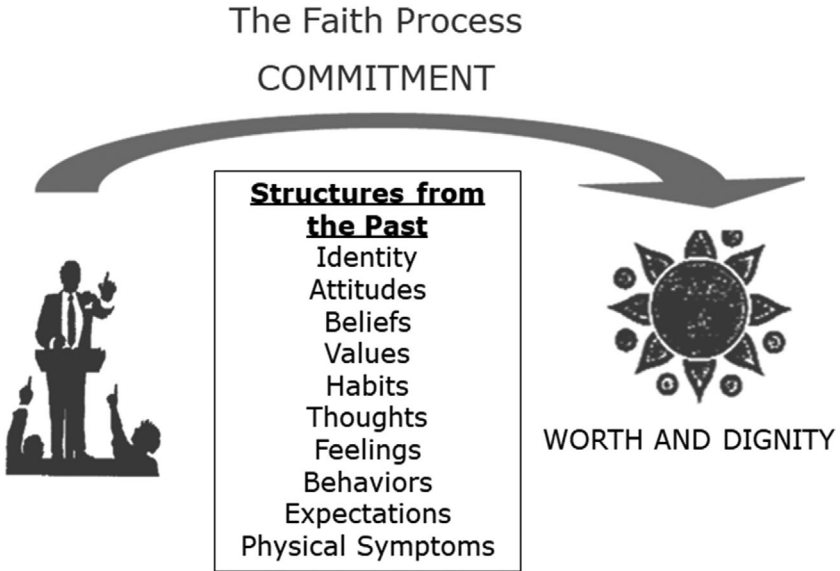


Figure 2. Making a commitment to the worth and dignity of every person creates increased awareness of blocks (aspects of past personal experiences) that prevent individuals from keeping this commitment. Processing these blocks increases a person’s self-worth and dignity as it opens the spiritual core.

- (5) Meaning or purpose: From the experience, a new sense of meaning or purpose for life is derived.

Opening to this awareness can be mild or gradual (i.e., an insight) or dramatic (i.e., a conversion experience) (James [1902] 1970; AA 2001), often depending on the nature of a person’s attitude to spirituality and personal experiences of worth and dignity. An example of the “conversion type” of experience is described in detail below:

I had a vivid realization of forgiveness and renewal of my nature. When arising from my hands I exclaimed, “Old things have passed away, all things have become new.” It was like entering another world, a new state of experience. Natural objects were glorified, my spiritual vision was so clarified that I saw beauty in every object in the universe, the woods were vocal with heavenly music; my soul exulted in the love of God, and I wanted everybody to share in my joy (James [1902] 1970).

THE FAITH PROCESS AND THREE KEYS TO SPIRITUAL OPENING

The opening of this spiritual core revealed relationships between spirituality and faith, as we identified a faith process shown in Figure 2. Faith is a word little explored in naturalism though a very relevant concern to explore (Dewey [1934] 1980; Wernicki 2018). This use does not refer to

faith in terms of a specific belief or with a specific object. An example of faith as an everyday experience occurs when we go to sleep at night having “faith” that we will wake up in the morning. The specific use of the term in this “Faith Process” is described by Dewey ([1934] 1980, 23): “For all endeavors for the better is moved by faith in what is possible, not by adherence to the actual.” Making and keeping a commitment to empower all persons’ worth and dignity is largely a possibility and only with discipline becomes an actuality. As persons make and practice personal commitment to the worth and dignity of every person (including themselves), spiritual opening occurs, but is limited by specific blocks related to their past. We understand these blocks to include identity, attitudes, beliefs, values, habits, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, expectations, and physical symptoms, which all require processing. This processing may be done in a therapeutic setting (e.g., mental health or psychiatry), a religious setting (Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, or Christian), a growth setting (Alcoholics Anonymous or SMART Recovery), or a learning setting (through work, academics, community education). As this occurs, there becomes a greater faith in self, others, and the world as the spiritual core opens further.

Processing these blocks to keep one’s commitment to the self-worth and dignity of every person requires personal transformation. For instance, examples of identity that block this commitment may include religious, professional, and/or ethnic modes of self-categorization or identification. How does an atheist keep their commitment to empower the self-worth and dignity of a fundamentalist Christian when they disagree so fundamentally?

The key question of processing then becomes “How do I disagree with this person and still empower their self-worth and dignity?” In most situations, disagreement is also expressed with disempowering by dismissing, discounting, discrediting, disparaging, or disrespecting among others. Disempowerment often lacks empathy/compassion, may lack true reason, and usually harms self-esteem, self-confidence, or self-competence depending on the action. To keep the stated commitment requires personal transformation of attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and/or beliefs, which leads to expansion of empathy/compassion, reason/wisdom, and often honesty and courage. This transformation of identity then fosters actions that empower self-esteem and general self-worth and dignity of both the person with the commitment and often may contribute to transformation of the other person.

A wonderful example of this is found in the movie “Gandhi” (1982), in which a Hindu man who tries to keep this commitment approaches Mahatma Gandhi. To paraphrase, he says “Bapu, how do I make amends for killing this Muslim boy’s father as he is now an orphan?” Gandhi’s thoughtful reply was “Take this child and raise him in your family as if he were your own child...and be sure to raise him as a Muslim.” This

solution clearly requires a transformation of his personal and religious identity as a Hindu as well as requiring an expansion of empathy/compassion, self-honesty and courage, and personal choices with reason. This transformation necessary to keep his commitment to the worth and dignity of every person would contribute to both his and the child's enhanced self-worth and dignity.

An example of professional identity may be as simple as a laborer and academic professor that do not associate with one another. Processing of past events that contributed to development of this reaction will require transformation of attitudes, beliefs, values, habits, and so on in order to see and keep the commitment to the self-worth and dignity of the other person. Specific attitudes that block this commitment may include attitudes related to authority, self-righteousness, powerlessness, self-pity, and others. Beliefs, values, and habits that block the commitment are often also connected with past religious/spiritual, personal, or professional experiences.

When sufficiently grounded and practiced in this process, participants in personal growth and spiritual exploration groups were asked to choose a project based solely on faith, having no idea or plan as to how to accomplish it. This process opens new intuitive problem-solving abilities and unpredictable breakthroughs occur. It demonstrated how the spiritual core is a source of unrecognized creativity. Signs of these breakthroughs may also include an increased experience of "synchronicity" (Jung 2000) or "meaningful coincidences" and a sense of increased "clarity" and understanding (AA 2001).

We identified three keys of practice (praxis) that facilitate opening to spirituality, one in each domain. In the domain of feeling, the key is open-heartedness: open to all feelings without judgment. In the domain of thinking, the key is open-mindedness: open to all thoughts and hypotheses without judgment. Without this key, people that demand "I can't understand this, so it is not true" or "I don't trust what I don't understand" will get stuck. They are unable to experience an openness to this spiritual core. We pose the question "What if there is knowledge that cannot be understood until it is experienced?" Reason must be suspended, and by intuition one must open themselves to the mystical part of this process where intuition is defined as "the direct knowing or learning of something without the conscious use of reasoning" (Neufeldt 1997) and mystical is defined as "attaining knowledge of spiritual truths through intuition, without the use of conscious reasoning" (Neufeldt 1997). In the domain of doing, the key is open-handedness: open to reaching out to get or give support without judgment of consequence. The illustration above about Gandhi demonstrates how open-mindedness, open-heartedness, and open-handedness were necessary for the transformation of the Hindu man.

Blocks to each of these openings come from life experiences of being open-hearted, open-minded, and open-handed, and being rejected,

ignored, abandoned, humiliated, and generally hurt. Past hurts have us become protective and guarded against opening these “keys.” Trauma, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which are reported to be experienced by 40% of the population, damages worth and dignity (Felitti 1998). For example, if a child is sexually assaulted, they may respond with a feeling of guilt or failure, or even being broken where all experiences of self-worth (self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-competence), and all experiences of dignity (making choices from reason, compassion for self and others, and courage) are severely damaged.

OPENING TO CREATIVE FORCES

Practicing the keys of open-heartedness, open-mindedness, and open-handedness expands the openness to spirituality and further opens experiences of what we call Creative Forces/Creative Openings, as indicated in Table 1. We call them “openings” as there is an increased opening of awareness and “forces” because the experience of them is forceful. When Love as a Creative Force (in the domain of feeling) appears in the group, it has been described as being like the Holy Spirit descending as noted in Christian writings and conversion experiences by William James. This is not love as a feeling, or love as a commitment like “I love you,” but it is like the Greek “*agape*,” the love of god, the divine, life, or love of self.

Truth, as a Creative Force (in the domain of thinking) is not absolute or dualistic truth like right/wrong, or good/bad, but like Gandhi’s *Satyagraha*, the Truth Force (Erikson 1989), as the visceral recognition when worth and dignity are damaged. This is the foundation of Gandhi’s movement for nonviolence. This recognition becomes activated in situations as we have recently seen in the United States with issues of violence and social injustice.

Finally, the Creative Force of Faith (in the domain of doing), as an action, not a belief—is to take that leap across a chasm, without proof—which results in an intense and sometimes ecstatic and thrilling spiritual opening.

THEORY RELATED TO BRAIN FUNCTION

An explanation of what may be happening with brain function helps to ground the framework in the physical and natural world. Paul McLean (1982) postulated that humans have a “triple brain” developed through evolution with a reptile part, including the brain stem, which operates for the survival of the animal; a mammalian part or limbic brain where emotions, memories, and decisions occur; and the neocortex or human part, which deals with reason and language. The reptilian part is generally instinctual and is essentially unconscious. As to the mammalian and human parts, Jonathan Evans (2013) describes two brain processing

<p><u>Type 1 process (intuitive)</u> Does not require working memory Autonomous</p> <p>Fast High capacity Parallel Nonconscious Biased responses Contextualized Automatic Associative Experience-based decision making Independent of cognitive ability</p> <p><u>Old mind</u> Evolved early Similar to animal cognition Implicit knowledge Basic emotions</p>	<p><u>Type 2 process (reflective)</u> Requires working memory Cognitive decoupling; mental simulation</p> <p>Slow Capacity limited Serial Conscious Normative responses Abstract Controlled Rule-based Consequential decision making Correlated with cognitive ability</p> <p><u>New mind</u> Evolved late Distinctively human Explicit knowledge Complex emotions</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Evans & Stanovich, 2013</p>
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Figure 3. Dual process theory of cognition. Fast Type 1 processing generates intuitive default responses on which subsequent reflective Type 2 processing may or may not intervene.

systems (Figure 3) occurring simultaneously, with the newer, slower, linear, logical, and possibly cortical system defaulting to the older, faster, nonlinear, associative, possibly limbic system. Evans (2013) suggested that the cortical system may be unaware of actions, including decisions of the mammalian part.

This theory of brain function can be explained more clearly with an example of trauma, as shown in Figure 4. If we consider an assault of a young person, the mammalian brain reacts with emotions, stores memories, and makes a decision, such as “it’s my fault,” or “I am broken or worthless,” with no awareness of the cortex. Decisions made by this mammalian part are often not logically rational but associative, using primitive processing. This “implicit” decision then controls life and actions with the cortex often unaware of why this is. The cortex and conscious “explicit” part of the brain may even invent rationalized explanations as demonstrated by split-brain experiments (Gazzaniga 2018). The cortex is always trying to “calm” or “fix” the emotions and impulses from these memories, and uses behaviors and habits including drugs, alcohol, desire for material possessions, control, power, and so on, to do so. The cortical response of “I know I should not do this, but I feel compelled/forced to do it” illustrates the human condition of this dual processing, and often is a typical response with addictions.

In the clinical setting, as well as through personal growth experiences, participants will use mindfulness meditation to quiet the judgment of the cortex, and to allow recall of the memories and feelings of the past. Acceptance of these feelings and memories, without judgment, produces a

Example – Trauma / Addiction

Emotions
Memories
Decisions



1. Trauma event occurs
2. Limbic brain reacts fast, makes decision – “I am a failure.”
4. Limbic decisions control actions based on “I am a failure.”

Language
Reasoning
Judgement



3. Cortex has no awareness of this decision
5. Cortex has no awareness of this control.
6. Cortex tries to adapt to these decisions/feelings by using drugs/behaviors

Figure 4. Example of trauma/addiction. The emotions and decisions made by the mammalian brain with trauma take place without awareness of the cortex. As described in the text, the cortex/conscious brain will attempt to manage or respond to these in ways that may lead to addiction.

rapid extinction of hurt and suffering, and with self-compassion and forgiveness empowers self-worth and dignity, opening to a new awareness and enhanced spiritual experience. A powerful experience of gratitude is often a sign that this has occurred.

SPECULATIVE THEORY RELATED TO EVOLUTION

The fact that humans have a capacity to experience self-worth and dignity as described, and the clear relationship with spirituality, healing, and human happiness suggests there is an evolutionary explanation. After all, it would make more logical sense for humans to be evolved as rational automatons as on Vulcan in the *Star Trek* series. The theory of evolution states that humans evolved from an “animal core,” and in this adaptation must be an explanation that is somehow related to survival.

David Sloan Wilson, in *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society* (2002), argues that religion developed in relation to the evolutionary process of multilevel selection. He counters multiple evolutionary theories of religion and advocates religious groups as evolutionarily adaptive units. He emphasizes that the group's moral system was supported by religious imagery, symbolism, and regulated behavior. Much of his argument is based on religion leading groups to function as specific adaptive

units of morality—indicating that religions evolved to help groups of individuals function as cohesive and adaptive units.

More recently, current theory suggests that religious capacity in humans evolved around 150,000–200,000 years ago (Rappaport and Corbally 2018). In their work, Rappaport and Corbally (2018) suggest that this evolution is based on the association of religious capacity with compassion and morality, and the necessity for complex cognitive development to be present for this to occur. Even though their theory describes compassion beginning with a feeling for another's suffering and motivation to relieve it, the theoretical focus is on this requiring two cognitive steps—some type of perception and some wellspring of motivation. The conclusion is that compassion, and thus religious capacity, could not be present until the cognitive capacity for decision-making and cognitive interpretation were also present. Both Wilson and Rappaport's theories require that a significant level of cognitive capacity was required for religious capacity or function to develop. However, I believe that a different approach must be taken.

Self-worth, dignity, and spiritual experience occur at very deep emotional levels, often without cognitive awareness or unavailable to cognitive interpretation. Looking for a cognitive explanation for spiritual experience appears to be “putting the cart before the horse,” so to speak. A more likely explanation begins with primitive emotional experience of worth and dignity occurring, with conscious cognitive understanding coming later. Support for this is presented by Boehm (2012), suggesting that a rudimentary presence of morality with responses of shame (related to self-worth), pride (related to dignity), and virtue may have been present 250,000 years ago.

An explanation for the source of this spiritual core was first proposed by Haidt (2012). He refers to a period of time that was likely pre-homo sapiens and habilis, and pre-language, between 100,000 and 1 million years ago. At this time, hominids were living within small groups of maybe 100–150 among severe survival pressures from the weather, predators, disease, and accidents. Haidt describes one point in pre-history that may have occurred during a period of a genetic “bottleneck” where it is suggested that 90% of humanity died, or may have involved a single small band of hominids separated from other groups. Haidt suggests that multilevel selection occurred, whereby survival was not just about the fittest individual, but the fittest group as previously supported by Wilson. He goes on to further suggest that in the group that survived, members had defined roles like in a beehive. Haidt describes what he labels an evolutionary “hive switch” that could occur under such severe conditions. A mindset of “one for all, and all for one” could be bred through a group adapting to these conditions, with the ability to lessen self-interest in favor of group interests and survival. Imagining a similar process at the evolutionary level of hominids, a powerful emotional connectedness and belonging, or even a rudimentary “empathy” could bind all, similar to the connectedness

leading to the aggressive response of members of a beehive to injury of one of their members, even from a significant distance. For members of the hominid group, knowing their individual role within the group may have provided a sense of security and peacefulness (with no conflicts); vitality and maybe even pleasure, as rudimentary actions and sentiments of “respect,” “attachment/affection,” and “protection/loyalty” toward others would prevail. Add to this a sense of directed purpose of the group and you have the five characteristics identified with what we call spiritual experience. Speculation is that evolution socially selected the characteristic of “All for one and one for all,” and neurologically and hormonally built it in as the characteristics of spiritual experience.

Haidt supports this with an example from an experiment of breeding hens for their egg count (Muir 1996); breeding hens individually for greater egg production leads also to more aggression, to the extreme of cannibalism. However, an experimental breeder who bred small henhouses of 12 hens for their collective egg count, rather than the individual count, observed that in three generations aggression plummeted; in six generations the death rate reduced from 67% to 8%, and eggs per hen increased from 91 to 237 (partly due to a longer life). Bred into these hens in a short period of time was, metaphorically, “All for one and one for all.”

It is proposed that while “All for one and one for all” was wired in socially in the hominid group, the personal experience that was also being bred, was the capacity for self-worth and dignity. With such survival pressures, those hominids whose rudimentary form of self-confidence, self-esteem, or self-competence was weak would make mistakes, become hurt, be shunned, abandoned, and die. Similarly, those who did not make choices from reason, who were lacking in compassion for others in the group, or who failed to act with courage never survived. Self-worth and dignity, as they have been operationalized here, had extreme survival value. This hypothesis would support researchers in the Cognitive Science of Religion that suggest that religious sensibilities are “by-products” of some other adaptive function (McCauley 2020). In this case, the spiritual connectedness and development of capacity for experiencing worth and dignity were the result of evolution-selected altruism for survival.

A possible explanation for how we have lost the connection to this group experience is that at some subsequent point of language development and global dispersion, the human cortex became more focused on social judgment for survival. Human ancestors became dominated by the social survival actions of the cortex and focused on judgment of external things, and relationships of things in order that we could adjust to changing social events including intergroup or tribal conflicts. This cortical dominance created a dualistic thinking pattern related to judgments of good/bad, and right/wrong, whereas the mammalian thinking pattern which was associational may be considered nondualistic. Humans

metaphorically lost the “Garden of Eden.” So what is postulated now is that when self-worth and dignity as integrated experiences of being are empowered to a certain degree, we automatically open old connections to the spiritual experience that is still neurologically embedded. This is referred to as our spiritual core that is part of the FOS that has been described. This explanation would also be consistent with the description of the mammalian cortex dual processing system postulated by Evans (2008) (Figure 3) and with responses and reactions that have been personally observed in the clinical setting. The replication of these findings and the clinical applicability and predictability that have supported this theory await further scientific investigation.

DISCUSSION OF NATURALISM

Discussion will now relate the spiritual core and the processes described to various aspects of naturalism and will suggest ways in which the FOS may provide answers or direction to some of the efforts in naturalism, especially regarding religious naturalism.

As noted previously, naturalism is the position that in exploring and understanding reality, nature is all that exists, and there are no supernatural entities. The limiting authority is considered to be logical reasoning with scientific explanations using the scientific method (Drees 2018). Despite the focus of naturalism appearing to be clear, there are debates that include distinctions between science-inspired, methodological, ontological, philosophical, metaphysical, religious, ecstatic, and ecological naturalism, which have all been addressed in a recent volume, including the various positions and critiques (Crosby and Stone 2018). Of particular note are the introductory chapters by Stone (2018) and Drees (2018) that clearly summarize the current status of naturalism.

The FOS is grounded in naturalism; it explores the “human spirit” and “soul” as a certain depth of human experience with no nonnatural or supernatural entities involved. The FOS is a phenomenologically revealed process founded on observation with logical reasoning and is rooted in the science of CBT. Though it is grounded in naturalism, the FOS does not mandate closure on discussion of the supernatural, as it provides no evidence to prove or disprove the existence of anything supernatural. As such, the FOS is not itself identified as a “naturalism” but is an explanation and process that can be accommodated by naturalism as well as other religious traditions. It is recognized that in some discussions within religious naturalism, the nature of “supernatural,” or the nature of “God” becomes a question of definition (Stone 2017; Szocik 2020) yet to be determined.

Of particular note, philosophical, metaphysical, and ontological perspectives of naturalism have certain implications, specifically in professional and academic settings. A chapter by Drees (2018) reminds

us and clearly outlines the limits to these concerns in neutral, open-minded, and necessary academic discussion. The role that the FOS has to contribute to these discussions has yet to be identified and will not be pursued at this time. However, this first introduction hopes to begin those discussions as it opens new avenues of understanding in each of these areas.

RELIGIOUS NATURALISM

Of particular relevance to this discussion, specifically in a nonsupernatural setting, is the area of “religious naturalism” that raises interest in “spirituality.” Scientist and geneticist Ursula Goodenough in *Sacred Depths of Nature* (1998) was an early proponent of religious naturalism. She poetically expresses that it begins with a foundation of science and nature that elicits religious-type experiences of gratitude (that we exist at all) and reverence (for how life works) “as mystery generates wonder, and wonder generates awe ... with a sacredness of life and self” (13). She envisions a “planetary ethic, an ethic that would make no claim to supplant existing traditions but would seek to coexist with them” (xvi). She highlights an awareness with a sense of immanence having a mystical quality of our deeper “spirit” that opens to beauty, love, and compassion, with noble aspects.

Without specifically describing it, she presaged many aspects of the FOS. The FOS describes an experiential opening to a “spiritual core” through awareness of personal life experiences. When these experiences are processed as described, including the use of “intuition,” a mystical-like experience may occur (see section “The Faith Process and Three Keys to Spiritual Opening”) with qualities similar to what is often identified with “religious” and “spiritual” references (see section “Opening to Spirituality”)—connectedness, aliveness/vitality, wholeness/integrity, emotions of peace/serenity/awe/wonder, and purpose/meaning. This spiritual core opens with expanded experiences of self-worth and dignity, love, compassion, wisdom, courage, creativity, clarity of thinking, generosity, gratitude, and faith as well as expanded experiences of the joy, awe, wonder, grandeur, beauty, and mystery of the natural world, integrated with our personal life experiences.

Additionally, the FOS addresses some of the major dichotomies that are present within naturalism and other disciplines, which are listed below. These are further explored in the subsequent sections of this article.

- Religion versus spirituality;
- Sacred versus secular;
- Transcendent versus immanent; and
- Ethics and morality.

RELIGION VERSUS SPIRITUALITY

Many discussions on this subject begin with Pargament et al.'s (2017) definition of religion as “a substantive set of beliefs, practices, experiences, and relationships directed toward a divine being” or power often occurring within the context of established institutions that are designed to facilitate spirituality and the sacred. This can be compared with his definition of spirituality as “the search for the sacred”—which refers to attributes that are often associated with the divine, God, and transcendent reality.

The FOS is not associated with any specific religion or religious institution, but may best be grounded in the root word “*religare*” from the Latin “to bind up” or make meaning of the natural world as Goodenough notes, or as William James used the term “religious” in the opening quote. The FOS approach to spirituality occurs within the natural world providing no evidence for or against understanding the divine, transcendent reality, or “God” as related to anything supernatural. Therefore, descriptions in the FOS, as in most religious naturalism, refer to “attributes” of experience that are common to usual experiences associated with the divine, transcendent reality and God as presented earlier by Goodenough. Very specifically, this is *not* the spirituality as noted by Szocik (2020) in his “Critical Remarks on the Cognitive Science of Religion,” whereby he relegates spirituality to “belief in spirits or disembodied persons.”

SACRED VERSUS SECULAR

As described, spirituality is a secular experience grounded in secular categories of experiences of thinking, feeling and doing, and self-worth and dignity. This explains why the characteristic of ineffability is often applied to spiritual experiences, where “qualities” of experience are involved, as it is common to have a difficulty in putting qualities into words, while they are nonetheless real. As described above, the opening to the spiritual core is often accompanied with feelings and ideas considered “numinous”—“having a deep spiritual/religious quality or connection” (Cambridge Dictionary). Though unexplained, this experience of opening is often “felt” or “believed” to have some specific “noetic” significance for personal salvation, redemption or transformation that is often related to meaning or purpose in life. It is believed that this noetically felt experience is a fundamental characteristic of this spiritual core.

The difference between identifying the opening of this spiritual core as a secular experience or a religious experience is that religions have honored and elevated these secular experiences and called them “sacred.” These experiences of “connection” with some “higher power” may then be enhanced with chanting, song, dance, or invocation for various purposes. The FOS challenges us to redefine secular and sacred with the relational factor being honor, which is the core of dignity—honoring the worth that

is uniquely human in each domain of thinking, feeling and doing! Pursuing this further may expand to honoring the entire secular world and recognizing it all as sacred as extensively promoted by Stone (2017) in *Sacred Nature*, as well as in other areas, such as deep pantheism (Corrington 2018), indigenous practices including shamanism, ecological movements (Stone 2017), ecospirituality (Sponsel 2018), and the Psyche-Gaia conjecture (Fellows 2019). The extension of secularity into the sacred may comprehensively be seen within the concept of Gaia—the idea that the earth became a new “entity” in the universe when it created “life,” and that it has continued further to create humanity and “consciousness.” This perspective calls into discussion a statement by Stone (2018, 10) that belief in “an entity surpassable by none except itself is not naturalist.” If Gaia is perceived as a self-correcting and self-creative entity, it is actually supreme and not surpassable by anything yet known in the universe! This would be so, even if all of it is unplanned and unintentional such as through “emergence,” as described by Goodenough (1998) and defined by Goldstein (1999) as “the arising of novel and coherent structures, patterns and properties during the process of self-organization in complex systems.”

It is the focus of the FOS on dignity as honoring the worth that is uniquely human that provides a unifying bridge between the strictly secular, and the exclusively sacred perspectives that have been so historically divisive. The power of this is culturally seen when secular expressions of nationalism take on almost sacred or religious significance as the “supreme” is expressed by honoring specific nationalistic symbols, beliefs, music, and rituals.

Additionally, practices of religions including chant, song, art, dance, and ritual identify these experiences as “artistic” and “aesthetic” expressions of life, which honor the awe, wonder, splendor, and beauty of life. This provides clear links of spirituality with the “secular” expressions of art, aesthetics, and beauty. A little known integration of this is the art of Hilma af Klint (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hilma_af_Klint), an early abstract artist, whose art combined ideas new to science at the time, including atomic theory, development, evolution, and spirituality influenced by the Theosophical Society.

Even within the sacred designation, a remaining and differing part of *religion versus spiritual* occurs. As religions may turn these experiences and practices into specific beliefs, they become more of a reasoned focus and may even be institutionalized into “creeds.” It could be speculated that this may have occurred as the spiritual core was variously “opened” or “discovered” through time by founders of specific religions (i.e., Buddha, Lao Tzu, Abraham, Jesus, Mohammed, and so on) often described as “revealed knowledge.” However, in many cases the resultant religious development focused on beliefs and creeds as the dominant theme necessary for following that religion, as the actual spiritual experiences were less emphasized.

In some religious traditions, these have been resurfaced by mystical factions such as Sufism, Kabbalah, and the Gnostics.

Beyond the belief in the natural world, the FOS has no specific beliefs or creeds associated and it appears that it may be part of a fundamental, mystical-like core of most religious traditions as described by Teasdale (2001). In an expansive form, it can even be seen as an expression of the “all creative abyss” to paraphrase a term written by Brian Swimme (2019) connecting it with the New Cosmology. It is therefore neutral for particular use in any secular or religious settings.

TRANSCENDENT VERSUS IMMANENT

The usual meaning of “transcendent” is related to supernatural or “beyond the natural laws.” This is contrasted with “immanence” where divinity or God is believed to be fully present in the physical world and thus accessible to people in various ways including within their own being.

Note that this is different in the philosophical field of phenomenology where “transcendent” is that which transcends our own consciousness, or that which is objective, rather than only a phenomenon of consciousness, as in Plato’s ideal forms, or in mathematics (Sardella 2016).

The spiritual core described within the FOS is an immanent experience as it is within our personal experience, though it is opened in relationship beyond the person in connection with other people, ideas, or nature. The definition in the Cambridge Dictionary of transcendence as “experience that goes past normal limits” identifies what is being described in the FOS as a transcendent experience, though not supernatural. It is an awareness or experience that transcends or “goes beyond” a prior form or state of oneself and has “transcendent” qualities that appear to be related to enhanced experience of self-worth and dignity resulting from open-mindedness, open-heartedness, and open-handedness. This transcendence expands further with experiences of the Creative Forces of Love (as agape), Truth (as Satyagraha-Truth Force), and Faith (as an action and not a belief), and has the qualities of mystical experience that may be thought of as a particularly advanced state of self-transcendence or self-awareness as noted by Frankl (2006), Maslow (1973), Cloninger (2007), and Bauer (2018). It is also similar to the transcendent experiences of Eastern religious traditions (Sardella 2016).

Of particular note, the extent of and characteristics of the spiritual core are yet unexplored. In future exploration, it may provide knowledge for some of the ongoing debates (Stone 2018) around the relationship of spiritual experience with materialism, process theology, the nature of “god” or the “divine,” pantheism, issues of design, yet unknown “energies,” and its role in public policy including ethics and justice. The power of the “Faith Process” as described has also yet to be explored. Some experience suggests

it may have abilities bordering on “miraculous” if a miracle is “an unusual and mysterious event that is thought to have been caused by a god because it does not follow the known laws of nature” (Cambridge Dictionary). The unique “laws” of the limbic system/mammalian brain have yet to be categorized by the FOS beyond the expanded understanding of the ontological reactions of “shame” and “guilt” as noted. The practical capacity of the Faith Process to open creative solutions where there was previously no imagined solution has been shown to be quite remarkable in some of our personal growth groups.

ECSTATIC NATURALISM

Many aspects of the FOS align very well with Corrington’s “ecstatic naturalism,” placing his approach to naturalism on even stronger scientific and naturalistic grounding. The “transcendent” experience of the FOS has been seen to include reactions that would qualify as ecstasy, opening an essential core of happiness with extreme emotional elements of joy, love, and even bliss. It also supports Corrington’s deeper psychological connections of ecstatic naturalism, as the opening of the spiritual core is part of his “selving” process which we would describe as enhancing self-worth including self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-competence/efficacy. The selving process and the FOS both involve increased self-awareness of elements characteristic of the Freudian unconscious or the Jungian archetypes and collective unconscious that are revealed. There is also part of the FOS experience reminiscent of Jung’s “shadow,” as shown by one of our group members with an instance of delusional paranoia occurring with the opening of this spiritual core that appeared to be related to childhood experiences of being raised in the family of a Holocaust survivor.

The FOS can even address a part of ecstatic naturalism as Corrington makes reference to the Emersonian transcendental naturalism and laments the loss of the “triumphal aspects of salvation” or glory as pursued by Emerson (Corrington 2016, 100). The FOS can overcome this loss as the spiritual core is explored; the experiences of some individuals have reported a triumphal releasing of ecstatic feelings including majesty and glory, grandeur and splendor, grandiosity, energy, and aliveness, clarity, loss of self, and connection with the “divine” associated with personal discovery and integration of a new meaning and purpose for their life. For some participants, in practicing this model, they have discovered their “mission” related to integration of life experiences in their exploration of self-worth and dignity. The further exploration of this process and the FOS can potentially recapture the Emersonian “salvation” within naturalistic reality-centered life experiences!

ETHICS AND MORALITY

Ethics and morality are often seen as critical and inseparable parts of religion. Some authors question how can there be ethics and morality without god or religion, being countered with *Ethics Without God* (Nielsen 1990), describing *God with Two O's* (Dobrin 1993), *The Science of Good and Evil* (Schermer 2006), *Good without God* (Epstein 2009), and *The Moral Landscape* (Harris 2010).

An early form of “ethical naturalism” was found in the ethical humanist movement with the *Humanist Manifestos* (1973), Kurtz (1973), the American Humanist Association and the International Humanist and Ethical Union, who were all more focused on humanity than nature. There have also been religious organizations with an ethical foundation such as Ethical Culture (<https://aeu.org>), Unitarian Universalism (<https://www.uua.org>), Baha'i (<https://www.bahai.us>), Brahma Kumaris (<https://www.brahmakumaris.org>), and even Religious Humanism (<https://religioushumanism.org>). All of these have struggled with the relationship of ethics and morality to religion and spirituality.

A problem with ethics and morality is “whose ethics do you use?” Do you follow Descartes, who said “reason” is the way, or the Dalai Lama, who today says “compassion” is the way, Jesus who said “love” is the way, Judaism and Islam who say duty and law is the way, or the Sikhs who say generosity is the way? Or do we simply follow some form of the simple but limited universal Golden Rule “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you?” The reference to this being limited is noted as we have seen limited forms of this that degenerate into “I’ll scratch your back if you’ll scratch mine” with unethical results.

Academically, the study of ethics or moral philosophy is its own branch of philosophy. In Western civilization, it has an extensive history coming from the Greek tradition including Aristotle (1962), through St. Augustine, utilitarianism with Mill ([1861] 1987), the categorical imperative of Kant ([1785] 1959), Nietzsche ([1886] 1966), and Heidegger ([1927] 2010), pragmatics of Dewey ([1920] 1957) and James ([1907] 1981), moral development of Kohlberg (1981), John Rawls’ “ethics as justice” (Rawls 1971) countered with the “ethics as caring” of Carol Gilligan (1982), and Nel Noddings (1984), postmodern ethics of Richard Rorty (1982), and applied ethics for specific settings such as bioethics, business, machine robotics, military ethics, and so on.

As future writings will address the FOS relationships to these multiple areas of ethical pursuits, for this discussion, the focus is on ethical naturalism. Ethical naturalism is defined as “moral terms, concepts, or properties are ultimately definable in terms of facts about the natural world, including facts about human beings, human nature, and human societies” (Encyclopedia Britannica). A major premise as described by Mill’s ([1861] 1987)

version of utilitarianism, is that an action is morally right to the extent that it tends to produce happiness (or pleasure, broadly construed) and morally wrong to the extent that it fails to produce happiness or tends to produce unhappiness (or pain, broadly construed). The extension to the FOS may be that an action is morally right to the extent that it tends to empower self-worth and dignity, and morally wrong to the extent that it fails to empower, or even harms, self-worth and dignity.

The major objection to postulating any specific ethical foundation is the “naturalistic fallacy” or “is-ought” question, as per Hume ([1777] 2010) which states that just because something “is” doesn’t necessarily mean that it “ought” to be. This is also stated another way by G. E. Moore (1903). His “open-question argument” claims that any attempt to identify morality with some set of observable, natural properties will always be liable to an open question, and that if this is true, then moral facts cannot be reduced to natural properties and that therefore ethical naturalism is false.

Disagreements about how to address this conundrum are extensive and will not be reviewed here. However, a clearer understanding of this dilemma may be directly related to the spiritual core and thinking associated with it. The objections to the is-ought argument seem to relate to a limitation of our dualistic thinking with judgment of things as being right/wrong or good/bad that has dominated our thinking about moral and ethical judgment. An example of the limits may assist, for instance, if evolution leads to development of a characteristic (i.e., humans have two arms) then humans should have two arms. This is a typically, and generally non-arguable, acceptable conclusion of is-ought. This is *not* a moral or “ethical judgment” of right or wrong but a “natural judgment” of how things should be. A non-dualistic thinking process would use this natural judgment as evaluative such as good/better, or instrumental, rather than the dualistic judgment of good/bad or right/wrong, and the is-ought fallacy is no longer a fallacy. Opening of the spiritual core moves a person into these non-dualistic thinking processes about experience.

Therefore, if opening our spiritual core is the source of healing, happiness, and optimal function (which is yet to be proven), then we “ought” to open our spiritual core—not as a moral, right or wrong absolute, but as a natural judgment and expression of our evolutionary heritage. The “is-ought fallacy” is an artifact of our fundamental dualistic thinking that limits our judgment and skews our perspective in making decisions about ethics and morality.

If this is concluded, then the FOS, which identifies the results of opening this spiritual core to be increased self-worth and dignity, should be naturally pursued or valued, providing a specific ethical and moral framework. It highlights the core values of self-worth as self-confidence, self-esteem, self-competence/efficacy, and dignity with all of its parts of choice/reason/wisdom, empathy/compassion/caring-justice, and

honesty/courage/giving-generosity. The implication is that these should all be identified as core values that should be empowered in our culture. Also the opening of the creative forces of Love (agape), Truth (truth-force), and Faith (as an action not a belief) should be supported in society. This would be the foundation for an ethics of naturalism. As demonstrated in the FOS, all of these can be operationalized into concrete actions and applications. The opportunity is that this could provide common values and goals that could be acceptable to both the secular world and almost all religions, and provide a unity of efforts worldwide. This is already supported worldwide by the principles of the United Nations Charter, which “reaffirm faith . . . in the dignity and worth of the human person” (<https://www.un.org/>).

SUMMARY

In summary, this implicit, out of awareness, spiritual core is part of our brain function that developed through evolution for survival as a group, and reconnects with our rational mind when self-worth and dignity are recovered from personal injuries throughout life. The reconnection opens a person to a new awareness with the spiritual experience of connectedness, aliveness, wholeness, emotions that are often peaceful or serene, and a new sense of meaning and purpose. Though coming out of a science-based foundation and secular experience, this new sense of self opens an individual to the world in a manner consistent with what has been called “religious” and “sacred” for millennia. The recognition and scientific exploration of this experience can provide a profound opportunity for science and religion to join together. In the words of Willem Drees (1998): “Even when religion is explained, if ever, it will not thereby be eliminated even though it will have to change.” The reverse can also be claimed that when the secular world recognizes the foundation of this spiritual core and spiritual experience, it will have to change, even to the extreme possibility that honoring all life experience is sacred and connected, and therefore religious. With this in mind, it is the future of naturalism to join with all religions and secular institutions to work together for the five Rs:

- (1) Reform what is not consistent with reality and knowledge.
- (2) Replace what is not working for human worth and dignity.
- (3) Reject what is harmful for human worth and dignity.
- (4) Rejuvenate life for all with a faith firmly grounded in science and secured in reality; a faith that when experienced is unshakeable, is healing, and is a source of human happiness.
- (5) Rejoice in the history, traditions, beauty, grace, and power from all religious traditions as we align ourselves with the unseen order for the supreme good of all beings with whom we share this Earth.

“There are no sacred and unsacred places; there are only sacred and desecrated places. My belief is that the world and our place in it are conditional gifts.”

Wendell Berry, American naturalist and poet

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