THE INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION AND "MORALIZATION" OF
APPEARANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT VALUES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON
CHILDREN’S CONTINGENCIES OF SELF-WORTH

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Timothy J. Strauman, Ph.D.

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience
in the Graduate School of Duke University

2008
ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

Children’s internalization of parental values is differentially influenced by discipline and parent-child relationship quality. Beyond simply affecting values, parents can influence the development of underlying belief structures children use to make sense of behaviors and attributes. Parental values might lead children to experience domains as differentially important and then use this structure when building and judging the content of their self-concept. The intergenerational transmission of values may therefore also differentially influence appraisals of the self. Crocker and colleagues (e.g. Crocker, Sommers, & Luhtanen, 2002) present a model of self-esteem that emphasizes “contingencies of self-worth”, which are domains on which individuals stake self-esteem. Although the existence of contingencies of self-worth (CSW) has been supported, their origin has not been addressed. This dissertation is a preliminary investigation into the origins of CSW. It is proposed that early adolescents’ CSW will reflect parents’ values in domains that carry a ‘moral’ weight due to parental socialization. The domains of physical appearance and academic achievements were of particular interest. Participants were 127 early adolescents (51% female) and their parents (102 mothers, 62 fathers) recruited from three populations in an effort to sample individuals for whom appearance and academics are differentially salient. Youth and parents each completed questionnaires addressing self-concept/self-esteem, CSW, parenting style, parent-child relationship, and domain-specific beliefs and behaviors. Results indicated that more negative ratings of transgressions in traditionally
moral domains (kindness and honesty) as well as the non-traditional domain of academics were associated with higher ratings for these domains on the CSW. Parental discipline moderated the association between parents’ and adolescents’ ratings of transgressions in kindness, honesty, and academics, and parenting style and parent-child relationship quality moderated the association between parents’ domain values and adolescents’ domain ratings on the CSW. This suggests that the internalization of moral standards influences developing self-structure and that a domain that is not traditionally considered ‘moral’ can be raised to a ‘moral’ level. The results also indicate that parental socialization influences the importance adolescents’ place on given domains when evaluating self worth and developmental theories regarding socialization of traditional values can also be used to understand the transmission of non-traditional values.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family.

It is dedicated to the Tanskis, Markiewicz, and Polanichkas.

It is offered in memory of my grandparents, great-aunts, and great-uncles – a generation that worked harder, and sacrificed more, so that I would never have to do the same.

It is dedicated to my mother, father, aunts, and uncles whose transmitted values, hopes, and dreams helped guide me to this point. It is dedicated to my sister, Dana, and my “brother”, Steve, who have seen me through good and bad.

It is dedicated to my husband, Richard, and my new family of Quinlans, Manderinos, and Sheridans, who joined the party late, but have been no less the cheerleaders.

Without the love, encouragement, and support of my family, none of this would have been possible.

Thank you.
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# LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>B&amp;G</td>
<td>Boys’ and Girls’ Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRPR</td>
<td>Child Rearing Practices Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>Contingencies of Self-Worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>Camp Timber Creek</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>not statistically significant</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEQ</td>
<td>Parental Environment Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>RR</td>
<td>Roanoke Rapids School System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socioeconomic Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIP</td>
<td>Talent Identification Program</td>
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INTRODUCTION

It is known that children may adopt views, values, and beliefs similar to their parents’, and it is generally argued that parental use of specific discipline techniques and the warmth of the parent-child relationship differentially affect a child’s internalization of these views and values (Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000). However, beyond simply affecting a child’s values, parents can influence the development of underlying cognitive belief structures children use to make sense of the behaviors and attributes of themselves and others. These belief structures lead a person to evaluate behavior, and these evaluations can have far reaching implications for the amount of effort a child will exert within certain domains as well as his or her coping strategy when faced with “failure”. Parental beliefs might also lead children to experience and construct dimensions as differentially important and then use this structure when building and judging the content of their self-concept. It is likely that children reason about behavior differently when it relates to domains their parents view as important and they have also internalized as significant. This intergenerational transmission of individual values may therefore also differentially influence appraisals of the self in various domains, which has consequences both internally and socially.

In their social psychology research, Crocker and colleagues (e.g. Crocker, Sommers, & Luhtanen, 2002; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001) present a model of global self-esteem that emphasizes “contingencies of self-worth”, which are domains or categories of
outcomes on which an individual has staked his or her self-esteem; the individual’s view of his or her value depends on perceived success or adherence to standards in that domain. Central to this model is the contention that people differ in the contingencies on which they base their self-esteem and an individual may hold multiple contingencies in varying degrees. These domains are hierarchically organized and the more strongly a person’s self-worth is contingent on particular domains the more chronically accessible and easily activated those contingencies are likely to be. It is believed that these contingencies develop over time in response to many forms of socialization, and these contingencies, in turn, influence goals and self-standards and motivate behaviors in an effort to ensure “success”. People will strive to reach goals linked to self-worth and will react particularly badly when their efforts fail. Although the existence of contingencies of self-worth has been supported, the origins of these contingencies have yet to be addressed. Crocker and her colleagues specifically point to parent-child interactions as well as cultural norms and observational learning as modes of social influence that potentially impact the development of contingencies of self-worth. While they believe that many contingencies probably have their root in childhood experiences (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001), they have not directly studied this process. This dissertation is a preliminary investigation into the origins of contingent self-worth. I propose that if children perceive parents’ hierarchical construction of domain-specific values and accept this structure of importance it will be built into their developing notions of the self and their internalized hierarchy of
contingent domains. If this is the case, a child’s contingencies of self-worth should reflect parental values, concerns, and behaviors related to specific domains.

What may be particularly important for the development of contingencies are the differences in how specific domains are socialized by parents. Certain domains of action may essentially become “morally” loaded for children when parents attach strong emotion to violations or exemplifications in that domain. Although there are inherent categories of values and morals that are universal (e.g. beneficence, honesty, the “Golden Rule”), a broader view of values indicates that they are present whenever people judge some ways of acting, thinking, or feeling as more desirable, more worthwhile, or more important than others. Beyond simply domains of social convention, domain-specific, instrumental behaviors and attributes such as appearance and achievement can be thought to be “values”, broadly defined. These values may then be raised to a “moral” standard through the specific focus of parents and related parenting behaviors; and, once elevated, can profoundly affect an individual’s self-concept and self-esteem. In domains involving very strongly socialized values—values that have become “morals”—judgments proceed rather automatically, often on the basis of severity of outcomes. When domain-specific norms are particularly constraining, they mandate that some end states are preferred regardless of the intentions or choices of the actor. If a domain becomes so important that it takes on a moral character in which only performance matters (rather than one’s intention or effort) then failure on such a domain could severely affect self-
esteem. I propose that contingencies of self-worth are those very domains that have taken on a moral character due to parental socialization and this moral loading is the reason self-esteem is so affected by “failure” in contingent domains. I investigate these propositions about morally loaded domains and their influence on contingencies of self-worth by focusing on the specific domains of physical appearance and academic achievement—domains that have become increasingly important in our society and which could reflect a moralization of two typically non-moral domains.

The existent theories and research on the development of values and self-systems that form the theoretical basis of this dissertation will first be reviewed before moving on to a synthesis that relates them to the present research. First, the developmental theories of value transmission will be covered in order to lay the groundwork for what is known about how parents communicate and transmit particular belief systems to their children. Next, the expansive social psychology literature on the self and self-esteem will be briefly reviewed with the goal of understanding current conceptualizations of the self system. Finally, after these two broad literatures have been synthesized, the protocol of this dissertation research project will be described, followed by a report and discussion of the results.

The Intergenerational Transmission of Values

Developmental psychology has long recognized that many ideas that individuals come to hold are taken from others and these ideas, as well as the feelings and actions
related to them, revolve around the goals that people set for others and for themselves (Goodnow, 2002). Through early socialization experiences, an individual forms expectations about what others should believe and how they should act, as well as what she, herself, should believe and how she should act in given situations. Although society’s “shoulds” often do not entirely overlap with individuals’ existing “wants” and “don’t wants”, there is general agreement that most people do not move through life viewing society’s norms as entirely external, coercively imposed pressures. While these norms may have initially functioned externally and in conflict with personal desires, they eventually become integrated into the individual’s motive system, helping to guide behavior in the absence of external authority (Hoffman, 1983). Internalization involves this taking in of external values and attitudes as one’s own so that socially acceptable behavior is motivated by intrinsic factors and not the anticipation of consequences external to the self (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Attitudes that are internalized are expected to influence behavior across situations (not simply in the circumstance in which they were first learned) and exert these effects on behavior and values independent of momentary changes in the instrumental worth of the behavior. Internalized values will influence an individual’s actions even in the absence of surveillance or coercion, and it is this lasting behavior change that is considered the goal of the socialization process (Lepper, 1983). Internalization is considered achieved when the norm is experienced as having derived autonomously from within the self—when
the idea, the associated affect, and the disposition to act accordingly all feel like they have been internally generated—and the original source of the norm is forgotten.

*The Goal of Internalization*

If internalization is the end goal of socialization, then what is the end goal of internalization? Why is it important that individuals come to internalize certain ways of thinking and acting? Clearly, if individuals are to function in a social world they need to be able to act prosocially and in accordance with society’s norms from a very early age. However, beyond simply promoting the ability to function adequately within their given environment, parents also wish to see their children hold values similar to their own with some degree of commitment and without the need for external supervision and support (Goodnow, 1997). Less clear, however, are the specific circumstances that lead parents or society to believe that certain values are in need of internalization while others are not.

It is easy to think of important values in terms of actions of a clearly moral nature, and internalization has long been synonymous with traditionally moral acts. According to Smetana (1999) morality is “an individual’s prescriptive understanding of how individuals ought to behave towards each other. Moral judgments are proposed to be obligatory, universalisable, unalterable, impersonal, and determined by criteria other than agreement, consensus, or institutional convention.” (p.312). In these cases, internalization is conceptualized as the extent to which a person resists temptation to depart from moral behavior when presented with attractive alternatives (Goodnow,
Being kind, considering others’ feelings, not hurting others, helping—all of these often go against daily egoist desires with which one must grapple. These clearly “moral” actions have societal impact and tend to fall under the umbrella of “The Golden Rule”—do unto others as you would have done unto you. While developmentalists have recently asserted the need to move away from regarding internalization only as a way of controlling unruly individual nature, the majority of the research into internalization remains in the areas of temptation, resistance, and transgression because they are easily studied. Moreover, because “The Golden Rule” is relatively universal, it can be assumed to be significantly important to most parents in most cultures. For these reasons, it is the transmission of moral values that has been the focus of the majority of internalization research.

Factors Involved in Internalization

The traditional theories of how children come to internalize values or standards of behavior have mainly focused on specific parenting styles and techniques and the importance of responsive parent-child relationships. Parenting is seen as a conscious and strategic effort (with some obviously unconscious and automatic features as well), and because in most cultures parents have extraordinary power and responsibility for children’s socialization, parents have remained the main focus of internalization research and time hasn’t changed many of the central ideas regarding parents’ contributions to children’s acquisition of values (Grusec et al., 2000). The two most influential ways of
viewing parenting strategies and children’s internalization of values concern specific
discipline techniques and overarching parenting styles. Both focus on parental reactions
in conflict situations and on the influence of parents on children, and while both are
similar in the kinds of child-rearing recommendations promoted, they differ in their
theoretical antecedents (Grusec, 1997). In general, research and theory on both discipline
and parenting style has stressed positive relationships, firm but non-controlling child-
rearing techniques, and reliance on reasoning and persuasion as most effective in enabling
children to internalize values (Grusec et al., 2000). Both parental discipline and parenting
style have been assessed mainly by parental report, and much of the time, the reporter has
been the mother. Studies of the antecedents and consequences of discipline have been
mainly retrospective, descriptive accounts of discipline situations while general parenting
style, on the other hand, has mainly been measured through structured assessments such
as the Block Child Rearing Practices Q-sort (Block, 1965), or the adapted paper-and-pencil
version, the Child Rearing Practices Report (Rickel & Biasatti, 1982; Roberts & Strayer,
1987).

Discipline

Freud provided the first formal theoretical analysis of discipline and the
internalization of values when he proposed that by adopting parental rules and
identifying with and internalizing the parent a child maintains repression of hostility and
elicits the desired approval of his parents. In this way, parental punishment is
transformed into self-punishment, or intense guilt, and guilt-avoidance is what psychoanalytic theory believes to be the underlying mechanism in children’s internalization of standards. Although this view is widely accepted in psychoanalytic literature, it lacks research support.

Social learning theorists have proposed different explanations for the contribution of discipline to internalization. In fear conditioning theory, it is held that a history of punishment for deviant acts will lead to cognitive cues and painful anxiety states being associated with those acts, and this anxiety is avoided by inhibiting the act even when alone. While individuals appear to behave in accordance with ‘internalization’, they are actually responding to conditioned fear of the external punishment remembered. When this anxiety becomes diffuse and detached from conscious fears, the inhibition of the act is seen as a primitive form of internalization. While this social learning theory inspired a great deal of research, much of it had serious problems and cannot account for the relatively permanent changes in behavior that continue long after a pairing is discontinued and should be extinguished (Grusec, 1997). A second social learning theory approach derives from the notion that people act for self reward and if children are socialized to act morally and experience self rewards afterwards they will guide behavior according to norms even in the absence of external constraint. However, there is also little evidence for this. Rewarding behaviors may not be inherently moral and it does not explain how the self that is rewarded develops in the first place (Hoffman, 1983).
In 1970, Hoffman proposed that it is the nature of differential discipline techniques that contributes to successful internalization. He made a greater distinction among these discipline techniques than previous investigators had and defined three specific techniques: power assertion, love-withdrawal, and induction. Hoffman believed that power assertion is detrimental to internalization because it arouses hostility with an accompanying unwillingness to comply with parents’ wishes, while simultaneously providing a model of aggression that can actually contribute to antisocial conduct (Hoffman, 1970; 1983). Research has continually shown that frequent use of power assertive discipline in isolation is associated with a moral orientation based on fear of external detection and punishment, and not an internalization of the underlying values (Hoffman, 1983). Withdrawal of love is regarded as intermediate in effectiveness because it neither arouses hostility, nor actively fosters awareness of, or sensitivity to, the feelings and needs of others (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994) and research has either found either no relationship between moral internalization and love-withdrawal techniques (Hoffman, 1983), or more varied and unclear effects (Lepper, 1983). In contrast, the less punitive induction techniques seem to promote later internalization, and the parents most successful in achieving internalization goals tend toward a greater use of induction that draws children’s attention to broader behavioral effects beyond immediate or personal consequences (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Several studies have suggested that inducing children to think in internalized, rather than externalized, terms about actions may make it
more likely that they will show intended behavior change later in situations where external controls are absent (Lepper, 1983).

Why do different discipline strategies show varying degrees of effectiveness for internalization? Power assertion discourages a child’s reflection on moral issues, whereas extensive explanations and dialogue facilitate an elaboration of schema for considering the psychological experiences of others—a condition likely to encourage respect for others’ rights (Applegate, Burke, Burleson, Delia, & Kline, 1985). While power assertion can cause an immediate negative reaction in the child, induction/reasoning is more effective because it develops the child’s empathic capacities and induces negative feelings from which he cannot escape even when the socializing agent is no longer present (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Moreover, the more frequently parents explain and justify their rules and standards for behavior (e.g. through induction), the more likely children are to adopt those rules regardless of the power approach the parents take (Elder, 1963). However, power-assertion used sparingly and in the correct situations may also contribute to internalization, and Hoffman (1983) argued that while reasoning contains a parent’s message, power-assertion captures the child’s attention so that the message is heard.

Moreover, although research generally describes distinct discipline techniques, parent strategies are usually multidimensional. All techniques are apt to have some power-assertive and love-withdrawal properties (whether explicit or implicit) because they intercept a child’s act and communicate dissatisfaction and the desire for change.
Multidimensional discipline techniques have emotional, physical, and verbal dimensions as well (e.g. changes in volume or tone, facial expression, gaze, or posture) and these expressions may interact with the verbal message adding yet another dimension that can influence the message’s reception (Hoffman, 1983). Additionally, although the implication in research has been that parents use one predominant style of discipline, it is more likely that they vary discipline according to the nature of the particular social standard violated. The importance of these variations may lay in the possibility that specific methods may be less important then the flexibility with which they are used.

*Parenting Style*

According to Darling and Steinberg (1993), while discipline practices are mechanisms through which parents directly help children achieve socialization goals, parenting style affects value internalization *indirectly* by creating a climate conducive to value transmission. Consequently, a second major approach to internalization research involves describing parenting styles. Usually these constellations have been identified through factor analysis of parenting behaviors (Grusec, 1997) and in now classic work have been characterized globally along a small set of broad, fairly independent dimensions such as love v. hostility and autonomy v. control (Schaefer, 1965); warmth and permissiveness v. restrictiveness (Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957); warmth v. hostility (Becker, 1964); and detachment v. involvement (Baldwin, 1955); or in terms of the relationship between the child and the parent (attachment). Sears and his colleagues
argued that parents relying on a love-oriented, warm style have children who internalize parental standards and values and have higher levels of conscience development than those who rely on object-oriented techniques (rewards and punishment). In general, warmth has played the largest role in most formulations of value acquisition and research evidence supports the notion that parental warmth increases internalization by making a child more willing to accept parental values in order to maintain a pleasurable relationship (Grusec, 1997).

Rather than identifying dimensions, some investigators have described categories of parenting style, providing a qualitative (not quantitative) analysis of effective socialization. The most influential of these analyses has been Baumrind’s (1967) classification of parents as authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive (Grusec, 1997). Researchers have typically found that authoritative parents are more successful in producing socially competent, responsible children who have accepted parental dictates as their own than are parents who tend to be either harsh and arbitrarily authoritarian in practice, or overly permissive (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Rohan and Zanna (1996) also found that adult male children were less similar to their parents in value profiles when the parents were extremely authoritarian and perceived by their children as less responsive. The differences between the effectiveness of authoritarian and authoritative styles conceptually parallels the results of inductive versus power-assertive techniques and parents’ general style probably has a role in the discipline techniques they select (Lepper,
Finally, in work on attachment, Maccoby (1980) and others (e.g. Matas, Arend, and Sroufe, 1978) suggest that a history of secure attachment and positive parent-child interaction in the first years of life may make it more probable that a child will readily comply with a request in the face of minimal external pressures later in life (Lepper, 1983), and there are further indications in the literature that secure attachment is more conducive to successful acquisition of values than insecure attachment (Grusec, 1997). However, all the dimensions described have been used mainly to classify overarching parenting styles and general parent-child relationships, and have been measured in a nonspecific manner that does not differentiate according to context, domain, or the particular child involved. Research in this area also has generally bypassed the cognitive and affective perspectives of parents, such as the explicit goals, values, beliefs and attributions they unwittingly or unwittingly use in rearing their children (Costanzo & Woody, 1985), all of which play a role in the specific values internalized.

Affect

The emergence of social domain theory has placed a focus more recently on the role of affect within the parent-child relationship. Social domain theory posits that children’s moral and social knowledge is constructed out of reciprocal individual-environment interactions and specific aspects of those interactions are what lead to consistencies and variations in moral and social judgments (Smetana, 2006). Affect in
particular is believed to inform moral development because conflicts and misdeeds often occur in the context of the broader affective family climate and emotional reactions are inseparable from children’s experiences of their transgressions. Social interactions regarding moral rules and rule violations may be highly emotionally charged and parental affective reactions to these situations, in conjunction with their use of reasoning, may facilitate children’s understanding, encoding, memory, and ultimate internalization of moral and social rules (Smetana, 1999; 2006). Research has indicated that stronger maternal responses to moral transgressions accompanied by intense affect led to greater amends among children than when cognitive messages were not so emotionally embellished (Zahn-Waxler et al., 1979; Grusec, Dix, & Mills, 1983).

Moreover, parents are more likely to employ negative affect—both distress (Zahn-Waxler & Chapman, 1982) and anger (Grusec et al., 1983)—in response to morally loaded missteps than other transgressions. Indeed, research by Arsenio and colleagues (Arsenio & Ford, 1985; Arsenio, Gold, & Adams, 2006) has shown that children associate different emotions with different types of transgressions. By middle childhood, moral events are evaluated as affectively negative, whereas conventional transgressions are viewed as affectively neutral and these ratings were highly correlated with children’s judgments of obligatoriness. Children use information about situational affective consequences to infer whether instigating events are moral, conventional, or personal in nature (Arsenio, 1988). These findings led Arsenio to propose that differences in the
tendency of moral events to elicit strong emotional arousal may promote differential
coding of these events; highly arousing events may be considered “immoral” in part
because they are more affectively salient than less arousing events. These studies
suggest that affective reactions are, indeed, a salient component of children’s
experiences of transgressions that influence their ability to understand, differentiate, and
explain events (Smetana, 2006).

Social domain theory also points to an important cognitive component in parents’
interactions with their children that may facilitate moral internalization. Besides being
highly affective, parental responses to moral transgressions are usually also direct and
explicit. Similar to Hoffman’s theories on discipline-specific uses of induction, social
domain theory posits that inductive discipline techniques, including parents’ domain-
specific explanations and reasoning, facilitate moral and social development by providing
clear information about the nature of the transgressions and by stimulating children to
think reflectively about their actions and the consequences of those actions. Parents’
reactions to transgressions provide a complimentary source of information about
experiences that children can then use to construct moral concepts (Smetana, 2006).

Consistent with the claim that affect influences the salience and encoding of moral events
(Arsenio & Lover, 1995), moderate anger and negative affect in conjunction with
explanations appear to increase the effectiveness of parental reasoning, perhaps because
they help the child focus on the harm caused (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Smetana, 1997).
And the more explicit parents are about the nature of an event and why one behavior is expected while another is “wrong”, the more effective such messages should be to children (Smetana, 1999).

*The Transmission and Internalization of Individual, Domain-Specific Values*

Although the majority of internalization research has focused on explicitly “moral” Values, a broader view of values indicates that they are present whenever people judge some ways of acting, thinking, or feeling as more desirable, more worthwhile, or more important than others do. Beyond simply domains of social convention, domain-specific, instrumental behaviors and attributes can be thought to be “values”, broadly defined. Milton Rokeach, who contributed one of the most developed conceptualizations of values to the literature, defined a value as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is...preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence” (1973, p.5) and D’Andrade (1984) pointed out that all cultural groups regard some skills, outcomes, and errors as more significant than others, putting more effort into teaching those skills, and judging more harshly errors or shortcomings in those areas. Research must begin to look within families for the promotion of particular ways of feeling, thinking, and behaving because in everyday early experiences, children learn the relative value of everything they produce (Goodnow, 1997). Recently, researchers have begun to expand the value internalization research to encompass the domains of cultural values (connectedness vs. independence) (Asakawa & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), academics
and educational goals (Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001; Smith, 1982),
athletics (Eccles & Harold, 1991; Jodl et al., 2001; Trent, Cooney, Russell, & Thornton,
1996), religious and social values (Hoge, Petrillo, & Smith, 1982), politics and work ethics
(Furnham, 2001), fear of failure (Elliot & Thrash, 2004), romantic partner preferences
(Hynie, Lalonde, & Lee, 2006), occupational aspirations (Hitlin, 2006), and the role of other
variables that might impact transmission (Pagano, Hirsch, Deutsch, & McAdams, 2003;
Schonpflug, 2001). However, these theories and studies have focused less on the means of
domain-specific value transmission and more on the topics and consequences of
transmission.

One major limitation of traditional socialization theories of internalization is that
they are content free and assume that the same principles hold for the development of any
value, regardless of subject (Grusec, 1997). However, parents and other socializers
differentiate the complex social world into domains of importance (in which invariant end
states are to be pursued), and domains of “variability” (in which the end state pursued
depends upon the context and purpose at any given moment) (Costanzo & Fraenkel,
1987). Parents’ understanding of social norms and “rules”, their parenting goals, and their
views of, and responses to, children’s misdeeds are differentiated by domain (Smetana,
1999). A parent’s behavior may show consistency within broadly equivalent classes of
situations, but not across such classes, and this suggests that a great many outcomes
affected by parenting, including internalization of values, are reasonably situation- or
domain-specific. What may be particularly important is how some domains are socialized differently than others, and rather than focusing on central tendencies in parenting, we need to consider meaningful within parent variations and domain-specific departures from the central tendency (Costanzo & Woody, 1985). Parents’ attempts to foster optimal outcomes in children are highly influenced by their own domain-specific values and how those translate into goals and concerns when applied to their children. Parenting is not simply a neutral, rational, process, but often touches on parents’ deepest feelings about right and wrong, good and bad. There is evidence from a number of studies of adult and child responses to transgressions that indicates that parents respond differently to transgressions in different domains (reviewed in Smetana, 1995), and it has been shown that parents’ choice of discipline strategy depends on the nature of the misdeed (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Goodnow, Knight, and Cashmore (1983) point out that a parent is more likely to constrain and control a child’s behavior in a content area of particularly high importance and strong value and when the parent distrusts the child’s naturally occurring learning, or fears a long-range consequence. Everyday social practices express the meanings and worth parents attach to particular ways of behavior as well as the possible routes to convey these values to their children; however, research on parenting has given little attention to differences among parental messages.

The “Moralization” of Domains

Another important analysis of the internalization of individual values asks how
certain domain-specific values come to be seen as beyond question and as a part of the
moral or natural order—when departures from the standard view or practice becomes
unthinkable—whereas others do not (Goodnow, 1997). Costanzo (2002) asserts that there
are:

problems entailed in making a priori distinctions between moral and conventional
domains...I would argue that concepts such as justice are as much a part of
conventional exchanges as those that are presumed to be intrinsically moral. Indeed,
much in the way of direct moral instruction from parent to child involved assigning
moral significance to conventional behaviors. For example, instructions to eat with
utensils often are not presented to children in terms of rule of social conformity but
are instantiated by...messages that proclaim failure to do so as not “fair” to others.
Is eating with utensils a simple conventional rule, or is it a moral rule? (p. 49).

To begin to unravel this question, researchers need to focus increased attention on
conditions that influence parents’ ratings of some messages as more significant than
others, parents’ views about the nature and importance of opinions of society at large,
parents’ choices of particular methods of delivery, and parental monitoring of, and
response to, transgression.

When a message is delivered, there are several cues as to the importance of the
message, but affect is the most prominent of the cues; the degree of negative affect
experienced or displayed by parents when the rules of social exchange are violated is
central to moral reference processes (Costanzo, 2002). For instance, the parental use of
drama when conveying a message may be a way of marking the intense importance of
an area, and such peripheral cues likely impact child behavior and internalization of the
underlying message (Goodnow, 1992). In these ways, even apparently trivial exchanges
about conventional issues can become “moral” exchanges if they follow a particular form of moral exchange-based grammar, which Costanzo (2002) referred to as “the grammar of importance” (p.50). Certain domains of action become morally loaded for children when parents or other socializers attach strong emotion to violations or exemplifications in that domain. Therefore, if a goodness-badness criterion is attached to behavior, any domain can acquire a moral tinge and the distinction between moral and conventional behavior is directly dependent on how any given culture, family, or person evaluates and reacts to a specific act and the actor (Costanzo, 1991). If a domain-specific norm becomes morally tinged, judgments within that domain will become particularly constraining and will mandate some preferred end state regardless of situation or intention of the actor. It will become a matter of right vs. wrong, good vs. bad, with little room for error.

The Self and Self-Worth (Esteem)

As illustrated in the first section of this paper, the evaluations an individual makes about the self and others in the social world are dependent upon the individual’s beliefs about what is important and compelling about behavior in that world, and parents play a significant role in conveying the importance of specific domains and values. It is now well accepted that “the self” has many interrelated parts and there is much empirical evidence supporting the notion that the importance of a given activity or domain will determine
the degree to which success and failure on that domain affect overall self-evaluations and general self-esteem. The body of literature about the self is impressive, and in this section, I will first offer a very brief review of this literature in order to provide a context for the later treatment of the development of self. Specifically reviewed will be the theory of a hierarchy of areas related to self-concept and the question of how internalization of the differential importance of instrumental (or moral) values related to those areas influence the construction of self-concept in children, thereby differentially impacting self-esteem.

‘Self-esteem’, or ‘self-worth’, has been conceptualized as “the level of global regard that one has for the self as a person” (Harter, 1993, pg. 88). Once a person recognizes the self as an individual and separate being, he begins to construct a ‘self-concept’, which refers to how that individual perceives his ‘self’ to be in terms of ability, value, successes, limitations, etc. This self-concept is then used to identify one’s nature and compare oneself to others (Calhoun & Morse, 1977). Self-concept has also been labeled ‘self-image’, and this interpretation adds to the working definition of self-concept as the image a person has of himself, including all of the characteristics and attributes of which he is aware.

While self-concept refers to the mental picture that a person has of herself, including perceptions of physical and psychological traits, talents, shortcomings, and labels, ‘self-esteem’ is the evaluative component of this self-image; it is the positive or
negative appraisal that person makes of these traits and shortcomings. In contrast to the purely descriptive nature of self-concept, self-esteem involves the additional evaluative component of satisfaction (Calhoun & Morse, 1977), and is determined by the degree to which one judges oneself as competent, belonging, and worthwhile (Page & Page, 1993). Rosenberg (1965) asserted, “self-esteem is a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self” (pg. 30), and Elder (1968) added that self-esteem consists of “feelings of personal worth…influenced by performance, abilities, appearance, and judgments of significant others” (pg. 258). Most of the definitions offered regarding self-esteem, however, focus on the personal judgments each individual makes about the ‘self’. In short, self-esteem has theoretically been considered to be the result of the process in which the content of self-concept is evaluated or judged against personal standards and values (Calhoun & Morse, 1977; Wells & Marwell, 1976). It implies how an individual values and regards herself, and, because of this, it is, naturally, a scaled judgment. All individuals have self-esteem, and it can range from high or positive to low or negative.

Some researchers believe that the development of self and self-esteem follow a set of stages that are relatively the same for every person. This development begins with the notion of an individual ‘self’, which is acknowledged very early in life (Calhoun & Morse, 1977). The next stage of development is the formulation of concepts of that self, and theorists have typically maintained that this sense of self is largely socially
constructed, if not entirely so (e.g. Cooley, 1902; James, 1890; Mead, 1934). An individual’s self concept is determined by his social interactions and experiences as well as the degree of success and interpersonal feedback he derives from these experiences. Once an individual has established a concept of himself, he can then determine whether or not he is satisfied with what he sees about himself; thus self-esteem can be judged.

There have existed several different models of self-esteem. Some theorists (Coopersmith, 1967) propose a unidimensional construct best assessed by combining an individual’s self-evaluations across items of various content. In this model, each item is given equal weight and the sum score is believed to adequately reflect an individual’s overall sense of self and self worth. This unidimensional view of self-esteem has been challenged, however, by those who argue that it masks important evaluative distinctions individuals make about their competence in different domains of their life. These critics have proposed models and adopted measurement strategies that identify and assess the individual domains of self-evaluation separately, providing a profile of self-evaluations across the specific domains identified by the investigator. In these models there is no final, overall ‘sum’ of self-worth, just a general picture of how a person feels about all his assessed competencies. Rosenberg’s (1979) model, on the other hand, emphasizes global self-esteem, which is the general regard one holds for the self as a person and which is distinct from specific self-evaluations (Brown, 1993). Although Rosenberg acknowledges that such a global judgment is undoubtedly the product of a complex
combination of other, smaller, domain-specific judgments, his model opts not to
examine those underlying judgments because he believes the individual is likely
unaware of the process through which these elements are weighted and combined.

James (1892), however, believed that one’s overall sense of esteem was not merely
an average of one’s competencies, but was directly determined by the different values
placed on success in various domains in one’s life, leading to a different personal
equation for each individual. Global self-esteem, according to James, is the ratio of one’s
competencies or successes in domains to the value one places on success within each
competence domain. If one’s success were equal to one’s aspirations, one would
experience high self-esteem; however, if one’s aspirations exceeded one’s actual success,
one would have low self-esteem (Harter, 1990a). James theorizing over a century ago
provided grist for a great deal of subsequent theory and research and is still pointed to
in the current self literature (Hoyle, Kernis, Leary, & Baldwin, 1999). In more recent
years there has been growing interest in these ideas of a potentially multidimensional
structure of self-concept, and while there has been an extensive body of research
exploring these ideas (e.g. to review see Dusek & Flaherty, 1981; Harter, 1982; Marsh &
Gouvenet, 1989), the findings in support of James’ ratio have been mixed, depending on
the research methods applied (Rodriquez, Wigfield, & Eccles, 2003). Two researchers:
Harter and her colleagues (e.g., Harter, 1986) and Marsh and his colleagues (e.g. Marsh,
1990; Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1992; Marsh & Gouvenet, 1989) have conducted most

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of the research to assess James’ definition of self-esteem, both exploring the differing roles of perceptions of competence and subjective importance across a variety of domains in relation to self-esteem. In general, Harter’s research has lent strong support to James’ formulation, while Marsh found that importance added little to the prediction of self-esteem beyond the variance accounted for by self-concept.

Yet another model, this one proffered by Harter (1990a), is an integration of the two major approaches, a Jamesian-style multidimensional theory combined with Rosenberg’s Global theory. Harter emphasizes the need to consider both the multidimensional nature of self-evaluation—including the fact that certain domains are more important to an individual than others—as well as individuals’ overall sense of self-worth. This approach appreciates that while global self-worth is made up of some combination of domain-specific evaluations, it is also a construct, in and of itself, that must be measured directly by an independent set of questions, and is not simply a mathematical combination of the domain-specific judgments. According to Harter, global self-worth is “the overall value that one places on the self as a person, in contrast to domain-specific evaluations of one’s competence or adequacy” (1990a, pg. 67).

By conceptually and empirically separating domain-specific judgments of competence from global judgments of self-worth, it is also easier to determine the relationship that specific competencies bear to global self-worth (Harter, 1990a) because the role a specific component plays in an individual’s overall self-esteem is indeed
important. As stated earlier, if a person perceives himself as competent in domains in which he aspires to excel, he will have high self-esteem; however, if a person falls short of his ideal in a domain in which he wishes to succeed, he will have low self-esteem. Following this, a lack of competence in a domain unimportant to the self should not adversely affect self-esteem (Harter, 1993). Harter and Engstrom (1982, as reported in Harter, 1983) found empirical evidence supporting this notion that the importance of an activity will determine the degree to which success and failure affect overall self-evaluation and self-esteem.

*Development of Self-Esteem and Domain-Specific Judgments*

Accepting Harter’s model of self-esteem, in which domain-specific evaluations contribute varying amounts to a separate, overall sense of self-worth, when can one begin to measure domain-specific and overall self-esteem? Not until about age eight do children develop a conscious, verbalizable concept of their overall worth as a person (Harter, 1996), and this evaluation does not spontaneously generate but rather has been affected by social interactions and competence-related events throughout the previous eight years. Regarding the development of the domain-specific judgments that make up self-concept, a great deal of empirical work addressing the multidimensional, hierarchical structure of self-concept provides support for this notion across a wide range of developmental levels, including both early and later stages of adolescence (for reviews see Byrne, 1984; Marsh, 1990; Marsh, et al., 1992). Specifically, results from a
study by DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease, (1996) indicated that early
adolescent self-esteem is a multidimensional conceptualization, in which specific
dimensions of self-evaluation each contribute to a global sense of self-worth in a type of
hierarchical model. The research also illustrated that different dimensions vary in the
magnitude of their contributions to adolescents’ global feelings of self-esteem. Harter
(1990a) theorized that not only adolescents, but children as well, are capable of making
evaluative distinctions between specific components in their self-concept. Support for
this idea has been obtained in measurement efforts with individuals between the ages of
eight and eighteen, which found that also beginning at approximately age eight (the
same time that overall judgments appear), children develop domain-specific evaluations
of themselves in addition to reliable judgments of their general worth as a person
(Harter, 1982). In Harter’s Self Perception Profile, children between the ages of eight and
twelve clearly differentiate the five relevant domains of scholastic competence, athletic
competence, peer acceptance, physical appearance, and conduct or behavior (Harter &
Pike, 1984). Again, these domain-specific conceptualizations do not appear
spontaneously but are likely affected by years of social interactions.

Harter (1990a) also examined the applicability of James’ model with children
grades three to six and six to eight. In support of James, she found correlations between
competence/importance discrepancy scores and self-worth across a sample of children
ages eight to fifteen. The larger the negative score - the more an importance rating
exceeded perceived competence – the lower the level of self-worth and self-esteem. The smaller the discrepancy score was, the higher the child’s sense of self-worth and self-esteem. This suggests that the competence/discrepancy score is a determinant of self-worth even in children—their global judgments are based on personal evaluations of how competently they perform in important domains (Harter, 1990a).

Focus of Judgments and Contingent of Self-Worth

A century after James’ work, social psychology has further expanded its focus on the ‘self’ to investigate structural questions. Crocker and colleagues (Crocker et al., 2002; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001) present a model of global self-esteem that also builds on James’ insights and emphasizes contingencies of self-worth. As James’ pointed out: not all domain-specific self-evaluations are equally important to global self-esteem, and a “contingency of self-worth” is a domain or category of outcomes on which an individual has staked his or her self-esteem. The individual’s view of his value or worth depends on his perceptions of success or adherence to standards in that domain. Contingencies of self-worth contribute, but are not identical, to ratings of importance of a domain (Wolfe & Crocker, 2003). Central to this model is the contention that people differ in the contingencies on which they base their self-esteem and an individual may hold multiple contingencies in varying degrees. These are hierarchically organized, vary in their accessibility, and the more strongly a person’s self-worth is contingent on a particular domain, the more chronically accessible and easily activated that contingency is likely to
be. These contingencies develop over time in response to many forms of socialization and social influence, and these, in turn, influence goals and self-standards and motivate behavior in an effort to ensure “success” (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Wolfe & Crocker, 2003). People strive to reach goals linked to self-worth and react particularly badly when their efforts fail (Wolfe & Crocker, 2003). In a test of their model using graduate school applicants and their affect related to true acceptance and rejection letters, Crocker and her colleagues found that acceptance or rejection had stronger affective and self-esteem consequences for individuals whose self-worth was staked on academic achievement than for individuals whose self-worth was not (Crocker, et al., 2002). A study of grades showed similar findings for poor grades but not for good grades (Crocker, Karpinski, Quinn, & Chase, 2003) lending additional support to the contingencies model.

Baldwin has focused on the role of interpersonal relationships—and individuals’ cognitions about relationships—in the development of contingent self-worth (Baldwin, 1992). He proposes that individuals’ perceptions of interpersonal acceptance as conditional on success and failure is an important factor in overall self-esteem. Repeated experiences of contingent social encounters (i.e. being praised heavily for success, or criticized brutally for failure) will cause a person to develop a relational schema in which her expectations of acceptance or rejection are based on performance. Feelings of self-worth may then become dependent on matching the specific evaluative
standards that have derived from relationships with critical or judgmental significant others. However, the specific content of these contingencies may vary; individuals can differ on the domains in which success is essential for acceptance and self-worth and not all domains will be contingent for all individuals (Baldwin & Sinclair, 1996). Smith, Stewart, and Buttram (1992) offered the illustration of a child whose performances have been evaluated and criticized repeatedly by perfectionist parents, suggesting that these experiences may lead that child to form a self-schema in which a specific behavior or behaviors (e.g., “did not get an A on a test”) automatically activate a view of the self as a failure. Although Crocker and colleagues’ research has focused mainly on the structure of contingencies of self worth, and Baldwin and colleagues have concentrated on the interpersonal interactions and relational schemas that contribute to the overall development of contingent self-judgments of worth, both point to the need to consider domain-specific success and failure when considering issues of self-esteem and its development.

*Domain-Specific Values, the Developing Self-System, and Self Appraisals*

While it is obvious that a child’s internalization of moral standards will affect his ability to function in the social world, and, as described above, will also likely influence his developing self-structure, what broader impact does the internalization of domain-specific values have? How do these standards inform the way a child comes to understand and cope with his standing on specific value-relevant domains? As Smetana (2006)
asserted “not much is known about how children’s developing ability to distinguish
morality from other social concepts is related to other moral or psychological
characteristics, including psychological adjustment (p. 145).” Studies of atypically
developing children suggest that difficulties in understanding the intrinsic basis of
morality are related to conduct problems, but what about children who view typically
non-moral, personal, domains as moral?

Piaget proposed that a child’s base for moral judgment undergoes change with
maturation, proceeding from an objective, cognitively limited judgment of moral fault or
naughtiness based on consequences, to a more developmentally advanced, subjective
judgment that depends on the child’s ability to infer an actor’s preceding intentions. If
some conventional domains attain a moral weight, would this proposition hold as well?
While skill at information integration undoubtedly increases with age and affects
developing judgments, social perceptions are fundamentally influenced by the norms and
beliefs common in a child’s life and internalized as her own (Costanzo & Dix, 1983). The
way an individual evaluates the self and others in the social world depends on what she
believes is important and compelling about behavior in that world (Costanzo & Fraenkel,
1987). In domains involving strongly socialized values, judgments may proceed rather
automatically, often on the basis of severity of outcomes, whereas in other domains,
intentions and mitigating circumstances are likely to influence judgment (Ruble &
Goodnow, 1998).
Costanzo and Dix believed that maturation of reasoning capacity is not a sufficient determinant in social and moral judgment. Norms governing behavior are clear guides that emerge for the evaluation of actions and actors, and when domain-specific norms are particularly constraining, they mandate that some end states are preferred regardless of the intentions or choices of the actor. In these cases, subjective information might not be used in judgment despite a cognitive capacity to do so (Costanzo & Fraenkel, 1987). Internalized values acquired socially early in childhood may come to function as these unseen and largely unacknowledged “directors” of social perceptions and inferences (Costanzo & Dix, 1983), and those who attach a significant weight to a specific behavior will evaluate others more harshly in regards to that weighted behavior than will those who attach less significance to it (Costanzo & Fraenkel, 1987). Individuals begin social observation in important domains with a pre-existing set of values about what outcomes are better than others, and these pre-existing values pre-empt information gathering about context when discerning the meaning of an act. How an individual perceives a context depends upon the values toward which he has been socialized to be vigilant. Normal rules that allow for mitigation of responsibility do not apply in circumstances in which values and beliefs about behavioral ends are absolute. Moreover, because the content of bad outcomes in these circumstances are extremely affect arousing, individuals may solely employ such contents—regardless of intention—to judge naughtiness, even though they are
technically capable of more context-dependent judgment (Costanzo, 1991).

The Duke studies of the 1970’s solidly demonstrated that age-related changes in social perception occur in the absence of differences in the ability to infer internal states of others. Costanzo, Coie, Grumet & Farnill (1973), and Farnill (1974) showed that young children failed to consider intentions of actors only when the action outcomes were negative or adult norms were salient. Because intention influenced their moral judgments when outcomes were positive and adult norms less salient, the failure to use intentions in the case of negative consequences was not believed to reflect underlying deficits in cognitive ability. Costanzo & Fraenkel (1987) believe that in value domains of high parental concern and/or high parental control, children internalize strong constraints and are subsequently quite objective in their focus when judging relevant actions, and they tested this hypothesis in a study that elicited mothers’ child rearing ideologies and children’s related moral judgments. They found that in vignettes tapping areas of low maternal importance, with both positive and negative outcomes, and in areas of high maternal importance with positive outcomes, there was an increase in intent differentiation with age. However, in the high concern, negative outcome vignettes, there was a significant decrease in intent use with age. The relative importance of the area caused children to make larger distinctions between the violators and exemplifiers with age, and appeared to only influence the child’s sense of degree of goodness or badness, not their ability or willingness to account for intentions when evaluating behavior in
general. This is a rather strong indication that children become more absolutist in their evaluation of negative behavior with age in domains for which parents report strong emotional involvement or concern. It is almost as if performance in significant domains is so important that no excuse for failure is allowed.

The Costanzo and Fraenkel study reveals the impact that internalization of values has on children’s moral judgments in domains when evaluating others. Presumably, these rather invariant principles would hold when evaluating the self as well, and if a child internalizes rather harsh norms for evaluating their own behavior in certain domains it would undoubtedly affect self-esteem. Regardless of intention or effort, if a child ‘fails’ in an important domain, then she has ”done badly”. If there is a failure to meet these highly important, value relevant goals and this failure is then viewed as stable and internal, rather than context- and intention-dependent because of its absolute importance, a child might not view an outcome as “good” or “bad”, but will view the self as stably good or bad.

How Parents May Impact Contingencies of Self-Worth through Value Transmission

While there is ample evidence that a hierarchy of self-defining domains exists there has so far been minimal study of specifically how this structural dimension of self-concept develops. The resurgence of literature on how interactive processes shape the developing self has mainly focused on how social interactions influence on the content
of self-concept. Even Harter, who specifically points to the lack of developmental theory in self research, has been most concerned with how parental opinions and communications influence a child’s sense of self worth by affecting evaluation of the self in specific domains (see Harter, 2003). However, social influences can also influence the structure of the self.

Despite describing different models and utilizing different terminologies, several recent social psychological formulations of the self indicate that others may influence the hierarchy and focus of children’s self-concept domains. In a retrospective study of 130 college students, the more participants reported having been previously teased or looked down upon by peers when they performed poorly at school, the more likely they were to base their current self-esteem on academic competence. Conversely, positive peer reactions for appearance in childhood predicted basing ones self-esteem on appearance (Park, Montgomery, & Crocker, 2005, as reported in Park, Crocker, & Vohs, 2006). If peer interactions influence contingencies of self-worth, then it is reasonable to believe that parents can also shape the hierarchical ordering of domains of self-worth, and Crocker and Wolfe (2001) specifically point to parent-child interactions as well as cultural norms and observational learning (such as with peers) as modes of social influence and socialization that impact the development of contingencies of self-worth. They believe that many contingencies probably have their root in very early childhood experiences—experiences which likely involve parents (Wolfe & Crocker, 2003). If
children perceive parents’ hierarchical construction of values and domains and accept this structure, it may be built into their own developing notions of the world and of the self and their internalized hierarchy of self-relevant domains (i.e. their contingencies of self-worth). Attributes may become personally important or relevant to an individual because they are important to her parents and this importance can be transmitted directly or indirectly through socialization, praise/criticism, or modeling. Although Crocker’s research group has yet to directly study the parental socialization processes involved in development of self-systems such as contingencies of self-worth, it may be reasonable to assume that it would resemble the previously described socialization processes involved in value transmission.

Hypotheses

This dissertation project is a preliminary investigation into the origins of contingent self-worth. It is theorized that if children perceive parents’ hierarchical construction of domain-specific values (through parental socialization of these values), and accept this structure of importance, it will be built into their developing notions of the self and their internalized hierarchy of contingent domains. Therefore, a child’s contingencies of self-worth should reflect parental values, concerns, and parenting behaviors related to specific domains. Specifically, it is proposed that contingencies of self-worth are most evident in those domains that have taken on a ‘moral’ character due to
parental socialization behaviors, and this moral loading is precisely why self-esteem is so affected by ‘failure’ in contingent domains. The main hypotheses are as follows:

1. Domains that are ‘morally’ loaded for participants (as reflected by ratings of negative affect, control/ punishment, and negative actor appraisals in the transgression vignettes) will also be integral to their evaluations of the self (as reflected by ratings on the Contingencies of Self-Worth measure).

2. Adolescents’ evaluations of domain-specific transgressions (the Vignettes) will be predicted by their parents’ ratings of those same transgressions.

3. Adolescent’s contingencies of self-worth will reflect an internalization of their parents’ beliefs regarding domain importance in those families exhibiting nurturing, warm parenting styles and close parent-child involvement and regard.

METHOD

Recruitment, Rationale, and Selection Criteria for Participants

Participants included early adolescent males and females (11-14 years old; 7th and 8th grade) and their parents/guardians. This specific age range of youth was targeted for two main reasons. First, based on research reviewed above regarding the development
and measurement of self-concept and self-esteem, it is known that by early adolescence individuals can, and do, evaluate both their general and domain-specific worth (Harter, 1982). They have also had many years of success and failure experiences that have helped shape their self-concept and self-evaluations. Secondly, early adolescent youth are in a developmental period of transition. They have experienced many years of parental socialization and therefore have had many opportunities to observe parental attitudes and behaviors. However, as they enter adolescence, they are becoming more independent, and the views and values they hold most strongly should be experienced as more intrinsic and less parentally mandated than would be the case for younger children.

Families were recruited from three specific populations in an effort to sample individuals for whom appearance and achievement are differentially salient, and for whom either achievement or appearance (or perhaps both) may have become morally loaded and differentially tied to self-esteem (i.e. contingent). Every effort was made to include two parents/guardians whenever possible.

The first group was recruited from a population for whom appearance is a salient issue—a group of overweight, treatment-seeking twelve to fourteen year olds who were either attending Camp Timber Creek (CTC), a residential summer weight-loss program, or were members of BLAST Wellness, a year-round, youth-only weight-loss program. The participants in this “weight-loss” group were identified by the director of CTC and
BLAST Wellness, and were recruited for this study through informational mailings and study consent forms sent to their home address prior to the start of camp or upon their enrollment at BLAST. All CTC and BLAST families who were identified as having appropriately-aged children (38 families) were contacted in an effort to recruit for this research and 25 (66%) consented to participate. Because no demographic information was known about the contacted families, and no families responded to the mailings in the negative (although they were given the option), it is unclear how representative the consenting participants are of the group as a whole.

The second group was a population for whom academic achievement is a salient issue—a group of eighth-grade students participating in Duke’s Talent Identification Program (TIP). A racially diverse, randomly selected, sample of one hundred and twenty eighth grade participants were identified by TIP personnel and were recruited through informational mailings and study consent forms sent to their home address. Of the 120 families contacted, 51% (61) consented to participate in this research and compose the “academic” group. Based on basic demographics of the contacted families (50% female, 70% Caucasian), this sample of consenting participants appears to be representative of the TIP group as a whole.

The final “community” group was a general population of early adolescents recruited through two organizations: the Halifax County, North Carolina school system and the Wake Forest, North Carolina Boys & Girls Club. The participants from Halifax
County were recruited from five eighth-grade homerooms in the Roanoke Rapids School System (RR). All 108 students in these five classrooms were given study information and consent forms to take home to their parents and 37 (34%) of the contacted families consented to participate in this study. Based on basic demographics of the contacted families (48% female, 81% Caucasian), this sample of consenting participants appears to be a fair representation of the group as a whole. The participants from the Wake Forest Boys & Girls Club (B&G) were recruited from all club members that a) were currently enrolled in the seventh or eighth grade and b) present at the club during the week in which study recruitment was conducted. All club members meeting these criteria were approached in-person at the club and the specifics of the study were discussed with them and their parents. Families were also given the same printed informational materials and consent forms as the other groups. Of 33 families approached in this manner, 30 (91%) consented to participate in this research and given this high participation rate, these families appear to be extremely representative of this group as a whole.

A comparison of the participants in the community group indicated that the RR participants’ mean age (13.73) was older than the B&G participants’ (13.24) by a statistically significant degree (t(56) = 2.51; p < .05), their racial composition was less diverse (79% White, 15% Black) than the B&G participants’ (44% White, 32% Black), and more RR participants lived in two-parent households than did B&G participants (82% v
56%). However, there were no significant differences in gender composition, parents’ age, or family SES status (as determined by mothers’ and fathers’ Occupational Prestige and Socioeconomic Index Scores). Additionally, a direct comparison of the three recruited ‘groups’ was not a central focus of the hypotheses; rather, they were selected in an effort to sample a distribution of families who report a range of self-relevant domain competencies and who differentially value these domains. Preliminary analyses comparing the RR and B&G groups on perceived competence in self-relevant domains and contingencies of self-worth showed no statistically significant differences between them on any domain. Therefore, the RR and B&G participants were combined to form the ‘community’ group for all between-group exploratory comparisons despite their above mentioned demographic differences.

Participants

Participants were 127 early adolescents (51% female) and their parents/guardians recruited from the three populations described above. Overall, the youth ranged in age from 11 to 15 years of age ($M = 13.28$ years, $SD = .74$) and were 71% Caucasian, 17% Black, 3% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. Sixty-two fathers (i.e. fathers/step-fathers/male guardians) and 102 mothers (mothers/step-mothers/female guardians) completed data collection. Ninety-seven percent of children reported living with their mother or stepmother and 81% reported living with their father or stepfather (approximately 80% of children reported living with two parents). Participating fathers ranged in age from
34 to 63 years (M = 45.72 years, SD = 6.23), and 71% had a college education or higher. Participating mothers were 32 to 60 years of age (M = 43.53, SD = 5.86), and 58% had a bachelors or advanced degree. For those parents who reported being employed outside the home and listed an occupation that could be categorized, Occupational Prestige and Socioeconomic Index scores were derived from Nakao and Treas (1994); these have a population mean of 46.4 (SD = 14.9; range 19.4-86.1) and 52.5 (SD = 20.8; range 17.1-97.2) respectively. Occupational prestige scores for employed fathers ranged from 24-68 (M = 55.62, SD = 13.59) and Socioeconomic Index scores ranged from 29-97 (M = 67.19, SD = 18.19). Occupational prestige scores for employed mothers ranged from 23-86 (M = 56.25, SD = 11.35) and Socioeconomic Index scores ranged from 22-97 (M = 66.05, SD = 17.95). These scores indicate that while this sample evidenced a range of occupations and SES, their means were slightly higher than Nakao and Treas (1994) population norms. For example, a mean-level occupation in Nakao and Treas’ sample would be the equivalent of a sales manager or a technical support position while in this sample a mean-level occupation corresponded to an administrative supervisor or advanced degree-level professional specialty occupation (scientist, dietician).

The sample size and specific demographics for each of the three groups is described in Table 1; there were some significant differences in demographic composition between groups. The weight-loss group had a disproportionately high female to male ratio ($\chi^2(2, N = 127) = 7.50, p < .05$) and a less racially diverse composition
(χ²(8, N = 127) = 19.88, p < .05) compared to the academic and community groups.

Fathers in the weight loss group were also significantly older (t(59) = -2.93, p < .01).

Adolescents in the community group were significantly older than adolescents in the other two groups (t(125) = 3.45, p < .001) and their mothers’ Occupational Prestige scores were significantly lower (t(71) = -3.27, p < .01). There were also significant differences between the academic and community groups in mothers’ Socioeconomic Index (SI) scores (t(59) = 4.52, p < .001) and father’s Occupational Prestige (t(42) = 2.79, p < .01) and SI scores (t(42) = 2.68, p < .01).
Table 1: Demographic Information

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<th>‘Academic’ Group (n = 48)</th>
<th>Community Group (n = 58)</th>
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<td>57</td>
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<td>59.8 (9.3)</td>
<td>51.4 (11.8)**</td>
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<td>72.5 (17.2)*</td>
<td>57.5 (18.1)*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

† = significant difference between groups
* = significantly different groups; ** outlier group

Note: Occupational Prestige and Socioeconomic Index scores derived from Nakao & Treas (1994)
Procedure

After informed consent paperwork had been reviewed, signed, and returned, participating youth and parents were given one questionnaire packet each to complete and return. In order to link families, parents and children were assigned surveys with matching codes. For the weight loss (CTC/BLAST) and academic (TIP) groups, the distribution of these questionnaires was done via mail, with each family receiving a packet containing 1) detailed instructions and investigator contact information, 2) study questionnaires for each participating family member, and 3) self-addressed, stamped envelopes in which to return the completed questionnaires. For participants in the community group (RR/B&G), the youth questionnaire packets were administered and completed on site either during their homeroom class (for RR) or during after-school club hours (for B&G). The primary investigator was present during these questionnaire administration sessions and verbally instructed participants with the same written directions given to the weight-loss and academic groups. Parent packets for this group were sent home with the youth for their parents to complete and return via addressed, postage paid envelopes. Participants who received their questionnaires at home were asked to complete them in a quiet and private place and mail them back separately. All participants were instructed to not share their answers with their family coparticipants until after the questionnaires were returned. When necessary, up to two follow-up contacts (electronic, and/or postal mail) were made with families who had not returned
their completed questionnaires at the designated deadline. After completed packets had been returned, participants were sent a letter thanking them for their participation. Additionally, every adolescent and participating parent or set of parents received $5 each upon receipt of their questionnaires.

Measures

Demographic Data. All participants were asked to provide demographic information that included their age, birth date, sex, and racial/ethnic background. Youth participants were also asked their grade in school, with whom they reside, and whether they have any siblings. Parents were asked about their specific relationship to their participating child, current marital status, level of education, and occupation.

Self-Esteem. Self-esteem was measured with slightly modified versions of the Harter Self-Perception Profiles for Adults (Messer & Harter, 1986), and for Adolescents (Harter, 1985). The adult version (titled “What I Am Like” in this investigation) consisted of 52 of the original 63-items. These items ask participants to use a four-point scale to assess themselves on a variety of specific domains (sociability, job competence, nurturance, athletics, appearance, morality, intimate relationship, intelligence, and humor), assess the personal importance of those domains, and assess their feelings of global self-worth. The 11 items that were removed from the original addressed the domains of “adequacy as a provider” and “household management”, were not of interest to this particular investigation, and were eliminated in an effort to shorten the instrument. Individual
items within each domain were averaged to produce domain-specific competence scale scores, domain importance scores, and a scale score of global self-worth. Analyses of the scales showed adequate reliability for eight ($\alpha = .69 - .85$) with slightly lower reliability for the scales of job competence ($\alpha = .55$) and sense of humor ($\alpha = .62$).

The child version (titled “How I See Myself”) is a similar 47-item measure that asks children to assess themselves on a variety of specific domains (scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, behavioral conduct, close friendship, and parent approval), assess the personal importance of those domains, and assess their feelings of global self-worth. Harter’s original version for adolescents was modified for this study by: 1) the reordering of questions in an effort to separate those that were similar, 2) the addition of questions addressing the importance of the above-listed domains, 3) the addition of questions addressing parent approval and body-specific appearance (see Appendix A for added questions), and 4) the elimination of questions addressing romantic appeal and job competence. As with the parent version, individual items within each domain scale were averaged to produce domain-specific competence scores, domain importance scores, and a score of global self-worth. Analyses of the seven scales from Harter’s original measure showed adequate reliability ($\alpha = .73 - .88$) as did the added body appearance scale ($\alpha = .80$). The added parental approval scale showed slightly lower than ideal reliability ($\alpha = .67$). Although the original physical appearance scale ($\alpha = .84$) and the new body-specific
appearance scale were intended to be separate (the body questions targeted issues of weight and shape while the physical appearance questions addressed overall appearance), analyses indicated moderate to high correlations between the items in each and a scale utilizing all seven items showed greater reliability than the two separate scales did alone (α = .89). The high alpha and the high correlations suggest that the two scales actually assessed the single construct of overall physical appearance and so the scales were combined into one for all analyses.

Contingencies of Self-Worth. Contingencies of self-worth in both children and parents were measured with a slightly modified version of Crocker’s Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003), titled “What I Care About”. This 35-item measure asks participants to rate on a seven-point scale how greatly their self-worth is affected by their performance on various domains (appearance, academic/occupational competence, competition, family support, virtue, approval from others, and athletics). The version used in this study differs from Crocker’s original version in that 1) the wording of all items was slightly altered to lower necessary reading level, 2) the domain of “God’s love” was eliminated and replaced with the domain of “athletics”, and 3) the wording of questions pertaining to scholastic competence was altered for the parent version to reflect occupational competence (see Appendix B for added and reworded questions). The wording of all other questions is identical in the parent and child versions. Domain-specific items were
averaged and compared to produce a hierarchy of contingent domains. Analyses of the Crocker’s original six scales (appearance, academic competence, competition, family support, virtue, approval) showed generally adequate reliability ($\alpha = .65 - .83$). The academic competence scale that was reworded to reflect job competence for the parent measure showed slightly lower reliability that the original scale ($\alpha = .64$ versus $\alpha = .74$) and the new scale assessing athletic competence also showed slightly lower reliability than the original Crocker scales ($\alpha = .60$).

*Parenting Style.* Parenting style was assessed through the use of a shortened form of the Child Rearing Practices Report (CRPR; Rickel & Biasatti, 1982; Roberts & Strayer, 1987), a modified, paper-and-pencil version of the Block Child Rearing Practices Q-sort (Block, 1965). This questionnaire consists of 43 of the original 91 statements describing child rearing attitudes and values, which participants rate on a six-point scale (not at all descriptive—very descriptive of me). The CRPR was administered in questionnaire format because it is more convenient and less time-consuming for participants than the Q-sort. From this questionnaire, relevant items were summed to produce scores on nurturance, restrictiveness, warmth, and conflict. Analyses of the scales for both mothers and fathers showed generally adequate reliability ($\alpha = .70 - .86$) with the exception of maternal and paternal conflict (both $\alpha = .47$) and paternal warmth ($\alpha = .54$).

*Parent-Child Relationship Quality.* The nature of parent-child relationships was measured with a slightly modified version of the Parental Environment Questionnaire
(PEQ; Elkins, McGue, & Iacono, 1997). The PEQ was developed by the Minnesota Twin Family Study to assess specific parent-child relationships. This self-report questionnaire obtains mother, father, and child reports of the child’s relationship with each parent separately, making it possible to determine how each family member perceives his/her relationship with other family members. Parents and children rate aspects of their relationship on a 4-point scale (from definitely true to definitely false). Each child completed up to two sets of ratings on the same items (one for mother and one for father) while parents rate their own relationship with the specific child participating in the study. The items are essentially the same for both parents and children, with alterations in wording appropriate for the particular raters. Items were summed to produce scores of conflict, involvement, regard for parent, regard for child, and parental structure. The PEQ was modified slightly for this study by the removal of 10 items (bringing the total to 40 items). Two of the removed items asked about parental behavior that could be deemed potentially abusive (and therefore would require report to Child Protective Services). Eight other items did not belong to any of the above scales, did not tap behaviors of interest to this study, and were removed in an effort to shorten questionnaire length. Analyses of the four scales for adolescents and both parents showed adequate reliability for most ($\alpha = .81 - .88$) with the exception of the scale for “parental structure” from both the adolescents’ ($\alpha = .51$) and parents’ ($\alpha = .43$) perspective, and the scale for “child’s regard for parent” from the parent’s perspective
(α = .57).

Moralization of Domains. To assess parent and child beliefs and values regarding particular domains, both parents and children were presented with a series of 10 vignettes depicting hypothetical transgressions in: 1) appearance/weight and 2) academic achievement (the two traditionally non-moral domains of interest); 3) kindness towards others and 4) honesty (two domains generally recognized as universally ‘moral’); and 5) athletic achievement (a domain believed less likely to be morally loaded for most participants). It is believed that individuals who hold specific domains as especially significant (i.e. moral) will evaluate others more harshly in regards to transgressions in those domains—regardless of intention—than will those who attach less significance to it. Only transgression, and not exemplar, vignettes were used because the Duke studies of the 1970’s showed that young children failed to consider intentions of actors only when the action outcomes were negative. Intention influenced their moral judgments when outcomes were positive. Specifically, Costanzo & Fraenkel (1987) found that in vignettes tapping areas of low maternal importance, with both positive and negative outcomes, and areas of high maternal importance with positive outcomes, there was an increase in intent differentiation with age; but in the high concern, negative outcome vignettes, there was a significant decrease in intent use with age. This is a rather strong implication that children become more absolutist only in their evaluation of negative behavior in domains for which parents report strong emotional involvement or
Two transgression vignettes were included for each domain, one that contained a qualifier regarding intention (thus potentially making the transgression more ‘excusable’), and one that did not. Parents’ vignettes were titled “Parenting Dilemmas” and contained 10 hypothetical stories involving their own child. After parents read each transgression, they completed a series of four questions addressing the specific transgression and their reaction. First, they rated on a 5-point scale their 1) level of concern about the transgression, 2) whether they believed the transgression warranted a parental reaction, and 3) how likely they would be to react if their child transgressed in the way described. Parents’ ratings on the three likert-scale items for each vignette were summed to produce an overall rating of transgression related concern. Analyses showed adequate reliability for this scale, with alphas for each vignette for both mothers and fathers ranging from .75 to .94.

Next, parents indicated in their own words how they would react if their child had behaved in the manner described in the vignette. These open-ended responses were coded for the particular strategy used (active assistance, encouragement/advice, induction, control, love withdrawal/guilt, verbal punishment, physical punishment, reassurance/support) and its relevance to the transgression by two independent coders who trained to reliability. Analyses conducted on the forty parent dilemma sets used in coder training (one quarter of the total parent responses) indicated adequate reliability.
All ten dilemmas were coded on eleven domains for a total of 110 codes. Of these, 103 yielded Kappas between .70 and 1.00, and six had Kappas between .50 and .69. After review of the codes showing less than ideal reliability, all remaining parental vignette responses were coded twice. A post-hoc analysis of the entire sample yielded similar reliability to the initial training set and means of the two coder responses were used for all remaining statistical analyses. See Appendix C for parents’ vignettes and questions.

Children’s vignettes, titled “Dilemmas” described a hypothetical other child transgressing in an identical manner. The vignette children were given gender-neutral names, in an effort to keep any name preference effects constant for all participants, but the pronouns used in the story were changed to specifically match the gender of the respondents. This gender matching was done so that participants could more easily identify with the child in the story. Using a 5-point scale, youth participants 1) rated how much they liked the hypothetical child in each vignette, 2) assessed the hypothetical child’s general “badness”, and 3) rated whether they felt the child should be punished. In areas of high contingent worth, there should be high moral judgments by children and they should judge others who have transgressed in important areas to be “worse” than those who have transgressed in less important areas.

Children were also asked to rate on a 5-point scale 4) how upset their own parents would be if they behaved similarly to the child in the story, 5) how likely their parents would be to punish them and 6) how badly they would feel about themselves if
they were in the role of the story child. These ratings are believed to be necessary to assess the transmission of a domain-specific value structure for several reasons. First, it is likely that children judge themselves similarly to how they judge others, especially in highly contingent areas. Second, in discussing intergenerational value transmission, it is important to note that perceived attitude similarity is greater than actual attitude similarity between parents and children (Acock & Bengtson, 1980). Since children can neither accept nor reject a domain-related message they do not accurately perceive, a child’s perception of parental attitudes is an important factor to consider in value transmission. Therefore it is important to determine what affective and behavioral reaction these early adolescents anticipate receiving from their parents for a hypothetical transgression in a given domain, and whether that anticipated reaction is similar to, or different from, parents reported reaction and their own domain self-structure. Third, given that research has shown that children as young as age nine have consistent perceptions of their parents’ preferred behaviors for them (Whitbeck & Gecas, 1988); it was believed their ratings would accurately reflect their perceptions of parental attitudes.

Children’s ratings on the six likert-scale items for each vignette were summed to produce an overall rating of transgression related concern. Analyses showed adequate reliability for this overall scale, with alphas for each vignette ranging from .71 to .87. The youth participants also completed a checklist rating the hypothetical other children
in each vignette along a series of 28 positive and negative dimensions. It is believed that in areas of high worth children will rate transgressors more negatively even on unrelated attributes (generalized judgments of “badness”). These attribute dimensions were chosen from a list of 2200 words from the Adjective Generation Technique based on their mean value and standard deviation (inter-rater agreement) on the dimension of “favorability” (Allen & Potkay, 1983). See Appendix D for vignettes and questions.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

All questionnaire responses were double-entered into SPSS (versions 14.0 and 15.0; SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) and verified for accuracy before measure scales were created from individual items. Next descriptive and exploratory analyses were conducted first for the whole sample, and then separately by group. These initial analyses consisted of examinations of means and standard deviations as well as simple T-test comparisons. Of specific interest were comparisons of ratings of competence in domains, importance of domains to self-esteem and contingencies of self-worth, and domain-specific beliefs (vignette ratings) between the three groups. Although no specific hypotheses were made regarding statistically significant differences between groups (given expected within group variability), it was believed that there would likely be some noticeable differences between the groups (namely that the Academic group
would evidence a higher mean competence and contingency ratings for academics than
the other groups and the Weight-loss group would evidence lower mean competence
ratings for appearance and higher mean negative overall ratings for appearance-related
transgressions than the other groups). Descriptive statistics for the main variables of
interest are shown in Table 2 for the adolescent sample as a whole and for each group
separately. Analogous descriptive statistics for participating mothers are listed in Table
3 and fathers in Table 4.
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Adolescents

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<th>Community</th>
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<td>SD</td>
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† significant difference between groups
* significantly different groups; ** outlier group
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Adolescents, continued

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</table>

† significant difference between groups
* significantly different groups;  ** outlier group

As expected, the Academic group of adolescents was significantly different from the Weight-loss and Community groups in their ratings of academic competence ($t(118) = 6.08, p < .001$) and the importance of academics to their self-worth as assessed by both the Harter scale ($t(120) = 3.01, p < .01$) and the Contingencies of Self-Worth scale ($t(125) = 2.71, p < .01$). They also rated the vignette describing an academic transgression without a qualifier as significantly more negative than did the other two groups ($t(124) = 3.14, p < .01$). The Academic group reported significantly higher ratings on behavioral conduct ($t(120) = 4.47, p < .001$), parental approval ($t(119) = 4.77, p < .001$), and global self-worth ($t(118) = 3.68, p < .001$) and their ratings of the importance of parental approval ($t(119) = 2.35, p < .05$) and virtue ($t(125) = 2.68, p < .01$) to their self-worth were higher as well.

The Weight-loss group’s ratings of their own physical appearance was
significantly lower than were the ratings of the Academic and Community groups 

\( t(120) = 4.69, \ p < .001 \) and their self-worth was significantly more contingent on 
appearance \( t(125) = -2.07, \ p < .05 \) and the approval of others \( t(125) = -2.53, \ p < .05 \). 

They also rated the honesty transgression without a qualifier as significantly less 
negative than did the other two groups \( t(125) = 3.59, \ p < .01 \). The Community group of 
adolescents was not an outlier on any self-relevant or transgression domains, but 
differed from at least one of the other groups in certain domain-specific ratings. 

Specifically, the Community group’s ratings of their athletic competence were higher 

than were the Weight-loss group’s \( t(73) = -2.32, \ p < .05 \) and they rated the athletic 
transgression without a qualifier as significantly more negative than did the Academic 
group \( t(104) = -2.30, \ p < .05 \).

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Mothers**

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\(^\dagger\) significant difference between groups

\(^*\) significantly different groups; \(^**\) outlier group

60
Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Mothers, continued

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† significant difference between groups
* significantly different groups
** outlier group
Similar to the adolescents, Academic group mothers rated themselves as more intelligent than did the mothers in the Weight-loss or Community groups ($t(99) = 3.50, p < .001$) and saw the academic transgression without a qualifier as significantly more negative ($t(62) = -2.31, p < .05$) than did the Weight-loss group mothers. They also rated the domain of sociability as more important to their self-worth ($t(100) = -2.12, p < .05$) and the kindness transgression with a qualifier as more negative ($t(99) = 2.42, p < .05$) than did the other two groups.

The Weight-loss group mothers’ self-worth was more strongly contingent on family support ($t(99) = -2.29, p < .05$), appearance ($t(99) = -2.47, p < .05$), athletics ($t(99) = -2.60, p < .05$), job/work competence ($t(99) = -2.24, p < .05$), and others approval ($t(99) = -2.62, p < .01$) than was the self-worth of mothers’ in either the Academic or Community groups. They also rated the honesty transgression with a qualifier as significantly less negative than either of the other two groups did ($t(99) = 2.01, p < .05$) and rated intimate relationships as more important to their self-worth than the Community mothers did ($t(52) = 2.02, p < .05$).

As with the adolescents, the Community group mothers were not an outlier on any self-relevant or transgression domain.
### Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Fathers

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† significant difference between groups  
* significantly different groups  
** outlier group
Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Fathers, continued

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</table>

† significant difference between groups
* significantly different groups
** outlier group

Unlike the adolescents and mothers, the fathers had fewer domains in which one group stood out as significantly different. Weight-loss group fathers rated their global self worth as significantly lower \((t(59) = 3.48, p < .001)\) than did the Academic and Community fathers’, and Academic group fathers rated the weight transgression without a qualifier as significantly less negative than did the Weight-loss or Community groups \((t(58) = -2.54, p < .05)\). The Community group fathers had the most distinguishing domains: they rated appearance as significantly more important \((t(60) = 2.76, p < .01)\) and intimate relationships as significantly less important \((t(60) = -2.45, p < .05)\) to their self-esteem than did the Weight-loss or Academic fathers and they saw the weight transgression with a qualifier as significantly more negative than did either of
the other two groups ($t(58) = 2.57, p < .05$).

Despite the few outliers, there were several domains in which two or more
groups differed significantly from each other. The Weight-loss group fathers rated
themselves as less attractive ($t(41) = -2.54, p < .05$) and considered a sense of humor to be
more important to their self-esteem ($t(42) = 2.61, p < .05$) than did the Academic group
fathers. They also rated the athletic transgression without a qualifier ($t(28) = -2.26, p <
.05$) and the kindness transgression with a qualifier ($t(27) = -2.53, p < .05$) as significantly
less negative than did the Community group fathers. All three groups differed
significantly from each other on their ratings of the academic transgression without a
qualifier. The Weight-loss group saw it as less negative than either the Academic ($t(39) =$
-2.28, $p < .05$) or Community ($t(26) = -4.45, p < .001$) groups did, and those two groups
also differed significantly from each other ($t(45) = -2.22, p < .05$).

Similar exploratory analyses were also conducted to determine if there were
gender differences. Male adolescents’ ratings of their athletic competence ($M = 2.75, SD$
$= .76$) were significantly higher than were females’ ratings ($M = 2.45, SD = .77; t(120) =$
-2.13, $p < .05$) and the difference in their ratings of parental approval (male: $M = 3.43, SD$
$= .70$; female: $M = 3.17, SD = .80$) approached significance ($t (119)= -1.94, p = .055$). Female
adolescents reported that their self-worth was more highly contingent on appearance ($M$
$= 4.94, SD = 1.14$) than was males’ ($M = 4.04, SD = 1.11; t(125) = 4.49, p < .001$). There were
no significant gender differences in ratings of transgressions in any domain, but fathers
of sons rated the academic transgression without a qualifier as significantly more
negative than did fathers of daughters (sons: \(M = 12.00, SD = 1.95\); daughters: \(M = 10.41, SD = 2.52\); \(t(54) = -2.66, p < .01\)).

Analyses of all participants’ ratings of the transgression vignettes confirmed that
the addition of a qualifier was successful in making the related domain transgression
more ‘excusable’. As can be seen in Tables 2, 3, and 4, adolescents, mothers and fathers
all rated the transgression with a qualifier as less negative than a similar transgression
without a qualifier and with only three exceptions this difference was statistically
significant (weight transgression for adolescents: \(p < .05\); all others: \(p < .01\) and \(p < .001\)).

For athletic transgressions, the addition of a qualifier did not significantly alter ratings
for either adolescents (\(t(126) = -.04; p = n.s.\)) or fathers (\(t(59) = -1.68, p = n.s.\)); and the
absence of a qualifier did not significantly increase mothers’ negative ratings of a weight
transgression (\(t(98) = -1.29; p < n.s.\)).

Primary Analyses

Domain-Specific Values and Evaluations of the Self

The first hypothesis stated that domains that are ‘morally’ loaded for participants
(as reflected by more negative ratings of the domain-specific transgression vignettes) will
also be integral to their evaluations of the self (as reflected by higher ratings on the
Contingencies of Self-Worth, CSW, measure). (See Tables 5, 6, and 7 for intercorrelations
of participants’ ratings on the CSW and the transgression vignettes). This first hypothesis

66
was tested using regressions for each of the specific domains (appearance, academics, athletics, and virtue) for adolescents, mothers, and fathers separately. The indices of individuals’ ratings on the domain-specific transgressions were the predictor variables. Individuals’ domain specific ratings on the CSW were the outcome variables. Group membership and global self-esteem were entered as covariates. Higher domain-specific transgression index ratings (indicating greater negative affect) were expected to be associated with higher ratings on the domain’s index on the CSW. Table 8 presents regression weights (β) for the main effects between participants’ ratings on domain-specific transgressions with and without qualifiers and their ratings of the importance of specific domains to their self-worth (contingencies).
### Table 5: Correlations among Contingencies of Self-Worth and Ratings of Domain-Specific Transgressions for Adolescents

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Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

CCM = CSW competition; CAP = CSW appearance; CAT = CSW athletics; CAC = CSW academic competence; CVR = CSW virtue; CFS = CSW family support; CAO = CSW approval of others; SWQ = academic transgression with qualifier; SNQ = academic transgression no qualifier; AWQ = athletic transgression with qualifier; ANQ = athletic transgression no qualifier; WWQ = weight transgression with qualifier; WNQ = weight transgression no qualifier; KWQ = kindness transgression with qualifier; KNQ = kindness transgression no qualifier; HWQ = honesty transgression with qualifier; HNQ = honesty transgression no qualifier
**Table 6: Correlations among Contingencies of Self-Worth and Ratings of Domain-Specific Transgressions for Mothers**

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*Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001*

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Table 7: Correlations among Contingencies of Self-Worth and Ratings of Domain-Specific Transgressions for Fathers

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Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

CCM = CSW competition; CAP = CSW appearance; CAT = CSW athletics; CAC = CSW academic competence; CVR = CSW virtue; CFS = CSW family support; CAO = CSW approval of others; SWQ = academic transgression with qualifier; SNQ = academic transgression no qualifier; ANQ = athletic transgression with qualifier; WNQ = weight transgression no qualifier; HWQ = honesty transgression with qualifier; HNQ = honesty transgression no qualifier.
Table 8: Transgression Ratings and Contingencies of Self-Worth Regression Weights (β), Controlling for Group Membership and Global Self-Worth

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<tr>
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<th>Adolescents n = 120</th>
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<tr>
<td>Virtue - kindness</td>
<td>.18*</td>
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<td>Virtue - honesty</td>
<td>.22*</td>
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<td>.29**</td>
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</table>

* = p ≤ .05; ** = p ≤ .01; *** = p ≤ .001

After controlling for group membership and global self-worth, more negative ratings of transgressions in the domains of academic performance (β = .32, t(118) = 3.55, p < .001), interpersonal kindness (β = .18, t(119) = 1.98, p = .05), and honesty (β = .22, t(119) = 2.48, p < .05) were significantly associated with adolescents rating their self-worth as more highly contingent on those related domains (academics and virtue). When qualifying events were added to transgressions in academics or virtue, the significant relationship to contingencies of self-worth in those domains no longer existed for adolescents. There were no significant associations between adolescents’ ratings of weight-related or athletic transgressions and their ratings of the importance of these domains to their self-worth.
For mothers, more negative ratings on vignettes depicting their child hypothetically transgressing in the domains of kindness ($\beta = .26$, $t(96) = 2.58$, $p < .05$) and honesty ($\beta = .29$, $t(97) = 2.85$, $p < .01$) were also significantly associated with mothers rating their own self-worth as more highly contingent on virtue. However, unlike the adolescents, when qualifying events were added to the hypothetical transgressions, these relationships became stronger (kindness: $\beta = .30$, $t(97) = 3.01$, $p < .01$; honesty: $\beta = .35$, $t(97) = 3.58$, $p = .001$). The same was true for fathers: more negative ratings of the kindness transgression vignette was significantly associated with father’s rating their self-worth as more highly contingent on virtue ($\beta = .30$, $t(59) = 2.32$, $p < .05$) and the addition of a qualifying event made this association to ratings of virtue even stronger for the kindness transgression ($\beta = .43$, $t(58) = 3.33$, $p < .01$) and significant for the honesty transgression ($\beta = .27$, $t(57) = 2.05$, $p < .05$). Similar to adolescents, there were no significant associations between either parents’ ratings of weight-related transgressions and their ratings of the importance of appearance to self-worth. There were also no significant associations between either parents’ ratings of domains that depicted their child hypothetically transgressing in the academic domain and ratings of the importance of work competence to their own self-worth. For fathers, there were also no significant associations between ratings of athletic transgressions and ratings of athletic performance to overall self-worth. And while for mothers there was a significant association between negative ratings of an athletic transgression with a qualifying event
and the important of athletic competence to their own self-worth (β = .20, t(95) = 2.10, p < .05), the absence of a qualifying event reduced this association to below significance (β = .17, t(98) = 1.79, p = .08).

**Parental Transmission of Domain-Specific Values**

The second hypothesis stated that adolescents’ evaluations of domain-specific transgressions (the Vignettes) will be predicted by their parents’ ratings of those same transgressions. (See Tables 9 and 10 for correlations between parents’ ratings and adolescents’ ratings on the transgression vignettes). This hypothesis was tested using regression analysis with parents’ domain-specific transgression ratings as the predictor variable (mothers and fathers separately) and adolescents’ ratings of the same transgressions as the outcome variable. Because some significant differences were noted between groups in adolescents’ ratings of domain transgressions (see Table 2), and since mothers and fathers ratings were investigated separately, group and child gender were entered as a covariates in the regression analyses and potential interactions were investigated.
Table 9: Correlations between Adolescents’ and Mothers’ Transgression Ratings

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Note. * = p <.05

Mothers’ ratings: MSWQ = academic transgression with qualifier; MSNQ = academic transgression no qualifier; MAWQ = athletic transgression with qualifier; MANQ = athletic transgression no qualifier; MWWQ = weight transgression with qualifier; MWNQ = weight transgression no qualifier; MKWQ = kindness transgression with qualifier; MKNQ = kindness transgression no qualifier; MHWQ = honesty transgression with qualifier; MHNQ = honesty transgression no qualifier

Adolescents’ ratings: ASWQ = academic transgression with qualifier; ASNQ = academic transgression no qualifier; AAWQ = athletic transgression with qualifier; AANQ = athletic transgression no qualifier; AWWQ = weight transgression with qualifier; AWNQ = weight transgression no qualifier; AKWQ = kindness transgression with qualifier; AKNQ = kindness transgression no qualifier; AHWQ = honesty transgression with qualifier; AHNQ = honesty transgression no qualifier
Table 10: Correlations between Adolescents’ and Fathers’ Transgression Ratings

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Note. * = p < .05; ** = p < .01

Fathers’ ratings: FSWQ = academic transgression with qualifier; FSNQ = academic transgression no qualifier; FAWQ = athletic transgression with qualifier; FANQ = athletic transgression no qualifier; FWWQ = weight transgression with qualifier; FWNQ = weight transgression no qualifier; FKQQ = kindness transgression with qualifier; FKQQ = kindness transgression no qualifier; FHWQ = honesty transgression with qualifier; FHNQ = honesty transgression no qualifier

Adolescents’ ratings: ASWQ = academic transgression with qualifier; ASNQ = academic transgression no qualifier; AAWQ = athletic transgression with qualifier; AANQ = athletic transgression no qualifier; AWWQ = weight transgression with qualifier; AWNQ = weight transgression no qualifier; AKQQ = kindness transgression with qualifier; AKQQ = kindness transgression no qualifier; AHWWQ = honesty transgression with qualifier; AHNQ = honesty transgression no qualifier
Table 11: Transgression Ratings Regression Weights (β), Controlling for Group, Gender

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<th>Adolescents’ n=120</th>
<th>Mothers n = 98</th>
<th>Fathers n = 59</th>
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* = p ≤ .05; ** = p ≤ .01; † = interaction by gender; ◻ = interaction by group

Table 11 presents regression weights (β) for the main effects of parents’ ratings on domain-specific transgressions with and without qualifiers and their adolescents’ ratings of those same transgressions. After controlling for gender and group membership, adolescents domain specific transgression ratings were significantly associated with their fathers’ ratings on the academic transgression (β = .28, t(54) = 2.16, p < .05), the athletic transgression (β = .37, t(58) = 2.99, p < .01) and the weight transgression with a qualifier (β = .31, t(58) = 2.58, p < .05). For the weight transgression there were also significant interactions between fathers’ ratings and child gender (β = -.34, t(58) = -2.86, p < .01) and fathers’ ratings and child group (β = .30, t(89) = 2.41, p < .05). As fathers’ ratings of the weight transgression with a qualifier (broken leg leading to weight gain) became more negative, daughters’ ratings also increased in negativity while sons’ did not (see Figure 1).
Figure 1: Father’s Rating of a Weight Transgression with a Qualifier by Gender and Adolescent’s Rating of the Same Transgression
For adolescents in the Weight-loss group, as their fathers’ ratings of the same weight transgression increased in negativity, their ratings decreased, while the opposite relationship was found in the Academic group and to the lesser extent the Community group (see Figure 2). No other significant associations were found between fathers’ transgression ratings and adolescents’ transgression ratings in other domains.

Figure 2: Father’s Rating of a Weight Transgression with a Qualifier by Group and Adolescent’s Rating of the Same Transgression
There were no significant main effects of mothers’ transgression ratings on adolescents’ ratings in any domain, although for the academic transgression with a qualifier (out sick before quiz and thus failed the quiz) the association approached significance ($\beta = .20$, $t(97) = 1.86$, $p = .066$). There was a significant interaction between mothers’ transgression rating and child gender for the honesty transgression with a qualifier ($\beta = -.21$, $t(98) = -2.04$, $p < .05$). Gender moderated the relationship between mothers’ ratings and adolescents’ ratings such that as mothers’ ratings of that transgression (lying due to fear of a bully) increased in negativity, daughters’ ratings also became more negative while sons’ ratings became less negative (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Mother’s Rating of an Honesty Transgression with a Qualifier by Gender and Adolescent’s Rating of the Same Transgression](image-url)
Post-Hoc Analysis. Post-hoc analyses were conducted to determine whether specific discipline strategies endorsed by parents were associated with adolescents’ transgression ratings and to explore whether specific strategies moderated the relationship between parents’ ratings of specific transgressions and adolescents’ ratings of the same transgressions. Based on previous research on discipline strategies and internalization of values, it was believed that greater use of power-assertive techniques (control and verbal and physical punishment) would be related to decreased similarity between a parent’s rating and their adolescent’s rating (Hoffman, 1970; 1983). Greater use of inductive techniques was predicted to be related to greater similarity between parents’ ratings and adolescents’ ratings (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). However, because previous research has either found either no relationship between moral internalization and love-withdrawal techniques (Hoffman, 1983), or more varied and unclear effects (Lepper, 1983), no predictions were made as to the role of love-withdrawal techniques in moderating the relationship between parents’ and adolescents’ ratings. To assess domain specific discipline strategies, parents were asked to indicate, in their own words, how they would react if their child had behaved in the manner described in each of the transgression vignettes. These open-ended responses were then coded for the particular technique used. The response rates (in percentages) of each particular technique for each transgression vignette are shown in Tables 12 (Mothers) and 13 (Fathers).
Table 12: Mothers’ use (%) of Specific Discipline Strategies (N=102)

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<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
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Table 13: Fathers’ use (%) of Specific Discipline Strategies (N=62)

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<th>Athletic none</th>
<th>Athletic qual</th>
<th>Appearance none</th>
<th>Appearance qual</th>
<th>Kindness none</th>
<th>Kindness qual</th>
<th>Honesty none</th>
<th>Honesty qual</th>
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<td>Active Assistance</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage/advice</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love with/guilt-shame</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Verbal punishment</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassurance/support</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To test these post-hoc questions, regression analyses were conducted with adolescents’ ratings of the domain specific transgressions as the outcome variables once again. Parental discipline strategy, parental transgression rating, and the interaction between parental discipline strategy and transgression rating were entered as the predictor variables (mothers and fathers separately; control, induction, and love withdrawal separately). Group membership was once again entered as a covariate, but given the lack of significant relationships with gender in the previous analyses, gender was dropped as a covariate from these analyses.

After controlling for group membership and parental transgression ratings, there was a significant main effect of paternal controlling discipline strategies on adolescents’ ratings for the academic transgression with a qualifier (out sick and failed a quiz; $\beta = -0.28$, $t(58) = -2.06$, $p < .05$). Greater reported use of controlling strategies on the part of the father was associated with adolescents’ rating the transgression as less negative. A similar effect of paternal use of controlling strategies approached significance for the honesty transgression (lying about completing a report; $\beta = -0.23$, $t(58) = -1.92$, $p = .061$).

There was a nearly significant main effect of paternal use of induction on adolescents’ ratings of the academic transgression (failing grade; $\beta = 0.24$, $t(54) = 1.85$, $p = .056$), but this was in the opposite direction of the controlling strategies effects. Greater reported use of induction techniques in response to an academic transgression was associated with adolescents’ rating the same transgression as more negative.
A significant main effect was found for maternal use of love withdrawal
techniques on adolescents’ ratings of the weight transgression with a qualifier (gained
weight due to broken leg; $\beta = .21, t(97) = 2.14, p < .05$). Paternal use of love withdrawal
also approached significance for the academic transgression ($\beta = .23, t(54) = 1.87, p =
.068$). Greater reported parental use of love withdrawal/shame inducing techniques for
transgressions in these domains was associated with adolescents’ rating these domain
transgressions as more negative.

In addition to the above main effects, reported discipline strategy use also
moderated the relationship between parents’ ratings and adolescents’ ratings for some
transgressions. There was a significant interaction between the use of controlling
discipline strategies and parents’ ratings of the academic transgression (mom: $\beta = -.25,$
t(97) = -2.55, $p < .05$; dad: $\beta = .24, t(54) = 2.13, p < .05$), but the effect of controlling
strategies on the association between parents’ and adolescents’ rating was different for
mothers and fathers. As mothers’ ratings of the academic transgression increased in
negativity, adolescents’ ratings of the same transgression also increased in negativity for
those families in which the mother reported she would use less controlling discipline
techniques for that particular transgression (i.e. mothers’ and adolescents’ ratings were
positively correlated). In those families in which the mother reported she would use
more controlling discipline, adolescents’ ratings of the transgression became less negative
(i.e. mothers’ and adolescents’ ratings were negatively correlated; See Figure 4).
Figure 4: Mother’s Rating of an Academic Transgression by Controlling Discipline Use and Adolescent’s Rating of the Same Transgression
However, for fathers’, greater use of controlling discipline strategies for an academic transgression seemed to *increase* the similarity between their own and their adolescents’ ratings of the negativity of the transgression (see Figure 5).

![Figure 5: Father’s Rating of an Academic Transgression by Controlling Discipline Use and Adolescent’s Rating of the Same Transgression](image-url)
Controlling discipline strategies also moderated the relationship between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings for the kindness transgression with a qualifier ($\beta = -.61, t(57) = -3.32, p < .01$) and the athletic transgression ($\beta = .26, t(58) = 2.44, p < .05$). For the kindness transgression involving knocking down a smaller child while rushing to meet a teacher, greater use of controlling discipline strategies was related to a negative correlation between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings of the transgression, while a lower use of controlling strategies was related to a positive correlation between their ratings (See Figure 6).

![Figure 6: Father’s Rating of a Kindness Transgression with a Qualifier by Controlling Discipline Use and Adolescent’s Rating of the Same Transgression](chart.png)
However, similar to the academic transgression, greater use of controlling discipline strategies for an athletic transgression (losing a basketball game) seemed to increase the similarity between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings of the negativity of that transgression (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Father’s Rating of an Athletic Transgression by Controlling Discipline Use and Adolescent’s Rating of the Same Transgression
Contrary to predictions, induction strategies moderated the relationship between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings of the athletic transgression ($\beta = -0.34, t(58) = -2.74, p < 0.01$) such that greater use of induction seemed to moderately decrease the similarity between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings while a lower use of induction increased transgression rating similarity (see Figure 8). Induction techniques did not significantly moderate the relationship between mothers’ and adolescents’ ratings for any transgression.

![Figure 8: Father’s Rating of an Athletic Transgression by Induction Use and Adolescent’s Rating of the Same Transgression](image-url)
Although there were no significant interactions between love withdrawal techniques and mothers’ transgression ratings, use of love withdrawal techniques in the honesty transgression with a qualifier approached significance in moderating the relationship between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings of that transgression ($\beta = .28$, $t(56) = 1.81$, $p = .076$). Greater use of love withdrawal/guilt/shame for a relatively excusable transgression (lying out of fear of a bully) seemed to increase the similarity between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings of the negativity of the transgression (see Figure 9).

![Figure 9: Father’s Rating of an Honesty Transgression with Qualifier by Love Withdrawal Use and Adolescent’s Rating of the Same Transgression](image-url)
Post-hoc analyses were also conducted to explore whether socio-economic status moderated the effectiveness of power assertive techniques in the transmission of domain specific values. Regression analyses investigating the three-way interaction between controlling discipline strategies, socio-economic status, and parents’ transgression ratings in predicting adolescents’ transgression ratings yielded no consistent pattern of significant effects.

*Internalization of Domain-Specific Values*

The third hypothesis stated that adolescents’ contingencies of self-worth will reflect an internalization of their parents’ beliefs about domain importance in those families exhibiting nurturing, warm parenting styles and close parent-child involvement and regard. This hypothesis was tested using a regression analysis with parents’ ratings of domain-specific transgressions as the predictor variable (mothers and fathers separately) and adolescents’ domain-specific contingencies of self-worth ratings as the outcome variable. Child gender, group and global self-esteem were entered as covariates. Ratings of parenting style (as measured by the CRPR) and parent-child relationship quality (measured by the PEQ) were explored as possible moderating variables. (See Tables 14 and 15 for correlations between parents’ transgression ratings and adolescents’ domain ratings on the Contingencies of Self-Worth measure).
Table 14: Correlations between Mothers’ Transgression Ratings and Adolescents’ Domain-Specific Ratings of Contingent Self-Worth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transgression</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Athletic</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Kindness</th>
<th>Honesty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>qual</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>qual</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>qual</td>
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<td>.06</td>
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<td>.10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virtue CSW</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = p < .05; ** = p < .01

Table 15: Correlations between Fathers’ Transgression Ratings and Adolescents’ Domain-Specific Ratings of Contingent Self-Worth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transgression</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Athletic</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Kindness</th>
<th>Honesty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>qual</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<td>Virtue CSW</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = p < .05; ** = p < .01

There were no significant main effects of parents’ domain transgression ratings on adolescents’ domain-specific contingencies of self-worth (CSW); however, parent-child relationship quality did moderate the association between parents’ transgression ratings and adolescents’ CSW for two domains. There was a significant interaction between mothers’ ratings of the kindness transgression and adolescents’ regard for
mother in predicting adolescents’ ratings of virtue on the CSW ($\beta = .20, t(94) = 2.03, p < .05$). For adolescents’ whose ratings of regard for their mother were higher, as their mothers’ ratings of the kindness transgression increased in negativity, their ratings of the importance of virtue to their self-worth also increased. For adolescents’ whose ratings of regard for their mother were lower, as their mothers’ ratings of the kindness transgression became more negative, their ratings of the importance of virtue to the self-worth decreased (see Figure 10).

![Figure 10: Mother’s Rating of a Kindness Transgression by Adolescent’s Regard for Mother and Adolescent’s Rating of the Importance of Virtue to Self-Worth](image)

Figure 10: Mother’s Rating of a Kindness Transgression by Adolescent’s Regard for Mother and Adolescent’s Rating of the Importance of Virtue to Self-Worth
Adolescents’ regard for father also approached significance in similarly moderating the relationship between fathers’ ratings of the academic transgression with and without a qualifier and adolescents’ ratings of the importance of academic competence to the self-worth (with qualifier: $\beta = .31, t(56) = 1.94, p = .059$; without qualifier: $\beta = .31, t(53) = 1.93, p = .06$). In both cases, for adolescents’ whose ratings of regard for their father were higher, as their fathers’ ratings of the academic transgression increased in negativity, their ratings of the importance of academic competence to their self-worth increased (see Figure 11).

![Figure 11: Father's Rating of an Academic Transgression by Adolescent's Regard for Father and Adolescent’s Rating of the Importance of Academics to Self-Worth](image-url)
Post-Hoc Analysis. Post-hoc analyses were conducted to determine whether adolescents’ domain ratings on the CSW were related to their parents’ CSW ratings and to explore whether parenting style or parent-child relationship quality moderated the relationship between parents’ and adolescents’ contingencies of self-worth. (See Table 16 for correlations between parents’ and adolescents’ CSW ratings).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 16: Correlations between Parents’ and Adolescents’ Domain-Specific Ratings of Contingent Self-Worth</th>
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<td>Adolescents’</td>
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<td>Academic CSW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appearance CSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtue CSW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† = p < .10
To test these post-hoc questions, regression analyses were conducted with adolescents’ domain-specific CSW ratings as the outcome variables once again. Parents’ domain-specific CSW ratings were entered as the predictor variables (mothers and fathers separately). Child gender, group and global self-esteem were entered as covariates. Ratings of both parenting style and parent-child relationship quality were once again explored as possible moderating variables.

There were no significant main effects of parents’ domain specific CSW ratings on adolescents’ CSW ratings; however, parenting style and parent-child relationship quality did moderate the association between parents’ CSW ratings and adolescents’ CSW for the domains of virtue and academic competence once again. There were significant interactions between both maternal nurturance and maternal warmth and mothers’ ratings of the importance of the domain of virtue to self-worth in predicting adolescents’ ratings of the importance of virtue (nurturance: $\beta = .22, t(95) = 2.24, p < .05$; warmth: $\beta = .24, t(95) = 2.49, p < .05$). For adolescents’ whose mothers’ parenting style was more nurturing or warm, as their mothers’ ratings of the importance of virtue to self-worth increased, their own ratings of the importance of virtue to their self-worth increased. For adolescents’ whose mothers’ were less warm or nurturing, as their mothers’ CSW virtue ratings increased, their ratings of the importance of virtue to their self-worth decreased (see Figure 12).
Figure 12: Mother’s Rating of the Importance of Virtue to Self-Worth by Maternal Nurturance and Adolescent’s Rating of the Importance of Virtue to Self-Worth
There was also a significant interaction between adolescents’ ratings of their involvement with dad and fathers’ ratings of virtue on the CSW in predicting adolescents’ ratings of virtue on the CSW ($\beta = .29$, $t(55) = 2.09$, $p < .05$). For adolescents who rated themselves as more involved with their fathers, as their fathers’ ratings of the importance of virtue to self-worth increased, their own ratings of the importance of virtue to their self-worth increased. For adolescents’ who rated themselves as less involved with their fathers, as their fathers’ CSW virtue ratings increased, their ratings of the importance of virtue to their self-worth decreased (see Figure 13).

![Figure 13: Father’s Rating of the Importance of Virtue by Paternal Involvement and Adolescent’s Rating of the Importance of Virtue to Self-Worth](image-url)
In the domain of academic competence, adolescents’ ratings of involvement and regard for their parents also moderated the relationship between parents’ ratings of the importance of job/work competence and adolescents’ ratings of the importance of academic competence (roughly equivalent domains for parents and children). There were significant interactions between ratings of regard for parent and parents’ ratings of the importance of job competence for both mothers ($\beta = .26, t(95) = 2.00, p < .05$) and fathers ($\beta = .28, t(56) = 2.09, p < .05$). For adolescents who indicated higher regard for their parents, as their parents’ ratings of the importance of job competence to self-worth increased, their own ratings of the importance of academic competence to their self-worth increased. For adolescents reporting lower regard for their parents, as their parents’ CSW job competence ratings increased, their ratings of the importance of academic competence to their self-worth decreased (see Figures 14 and 15).
Figure 14: Mother's Rating of the Importance of Job Competence by Maternal Regard and Adolescent's Rating of the Importance of Academic Competence to Self-Worth

Figure 15: Father's Rating of the Importance of Job Competence by Paternal Regard and Adolescent's Rating of the Importance of Academic Competence to Self-Worth
Adolescents’ ratings of involvement with dad also moderated the relationship between fathers’ ratings of job competence on the CSW and adolescents’ ratings of academic competence on the CSW in a similar manner ($\beta = .38$, $t(55) = 2.83$, $p < .01$). There was a positive correlation between fathers’ ratings of the importance of job competence and adolescents’ ratings of the importance of academic competence to their self-worth for those adolescents who rated themselves as more involved with their fathers. For those families in which adolescents rated themselves as less involved with their fathers, there was a negative correlation between fathers’ and teens’ ratings.

**DISCUSSION**

This dissertation project investigated the origins of self-worth structure and theorized that if children perceive their parents’ hierarchical construction of domain-specific values (through parental socialization of these values), and accept this configuration of importance, it will be built into their developing notions of the self and their internalized hierarchy of contingent domains. Therefore, by early adolescence, the domains on which individuals’ self-worth is most strongly based should reflect parental values, concerns, and parenting behaviors related to specific domains. Specifically, this dissertation proposed that an individual’s self worth is most strongly contingent on those domains that have taken on a ‘moral’ character due to parental socialization behaviors and this moral loading is why self-esteem is so affected by ‘failure’ in these domains.
The first step in testing this theory of parents’ influence on their children’s developing structure of self-worth involved assessing whether an individual’s rating of a domain’s importance to self-worth is related to his ratings of negative affect and consequence associated with transgressing in that domain. Higher ratings of negative affect and consequence were expected to indicate the ‘moral’ weight that domain carries for an individual. Although some domains are traditionally and nearly universally considered to be ‘moral’ values, a broader view of values would indicate that even traditionally non-moral domains can be raised to a ‘moral’ level by individual families, societies, or cultures. Achievement (academic in particular) and appearance are two such domains that are argued to have significant importance in western culture and for some individuals may have become so important they have been moralized and may have taken on a central role in the evaluation of self-worth. To investigate this proposition, families were recruited from three specific populations in an effort to find individuals for whom specific domains (achievement and appearance) are differentially salient, and for whom either (or both) domains may have become morally loaded and strongly connected to evaluations of self-worth. Exploratory analysis of group differences in ratings of domain competence, contingencies of self-worth, and domain-specific beliefs indicated that this targeted sampling effort was successful in that, even with within-group variability, there were statistically significant differences between groups.
As expected, in the domain of academics, ratings of competence, contingency of self-worth, and negativity about a related transgression were highest for those adolescents in the Academic group. Academic group mothers also rated themselves as more intelligent and saw the academic transgression as more negative than did mothers in the other groups. The Academic adolescents’ higher ratings on behavioral conduct, parental approval, and global self-worth are also not surprising for they are a group of high-achieving, well-behaved teens who likely receive a great deal of praise from parents and educators on a daily basis. Mothers of these high-achieving teens also appear to hold them to higher standards, as they rated the more excusable kindness transgression with a qualifier as significantly more negative than did the other mothers.

In the domain of appearance, ratings of one’s own perceived attractiveness were lowest and ratings of contingency of self-worth were highest for those adolescents in the Weight-loss group. Not only is it noteworthy that the Weight-loss group was an outlier on both measures, but the opposite direction of these ratings indicates that this group also evidenced the highest self-discrepancy for this domain. Of the three groups, their self-worth was most strongly tied to appearance, but they also believed they were performing the ‘worst’ in this area. Moreover, although it was not a statistically significant difference, Weight-loss group adolescents’ ratings of the weight transgression were also the most negative. Weight-loss group mothers rated their self-worth as more contingent on appearance and the approval of others, and fathers in this group rated
themselves as significantly less attractive. Interestingly, Weight-loss group mothers’
ratings of the honesty transgression with a qualifier (lying out of fear of a bully) were
also the least negative. Perhaps these mothers are acutely aware of the teasing their
overweight children likely face on a daily basis and view transgressions committed to
avoid such peer attacks as excusable. Appearance was also the only domain on which
there were gender differences in ratings of contingency of self-worth. Not surprisingly,
female adolescents reported that their self-worth was more highly contingent on
physical appearance than was males’.

Although the domain of athletic competence was not specifically targeted as a
domain of interest, it was included as representative of a domain that is traditionally
non-moral and also relatively less likely to become ‘moralized’. Interestingly,
preliminary analyses indicated that the participant recruitment strategy also successfully
produced an outlier group in this comparison domain. Community group adolescents’
ratings of athletic competence, contingency of self-worth, and negativity of an athletic
transgression were the highest, although the difference only reached statistical
significance when directly compared to each of the other two groups separately (and not
the mean of the two together). Community group fathers’ ratings of the athletic
transgression were also the most negative and were statistically more negative than the
Weight-loss group fathers’ ratings. Surprisingly, it was the Weight-loss group mothers
who rated their own self-worth as more contingent on athletics than did the other
mothers in the other groups. However, even for these mothers, and as expected, athletics was the domain on which self-worth was least contingent. Athletics was also the only domain on which there were significant gender differences in competence ratings; adolescent males rated themselves as more athletic than did the female adolescents.

After confirming that the sample was sufficiently varied in ratings of domain-specific competencies, contingencies of self-worth, and transgressions, the first part of the theory was tested. ‘Morally’ loaded domains (as reflected by more negative ratings of domain-specific transgressions) were expected to be more integral to individuals’ evaluations of self-worth (as reflected by higher ratings on Contingencies of Self-Worth, CSW), and the results lent qualified support to this hypothesis. For all participants, more negative ratings of the kindness and honesty transgressions were significantly associated with higher ratings of virtue on the CSW. “Virtue” (as operationalized by kindness and honesty) is a traditionally moral domain and was it was expected that ratings of transgression in related areas would be generally negative for all participants and that most individuals would base evaluations of the self at least in part on virtuous behavior. These findings are significant, however, because they indicate that even for a widely recognized and important ‘moral’ domain, individuals’ evaluations of related transgressions of others are significantly associated with the weight they assign to this domain when evaluating their own self-worth. As the moral loading of virtue increases,
self-worth becomes more highly contingent upon virtuous behavior.

Although not a traditionally moral issue, similar results were found for the domain of academic competence for adolescents, suggesting that academics may indeed become morally loaded for some teens. This moral loading was indicated by individuals assessing others’ academic transgressions more negatively and reporting that their own self-worth was more contingent upon academic performance. Comparable results were not found for parents’ competence domain, however, and a possible reason for this may be the not-quite-precise mapping of adolescent transgression to adult self-worth. Although believed to be roughly analogous to the adolescents’ domain of academic competence (on which they assessed their own child’s hypothetical transgression), parents’ CSW asked them to rate the importance of occupational competence to their self-worth. Perhaps the difference between the two domains (however slight) may be contributing to the lack of significant association between parents’ ratings of an academic transgression and their ratings of importance of job competence to self-worth.

With one exception, there was no evidence of ‘moral’ loading and associated increase in importance to self-worth for the domains of athletics and appearance. Like academics, neither is traditionally held as a moral domain in the way that virtue is, and while null findings were expected for the domain of athletics, it was believed that at least a portion of the study sample would have abnormally elevated the importance of appearance. Physical appearance, like academics, has become extremely important in our culture and
has been found to be strongly related to individuals’ feelings of self-worth. In fact, there has been considerable consensus that physical appearance heads the list of domains contributing most to self-esteem (Adams, 1977; Harter, 1987; 1990a; Lerner, Orlos & Knapp, 1976) because research has shown it to be the domain that consistently correlates the most highly with global self-esteem (Harter, 1990b). However, at least in this sample, a ‘moralization’ of appearance was not evident as assessed by the association between negativity of appearance transgression ratings and ratings of appearance on the CSW. It is possible that moralization of both of these domains does exist, but only for a such a limited number of individuals that it could not be detected given the sample size and associated power. Conversely, perhaps ratings of transgression were not the most appropriate way to assess differential importance of performance in these domains. While it is socially acceptable to praise and reward individuals who succeed in these domains (e.g. multi-million dollar professional sports and modeling contracts), it is less than acceptable to punish those who ‘fail’. It is clear that these two domains are differentially salient to individual’s evaluations of self-worth and whether it was due to self presentation concerns or inappropriateness of the transgression vignette itself, perhaps the moralization of athletics and/or appearance was not successfully assessed in this investigation.

The relative difference in ratings of transgressions with and without qualifiers was also expected to be an indication that a domain had taken on a moral loading. Results showed that the addition of qualifiers was successful at portraying transgressions as more
understandable and excusable as the average ratings of transgressions with qualifiers were significantly less negative than the ratings of transgression without qualifiers.

Notwithstanding this expected rating trend, given the Duke studies on the use of intention in moral judgments (Costanzo, et al. 1973; Costanzo & Fraenkel, 1987; Farnill, 1974), it was also predicted that individuals for whom a domain is especially morally loaded would rate transgressions with a qualifier as more negative than transgressions without a qualifier. Therefore, an even stronger association should be found between individuals’ ratings of a domain transgression with qualifier and their CSW ratings of that domain.

This was indeed found to be the case for the parent participants: when qualifying events were added to the hypothetical kindness and honesty transgressions, the relationships between mothers’ and fathers’ transgression ratings and their ratings of virtue on the CSW became stronger. Additionally, for mothers, the addition of a qualifying event made the relationship between their ratings of an athletic transgression and the domain of athletics on the CSW significant, indicating some ‘moralization’ of athletics for a subgroup of mothers in the sample. For adolescents, however, the significant relationship between transgression ratings and contingencies of self-worth for the domains of virtue and academics no longer existed when qualifying events were added to the transgressions. This was contrary to expectations and opposite of the findings for parents. The Costanzo and Fraenkel (1987) study, however, seems to account for this difference. They found that in domains of high concern and negative outcome,
there was a significant decrease in intent use with age. As they age, individuals appear to become more unconditional in their evaluation of negative behavior in moral domains and intention is less likely to alter their evaluation of a transgression. The adolescents in this sample are decades younger than the parents are and perhaps with time will become similarly absolutist in the domains that are most strongly tied to their self-worth.

The next step in testing this theory of parents’ influence on their children’s developing structure of self-worth involved assessing whether adolescents’ beliefs about the relative importance of domain-specific performance were related to their parents’ beliefs about performance in the same domain. The second hypothesis stated that adolescents’ evaluations of others’ domain-specific transgressions will be predicted by their parents’ rating of the same transgression, thus indicating successful transmission of domain-specific values. Initial analyses did not clearly support this hypothesis, however. Parents’ transgression ratings only directly predicted adolescents’ ratings on the academic and athletic transgressions, and only for fathers. There were no other statistically significant direct associations.

There was also no clear pattern of moderation by gender or group that would explain the lack of more significant findings, although gender and group did moderate the relationship between parents’ and adolescents’ ratings in one domain for each parent. Daughters appear to be directly influenced by their fathers’ feelings about weight and on
the vignette with a somewhat excusable weight-gain, as fathers’ ratings of the transgression became more negative, so did their daughters. Sons ratings, however, appeared to be unaffected by their fathers’. Perhaps fathers serve as a model for what other males consider attractive and desirable in regards to female physical appearance and daughters are therefore deeply affected by their fathers’ opinion. Additionally, while both the Academic and Community group adolescents’ ratings of the weight transgression with a qualifier were positively associated with their fathers’ ratings, Weight-loss group adolescents’ ratings were negatively associated with their dads’. As these adolescents’ fathers’ ratings became more negative, their own ratings became less negative. Unlike the majority of adolescents’ in the other two groups, adolescents’ in this group are arguably ‘failing’ in the domain of appearance—they are overweight and seeking treatment. Perhaps this counter movement in transgression ratings represents an internal protective mechanism designed to shield overweight adolescents’ self-worth from further attack. Whether their ratings represent their true beliefs or not, overweight adolescents’ in this sample are at the very least reporting that a hypothetical others’ weight-gain is not as negative as their parents’ report their own would be.

The moderating role of gender in the association between mothers’ ratings and adolescents’ ratings of the honesty transgression with a qualifier may also represent a type of protective mechanism. While daughters’ ratings of this transgression followed their mothers’, sons’ ratings moved in the opposite direction—they became less negative as
their mothers’ became more negative. A mother’s negative ratings on this transgression indicates that she would consider her child lying out of fear of a bully to be unacceptable (and perhaps even cowardly) and male adolescents may be more threatened by this implication than are female adolescents. Perhaps sons of mothers who have described this behavior as more unacceptable protect their ego by indicating that they find it to be excusable.

The relative lack of expected associations between parents’ and adolescents’ transgression ratings was somewhat surprising, but given the extensive body of research showing that different discipline strategies show varying degrees of effectiveness for transmission and internalization of values, further analyses seemed reasonable. Verbatim responses from parents’ regarding their reaction for each transgression were coded for specific discipline strategies used and post-hoc analyses were conducted to determine whether the discipline strategies endorsed by parents moderated parent-child rating agreement. Based on the reviewed developmental research, power-assertive (controlling), inductive, and love-withdrawal techniques were specifically targeted for analysis.

Although parental discipline strategies did not consistently moderate the relationships between parents’ and adolescents’ transgression ratings, when discipline did moderate the relationship, it did so in generally expected ways with few surprises. Greater use of power-assertive discipline strategies by father was associated with
adolescents rating an excusable academic transgression and an inexcusable honesty transgression as less negative. Controlling discipline also moderated the relationship between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings of the kindness transgression with a qualifier. As expected, greater use of power-assertion was related to a negative correlation between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings of the transgression.

Additionally, controlling discipline use moderated the relationship between parents’ and adolescents’ ratings of the academic transgression for both parents. While the interaction was in the expected direction for mothers, (greater use of power-assertive techniques reduced the similarity between mothers’ and adolescents’ ratings), it was in the opposite direction for fathers. Similarly, greater use of controlling discipline for an athletic transgression also seemed to increase the similarity between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings of that transgression rather than decrease it. Although power assertion does not appear to lead to successful intergenerational transmission of traditionally moral values (honesty and kindness to others), perhaps it is effective in transmitting paternal expectations for non-moral domains like academics and athletics.

The finding that parental use of induction also moderated father-adolescent agreement in an unexpected way lends further support to this assertion that a particular strategy’s efficacy is not universal, but depends in part on the situation in which it is used (Hoffman, 1983). Contrary to predictions, greater use of induction decreased the
similarity between fathers’ and adolescents’ ratings of an athletic transgression. While inductive techniques that focus on explanations of expectations, consequences for others, and discussions of ‘right and wrong’ are expected to promote transmission of traditionally moral values, perhaps they are ineffective at transmitting expectations in non-moral domains that have less to do with ‘moral’ or ethical behavior. Losing a basketball game does not truly cause anyone harm, and inducing a child to reason about why their poor athletic performance was ‘wrong’ may be an inappropriate and counter-productive strategy. Furthermore, in the conventional, non-moral domains, it is plausible that parent preference for induction over power assertion is interpreted by their adolescent children as an relative indifference to the domain. Especially in the domains of academic and athletic attainment, which are subject to change with effort exertion, parental induction might connote the acceptance of lower effort or be interpreted as a marker of their lower ability in those domains.

Given the above findings that discipline strategies showed varying effectiveness depending on the domain and situation in which they are used, post-hoc analyses were also conducted to determine if family environment moderated the efficacy of discipline and intergenerational transmission of values. Family socioeconomic status was added to the regression equations, but no consistent pattern of significant effects was found.

Although the findings linking adolescents’ transgression ratings to their parents’
transgression ratings yielded less than consistent results and failed to lend unequivocal support to the theory of intergenerational transmission of domain-specific beliefs, it is possible that the method of measurement contributed to the equivocal results.

Adolescents’ vignettes asked them to rate the transgression of a hypothetical other child, while parents’ vignettes required them to assess their emotional and behavioral reactions to the hypothetical transgression of their own children. This difference, subtle though it is, involves some not-so-trivial differences in emotional reactions that may have contributed to the lack of significant associations between adolescents’ and parents’ ratings.

The third hypothesis in this theory of parental influence on developing self-structure stated that adolescents’ contingencies of self-worth will reflect an internalization of their parents’ successfully-transmitted domain-specific values, and that successful transmission of these values will be moderated by parenting style and parent-child relationship quality. Analyses of the relationships between parents’ domain-specific transgression ratings and adolescents’ CSW ratings lent meager support to this hypothesis. Once again, in the traditionally moral domain of virtue and the non-traditional moral domain of academic achievement, adolescents’ level of regard for their parent moderated the relationship between parents’ transgression ratings and the importance of those domains to adolescents’ self-worth. For those adolescents’ who held their mothers or fathers in high regard, as their parents’ views of a transgression in kindness or academics became more negative, the importance of that domain to
adolescents’ self-worth increased. For adolescents’ who held their parents in lower regard, the opposite was true: as parents rated the domain transgression more negatively, it became less important to adolescents’ ratings of self-worth. This pattern of findings is especially noteworthy when considering how differences in parent-adolescent attachment might mediate the development of "rebellious’ values during the adolescent transition.

Similar relationships were not found for the domains of athletics and appearance, and while neither of these domains is traditionally considered to be a ‘value’ in the way virtue is, it was believed that appearance, in particular, might evidence signs of moralization, in the same way that academic achievement has in this study. Namely, it was predicted that parents’ who hold appearance to be especially important would transmit this value through their emotional and behavioral reactions to appearance-related transgressions and this value structure, if successfully transmitted and internalized, would be built into adolescents’ self-structure. However, analyses of parents’ and adolescents’ transgression ratings failed to find significant associations (possibly indicating a lack of intergenerational appearance value similarity) and this analyses extending to adolescents’ self-worth structure failed to support the notion of a moralization of the domain of appearance. While it may be the case that other ways of examining parent transmission of appearance values might yield positive outcomes, it is probably more reasonable to conjecture that appearance-related norms are more strongly conveyed through the influence of adolescent peer groups and media ideals.
While the planned analyses failed to indicate a parent-mediated moralization of appearance, the earlier reflection on the appropriateness of transgression vignettes in assessing values regarding appearance and athletic performance suggested that additional analyses might be warranted. If parental ratings on transgression vignettes did not accurately convey their underlying values about these domains, it is possible that successful transmission of these values to their adolescents’ went undetected in the initial analyses. To investigate this possibility, post-hoc analyses were conducted to determine whether adolescents’ self-worth structure was associated with their parents’ reported self-worth structure, and whether parenting style or parent-child relationship quality moderated this association as well. Similar to the analyses with transgression ratings, parenting style and parent-child relationship quality moderated the association between parents’ and adolescents’ CSW ratings for the domains of virtue and academics while the intergenerational associations on the domains of athletics and appearance remained non-significant.

Unlike the transgression analyses, however, more aspects of parenting style and relationship quality showed a significant moderating effect. Both maternal nurturance and warmth significantly moderated the relationship between mothers’ and adolescents’ ratings of virtue on the CSW in a manner identical to the findings above (i.e. more nurturance and warmth = greater similarity of CSW ratings). Additionally, for adolescents’ who reported higher paternal involvement, as their fathers’ ratings of the
importance of virtue increased, so did their own ratings of virtue on the CSW. Parental involvement, in addition to parental regard, also surfaced as a significant moderator of the relationship between mothers’ and fathers’ ratings of the importance of occupational competence and adolescents’ ratings of the importance of academic competence to self-worth.

The finding that the relationships between parents’ values and self-worth structure regarding specific domains and their adolescents’ self-worth structure were moderated by parenting style and relationship quality was as predicted. Moreover, the significant interactions found were all in the expected direction given previous developmental research on intergenerational value transmission. Children are more likely to correctly perceive and internalize parents’ values when they are transmitted in the context of a warm, nurturing, involved relationship marked by high levels of respect and regard. However, a greater number of significant relationships were expected between parents’ ratings of domain transgression and adolescents’ self-worth structure than were actually found. The fact that additional statistically significant associations were uncovered in post-hoc analyses using parents’ self-worth structure as the predictor variable indicates that warm, involved, highly regarded parents are indeed successfully conveying some of their most strongly held values—kindness, honesty, virtue, and achievement—to their adolescents. The relatively fewer significant associations with the vignette ratings suggest, however, that parents may not be transmitting their values via their reactions to
instances of transgression and discipline, but through other means such as modeling and overt and covert parental self evaluation in those domains.

Strengths and Limitations

Several strengths of the current investigation warrant mentioning. First, although researchers have theorized about the modes of social influence and socialization that influence the formation of contingencies of self-worth, there has been minimal study of how this structural dimension of self-concept actually develops. The studies that have been conducted on self-worth contingencies have investigated peer influences; and self researchers who have explored parental influences have focused on their role in the development of evaluations of the self, rather than self-structure. This study is unique in its focus on parental socialization’s influence on the structural development of the self-system.

Second, this study attempted to investigate the influence of mothers and fathers as separate individuals, rather than grouping them together under the broader heading of ‘parents’. Each person’s value system and hierarchical structure of self-relevant domains is unique and even the most similar and united of parent couples likely convey subtly different messages to their children. And while value transmission in two-parent households may differ from value transmission in single parent households due to either additive or competitive effects (depending on the similarity or lack thereof between parents), the individual and differential effects of mothers and fathers on sons and
daughters needs to be explored and understood first. A majority of developmental research has focused on mothers due to simplicity, convenience, and practicality and this study attempted to recruit as many fathers as it did mothers. While not entirely successful in this endeavor, it was a step in the right direction.

Third, this study was interdisciplinary in its use of both developmental and social psychology theories to help understand the establishment of value and judgment systems that may have potentially clinical ramifications for individuals. When self-worth is too greatly contingent upon one domain—when a domain has become so important it has essentially gained a moral loading—there is a significant risk to self-esteem and functioning when presented with misstep or failure in that domain. Understanding how and why domains take on such weight is a first step in addressing the problematic consequences. Over a century of social psychology research provides insight into the self-system while decades of developmental study into parent-child relationships and parental socialization of values informs the early development of these systems. While existent theories of each do not perfectly map upon one another, the utilization of both may produce newer, hybrid, theories.

Finally, the results of this study illustrate that monolithic models of the effects of parental child-rearing strategies may be problematic. Whether induction or power assertion is more efficacious in promoting the internalization of interest and values seems to be
dependent upon the domain of socialization examined. One of the strengths of this study is the multi-domain examination of parental socialization effects.

This study was also not without limitations, however, and these fall into the areas of sample size (including implications for power), sample composition, and assessment. Although all attempts were made to recruit an equivalent number of fathers and mothers, there was a notable discrepancy in the sample size for each group of parents. With only 62 participating fathers, this significantly reduced the statistical power for finding associations between fathers and adolescents as compared to mothers. Assuming a conservative effect size of 0.1 and 62 father-adolescent dyads, a regression analysis using 6 predictors would have power of only .30 to .50 to detect this effect (Cohen, Cohen, West and Aiken, 2003). Moreover, Jaccard, Turrisi, and Wan (1990) state that in order to detect a significant two-way interaction assuming an effect size ranging from .06 to .12, one would need a sample size ranging from 143 to 165 participants. Although the intention was to recruit well over that number of families, participation rates remained low despite considerable effort; even the adolescent sample size of 127 fell below this ideal range. Therefore, this sample would have failed to provide the power to detect small significant relationships that may have existed.

The low participation and survey completion rates also point to self selection as a notable limitation. Only those families who were interested and motivated to engage in an exploration of intergenerational value transmission consented and returned the
measures and these families likely differed from families who were not so interested or motivated by the topic. Participating parents might be more concerned about these domains, more involved in their adolescents’ lives, or more invested in transmitting their values to their offspring. It is difficult to say for certain due to the lack of data from non-participating families, but these speculations should be considered when reviewing the results.

As mentioned earlier, the use of only transgression vignettes may have been a further limitation in this study. Socialization—and parenting for that matter—is not solely about discipline and punishment; it involves communications and behavior over a wide-variety of circumstances. Parents likely transmit their values via praise in instances of exemplification as well as through discipline in instances of transgression. Future research should investigate parental transmission of values and beliefs via instances of domain-specific ‘success’ and related positive reinforcement. Additionally, transgression vignettes may not have been the most appropriate way to assess differential importance of performance in the domains of athletics and appearance. While it is socially acceptable to praise and reward individuals who succeed in these domains, it is less than acceptable to punish those who ‘fail’. Perhaps to most successfully assess the moralization of these specific domains future research should utilize exemplification vignettes. And given that Costanzo and Fraenkel (1987) found that children’s intent differentiation increased with age for areas of high maternal importance and positive outcomes, the difference in
positive ratings for exemplification vignettes with and without qualifiers could once again be used to identify the relative importance of a domain to self-worth structure.

Another limitation existed in the sampling strategy designed to yield individuals for whom appearance and achievement were differentially tied to self-worth. Although preliminary analyses indicated that the strategy was successful in producing a varied sample, the academic achievement and appearance groups were different in a notable way. While the TIP group exemplified academic achievement—they were succeeding in this important domain, the weight-loss group was not succeeding in the domain of appearance. They were overweight and they (or their parents) were distressed enough by their weight status to seek weight-loss treatment. Whether one’s child is already generally achieving or failing in a domain one believes to be important likely influences the emotional and behavioral reactions one would have to a hypothetical transgression in that domain. Similarly, whether an adolescent is accustomed to hearing praise or scorn from his parents about an important domain likely affects the reactions he reports to the hypothetical transgression on another. The fact that group status significantly moderated the relationship between parents’ ratings of a weight-transgression and adolescents’ ratings of the same transgression, but did not do so for an academic transgression, indicates that this difference in succeeding or failing on a domain is not a trivial one and may have added an unanticipated variable to this study. Future research should attempt to sample successful and unsuccessful individuals in every domain. For the domains of academics and
appearance, recruiting a group of students who had repeated a grade as well as a group of beauty pageant contestants may successfully provide appropriate counterparts to the groups utilized in this study.

A final limitation existed in the construction of the vignettes themselves. As mentioned earlier, there was a non-identical mapping of adolescent transgression to adult self-worth domain. While parents’ rated their reaction to their child’s hypothetical transgression in scholastic performance, the CSW asked them to rate the importance of occupational competence to their own self-worth. Although these domains were believed to be roughly analogous, they differ in important ways, and these differences may have contributed non-trivial noise to the relationships under investigation. Furthermore, adolescents’ vignettes asked them to rate the transgression of a hypothetical other child, who was not connected to them in any way. Parents’ vignettes, on the other hand, required them to assess their emotional and behavioral reactions to the hypothetical transgression of their own children--individuals directly associated with them and whose transgressions may be considered to directly reflect upon them. This difference, subtle though it is, involves some not-so-trivial differences in emotional reactions and self-relevant implications that may have contributed to the disconnect between adolescents’ and parents’ ratings. Future research should strive to more closely match the domain content, as well as the emotional context, of parents’ and children’s vignettes.
Despite these limitations, the results of this study provide for novel inferences about the role of parenting in the differential communication of the importance of domains of worth to their children. In the main, the limitations described (e.g. power restrictions) resulted in an underestimation of the power of these effects and the ramifications of those effects for the development of the structure of self-worth during adolescence.

Conclusions

Overall, results from this study indicate that the internalization of moral standards not only affect one’s ability to function appropriately in the social world, but also influence one’s developing self-structure. As an individual’s ratings of affective reaction to, and perceived consequences associated with, transgressions in significant domains increased in negativity, his ratings of the importance of those domains to evaluations of self-worth also increased. And by adulthood, for domains an individual holds as among the most important, good intentions and mitigating circumstances did not seem to temper negative reactions to an associated transgression and the effect failure in that domain may have on self-worth. Furthermore, the data lend qualified support to the notion that a domain that is not traditionally considered a ‘moral’ issue (i.e. academic achievement) can indeed be raised to a ‘moral’ level and influence the structure of self-worth in a similar manner as traditionally moral values. The results also indicate that although parental socialization
does not fully explain the development of adolescents’ self-worth structure, the intergenerational transmission of values does, indeed, influence the importance adolescents’ place on performance in given domains when evaluating their worth as a person. Moreover, it appears that developmental theories regarding parental socialization of traditionally moral values can also be used to understand the transmission and internalization of domain-specific, non-traditional values and how this transmission and internalization influence developing self-worth.
APPENDIX A

Questions Added to the Harter Self Perception Profile for Adolescents (Harter, 1985)

Questions addressing parental approval and body-specific appearance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RT</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Some kids get along well with their parents</th>
<th>but</th>
<th>Other kids don’t get along well with their parents</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>RT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Some kids think they are just the right size</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other kids wish they were a different size</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Some kids feel their parents are proud of them</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other kids don’t feel like their parents are proud of them</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Some kids are not happy with how their body looks</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other kids are happy with how their body looks</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions addressing importance of domains:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RT</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Some kids don’t think what their parents think of them is important</th>
<th>but</th>
<th>Other kids think what their parents think of them is important</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>RT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Some kids think it's important to feel good about their body</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other kids do not think it's important to like their bodies</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Some kids think that doing well in school is important</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other kids don’t think that doing well in school is really that important</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Some kids don’t think it’s all that important to have a lot of friends</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other kids think that having a lot of friends is important</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Some kids don’t care much about being good at sports</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other kids think that it is important to be good at sports</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Some kids think being good looking is important</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other kids don’t think being good looking is very important</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Some kids think that doing the right thing is important</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Others don’t think it’s that important to do the right thing</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Some kids don’t think having close friends is all that important</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>Other kids think it’s important to have really close friends</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

Questions Added to, and Reworded on, the Contingencies of Self-Worth Measure
(Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003)

Questions Added: Domain of Athletics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel bad about myself whenever I don’t do well in sports.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My self-esteem is affected by how well I do in sports.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How I feel about myself has nothing to do with how well I do at sports.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel better about myself when I know I’m doing well at sports.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing well at sports makes me respect myself more.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions Reworded: Academic Competence to Occupational Competence:

- How I feel about myself has nothing to do with how well I do in school. changed to: My opinion about myself isn’t tied to how well I do at work.
- Doing well in school makes me respect myself more. changed to: Doing well at work gives me a sense of self-respect.
- I feel better about myself when I know I’m doing well at school. changed to: I feel better about myself when I know I’m doing well professionally.
- My self-esteem is influenced by how well I do in school. changed to: My self-esteem is influenced by my professional/ work performance.
- I feel bad about myself whenever my school work is not as good as it should be. changed to: I feel bad about myself whenever my work performance is lacking.

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APPENDIX C

Parent Dilemma Question Format and Vignettes

Format of the Vignette and Following Questions:

1. Vignette describing a transgression your child hypothetically committed:

   circle one for each:

   a. How upset would you be with your child?  
      Not at all upset  A little upset  Moderately upset  Pretty upset  Extremely upset

   b. How important do you think it would be to discipline/sanction/deal with your child regarding this?  
      Not at all important  A little important  Moderately important  Pretty important  Extremely important

   c. How likely do you think you would be to discipline/sanction/deal with your child regarding this?  
      Not at all likely  A little likely  Moderately likely  Pretty likely  Extremely likely

   d. What do you think you would do to deal with your child if you chose to?

Vignettes:

Academic Transgression:

Your child had a difficult science exam that the teacher had warned them about ahead of time. When the teacher returns the exams, you learn that his/her grade was a D-.
**Academic Transgression with Qualifier:**

Your child had a quiz in math class the day after he/she had been out from school with a very bad cold. Although your child missed class and does not understand the new material, he/she was required to take the quiz because it had been previously scheduled and he/she knew about it. Your child ends up nearly failing the math quiz.

**Appearance Transgression:**

It is the start of the school year and the school nurse has measured and weighed the students for school records and has sent the charts home for each child’s parents to initial. When you see your child’s chart, you notice that he/she has gained a lot of weight in the past two months.

**Appearance Transgression with Qualifier:**

Your child broke his/her leg playing soccer and was unable to exercise as he/she normally did and, instead, had to spend most of his/her spare time sitting around, watching television. At your child’s next doctor’s appointment, the doctor tells you that your child has gained too much weight.
**Athletic Transgression:**

Your child’s basketball team was playing one of the best teams in the state. Your child played badly and did not score a single point, and the other team ended up winning.

**Athletic Transgression with Qualifier:**

Your child was asked to join the volleyball team just before the team’s first game. Although your child hadn’t practiced much with the team, the coach let him/her play in the first game. Your child did not do well at all in the game and the team lost.

**Kindness Transgression:**

While getting on the bus, your child jostled another rider and knocked her into the mud. Instead of helping her up, your child just laughed with his/her friends and stepped over the fallen rider to get onto the bus.

**Kindness Transgression with Qualifier:**

Your child’s writing teacher asked him/her to meet immediately before lunch. While your child was rushing through the hallway to get to the writing room for this meeting, he/she pushed past a smaller student, sending the student’s books all over the floor. Not wanting to get in trouble with the teacher for being late, your child just kept rushing off to class and did not stop to apologize or help the other student pick up her books.
Honesty Transgression:

There was a book report due in English class but your child had not even worked on the report yet. When the teacher came around to collect everyone’s paper, your child lied and told the teacher that it was done but that he/she had forgotten it at home.

Honesty Transgression with Qualifier:

The class bully, who everyone is afraid of, had broken the teacher’s glass flower vase before the teacher got into the room and your child was the only one who saw him do it. When the teacher returned and asked your child directly what had happened to the vase, your child lied and said that his/she didn’t know.


**APPENDIX D**

**Adolescent Dilemma Format and Vignettes**

1. A vignette describing a hypothetical child transgressing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>circle one for each:</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A good bit</th>
<th>A whole lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. How much do you like Child?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. How bad do you think Child is?</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. How much trouble should Child be in with her parents?</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. How upset would your parents be if they found out you did what Child did?</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. How much trouble would you be in if you were Child?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. How bad would you feel if you were Child?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

g. Although you have only heard a very little bit about Child, we want to see what else you can guess about her. Put a check or an x next to any of the words below that you think might describe Child. You can check off as many words as you like.

- ___ annoying
- ___ boring
- ___ cheerful
- ___ clean
- ___ dirty
- ___ dumb/stupid
- ___ friendly
- ___ funny
- ___ good student
- ___ grouchy
- ___ honest /truthful
- ___ intelligent /smart
- ___ interesting
- ___ kind /considerate
- ___ lazy
- ___ liar /dishonest
- ___ mean
- ___ moral
- ___ popular
- ___ pretty /good-looking
- ___ reliable /responsible
- ___ respectful
- ___ rude
- ___ trouble maker
- ___ unattractive /ugly
- ___ unpopular


**Academic Transgression:**

Cameron had a difficult science exam that the teacher had warned them about ahead of time. When the teacher returns the exams, Cameron finds out that he/she got a D-.

**Academic Transgression with Qualifier:**

Jo had a quiz in math class the day after he/she had been out from school with a very bad cold. Although Jo missed class and did not understand the new material, he/she was required to take the quiz because it had been previously scheduled and he/she knew about it. Jo ended up getting an F on the math quiz.

**Appearance Transgression:**

It is the start of the school year and the school nurse has measured and weighed the students for school records and has sent the charts home for parents to initial. When Sam’s parents see his/her chart, they find out that Sam has gained a lot of weight.

**Appearance Transgression with Qualifier:**

Casey broke his/her leg playing soccer and was unable to exercise as he/she normally did and, instead, had to spend most of his/her spare time sitting around, watching television. At Casey’s next doctor’s appointment, the doctor says that Casey has gained too much weight.
**Athletic Transgression:**

CJ’s basketball team was playing one of the best teams in the state. During the game CJ played badly and did not score a single point, and the other team ended up winning.

**Athletic Transgression with Qualifier:**

Pat was asked to join the volleyball team just before the team’s first game. Although Pat hadn’t practiced much with the team, the coach let him/her play in the first game. Pat does not do well at all in the game and the team loses.

**Kindness Transgression:**

While getting on the bus, Dana jostled another rider and knocked her into the mud. Instead of helping her up, Dana just laughed with his/her friends and stepped over the fallen rider to get onto the bus.

**Kindness Transgression with Qualifier:**

While getting on the bus, Dana jostled another rider and knocked her into the mud. Instead of helping her up, Dana just laughed with his/her friends and stepped over the fallen rider to get onto the bus.
Honesty Transgression:

There was a book report due in English class but Loren had not even worked on the report yet. When the teacher came around to collect everyone’s paper, Loren lied and told the teacher that it was done but that he/she had forgotten it at home.

Honesty Transgression with Qualifier:

The class bully, who everyone is afraid of, had broken the teacher’s glass flower vase before the teacher got into the room and Robin was the only one who saw him do it. When the teacher returned and asked Robin directly what had happened to the vase, Robin lied and said that he/she didn’t know.
REFERENCES


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BIOGRAPHY

Nicole Polanichka Quinlan was born on September 6th, 1978 in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Summa cum Laude from Princeton University in 2000 with an A.B. degree in Psychology and a Certificate in Visual Arts. Following the completion of her undergraduate education, she held a Pre-doctoral Intramural Research Training Award Fellowship at the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health. Nicole began her graduate studies in the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program in the Department of Psychology: Social and Health Sciences at Duke University in the fall of 2002 and received her M.A. in 2005.

During her graduate studies, Nicole received the following honors and awards: Honorable Mention from the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Award (2003 & 2004), Anne McDougall Memorial Award from the Program in Women’s Studies at Duke University (2003 & 2006), the Duke University Center for Child and Family Policy Spencer Education Science and Policy Scholar Fellowship (2004) and Dan Levitan Child Policy Graduate Research Fellowship (2005), Duke University Sigma Xi Mini-Grant (2006), Aleane Webb Dissertation Research Fellowship from the Duke University Graduate School (2006), Summer Research Fellowship from the Duke University Graduate School (2006), Carolina Consortium on Human Development Predoctoral Fellowship from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Center for Developmental Science (2006), and Sigma Xi Grant-in-Aid of Research (2006). She has
published the following papers and book chapter: “Norm-narrowing and self- and
other-perceived aggression in early adolescent same-sex and mixed-sex cliques” in the
*Journal of School Psychology*, “Assessing weight-related quality of life in adolescents” in
*Obesity*, and “All things interpersonal: Socialization and female aggression” in M.
Putallaz and K. L. Bierman (Eds.), *Aggression, Antisocial Behavior, and Violence Among
Girls: A Developmental Perspective*. She has presented her research at the biennial
meetings of the Society for Research on Child Development and the Society for Research
on Adolescence, and the annual meetings of the Society for Prevention Research and the
North American Association for the Study of Obesity.

Nicole Polanichka Quinlan will complete her predoctoral clinical internship at
Dorothea Dix Hospital in Raleigh, North Carolina in August 2008.