MAKING SENSE OF
BELIEFS

AND
VALUES

Theory, Research, and Practice

Craig N. Shealy

EDITOR

In Praise of
Making Sense of Beliefs and Values

Fabulous book! It's really timely, because contemporary developments all over the world make the need to "make sense of beliefs and values" more pressing than ever before, I think. It's the only way our humanity can rise again. The book is a trailblazer in that critical sense, and is the most compelling response to the age-old quandary that is captured in a pithy observation made by Ian McKellen in the new film, Mr. Holmes, *about human nature being a mystery that "logic alone could not illuminate." This is a book that must be read by all – the elite and those on the streets alike.*

Akwasi Aidoo, PhD
Senior Fellow
Humanity United

In Making Sense of Beliefs and Values, *Craig Shealy and colleagues take on the herculean task of calling our collective attention to that which is generally ignored yet routinely practiced in our lives – namely the construction, adoption, and enactment of values and beliefs as a dominant sociopolitical force. Focusing on these foundational matters is akin to exposing the pervasive HTML codes lurking behind the user interfaces that are blithely operated with the push of a button or a swipe across a touchscreen. Based on substantial research and presented in detailed eloquence,* Making Sense of Beliefs and Values *admirably draws out the autonomic nature of our belief systems for closer scrutiny, and perhaps ultimately, for more intentional advancement of our collective efforts to engage the issues of the day.*

Randall Amster, JD, PhD
Executive Director, Peace and Justice Studies Association
Director, Program on Justice and Peace, Georgetown University
Author of *Peace Ecology* (2014)

Making Sense of Beliefs and Values *advances a goal of "cultivating the globally sustainable self" – being a greater capacity to simultaneously care for self, others and the wider world – and is committed to education systems that create the circumstances through which people can look beyond their own views of reality and the confines of their own parochialism, to reach out to those who are far away and with whom, whether they like it or not, they must share this planet. This is a laudable collection espousing a more than worthy cause.*

Jo Beall, PhD
Director of Education and Society and Executive Board Member
British Council, London

With his understanding of the constant interaction of cultural, religious and political diversity, Craig Shealy investigates ideas and ideologies that cause prejudice, racism, acts of violence and abuse of power. This collapse of social texture is not the result of indifference, as it provides evidence of intransigence. Making Sense of Beliefs and Values: Theory, Research, and Practice *proposes the urgent need to develop personal and communal new skills of reflection and the building of a methodology that will enhance respect and awareness using sustainable educational models, scholarship, and policy-making towards the acquisition of empathy.*

Claudia Bernardi, Hon DFA, MFA
Founding Director, School of Art and Open Studio
Professor, California College of the Arts

This book is both inspirational and informative. By asking readers to make explicit their unspoken, often unquestioned worldviews, and illustrating how to do that with examples grounded in important current events, Shealy and co-authors show how understanding why we form beliefs and values and how we use them can promote rich, reflective, scholarly accounts of human motivation and action, and can provide powerful ideas about how to transform education and services. These ideas are essential as we try to cultivate a global society and global citizenry.

> Merry Bullock, PhD
> Co-Editor, *Going Global: How Psychology and Psychologists Can Meet a World of Need*
> Executive Committee, International Union of Psychological Science

Terrific and timely! A careful and thought-provoking exploration of how the self comes to be and is expressed through the interrelation of beliefs, values, and needs. In an era of increased fragmentation and polarization, this text unpacks in clearly understandable terms the complexities of these relationships and asserts the importance of conscious and reflective individuals in a rapidly changing global landscape. Building on the work of classics in the field, as well as contemporary scholars, the authors make clearly visible the powerful implications of this work for an evolving theory of transformative learning relevant to education, leadership, therapy, culture, politics, and religion. This work will not only advance a deeper understanding of the meaning of beliefs and values of our individual and collective lives, but also, in the words of the leading author, help us to realize "our nascent potential to love as we were meant to be loved" and to "save ourselves by saving each other."

> John M. Dirkx, PhD
> Editor, *Journal of Transformative Education*
> Professor of Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education
> Michigan State University

I am so pleased to find an in depth and accessible book that describes the value "lenses" through which humans make sense of the world and decide what is "right" and "wrong" in areas like politics, the environment and religion. This book is an indispensable tool for understanding – with insight and compassion – someone who believes differently than you.

> Thomas J. Doherty, PsyD
> Past President, Society of Environmental, Population and Conservation Psychology
> Director, Ecopsychology Certificate Program, Lewis & Clark Graduate School

This fascinating and timely volume … is a tour de force that takes us through an invaluable encyclopedia of theories and research findings. I applaud both its scholarship and its contributions to a better understanding of our values, needs, and sense of self – and what might lead to optimal human development.

> Riane Eisler, JD, PhD(h)
> President, Center for Partnership Studies
> Editor-in-Chief, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies*
> Author, *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*

For someone who comes from a cognitive tradition, this book was tremendously thought provoking. Where much of psychology has given short shrift to beliefs and values, the theory, applications, and research contained in this book provide a framework and supporting data to examine factors that so clearly have profound influences on human and societal actions. The authors take on, with insight and ambition, the challenge of integrating ideas that cross the boundaries of philosophy, psychology, politics, religion, anthropology, sociology, and assessment. This book not only shares views on beliefs and values in shaping behavior but pushes readers to examine their own views as well.

> Drew Gitomer, PhD
> Rose and Nicholas DeMarzo Chair in Education
> Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

This book comprehensively and articulately describes how and why we make sense of beliefs and values. This interdisciplinary book is a must read for all – educators, scholars and practitioners. It gives us not only an overview but also a practical application and a strong conceptual framework.

Yoshie Tomozumi Nakamura, EdD
Director of Organizational Learning and Research
Columbia Business School

This is a highly sophisticated and scholarly treatment of values and beliefs with wide ranging implications for the promotion of personal, interpersonal, organizational, community and global well-being. Through a combination of conceptual integration and applied projects, the authors distill the implications of values and beliefs for a more peaceful, sustainable, caring, and just world. This is a wonderful integration of theory and practice.

Isaac Prilleltensky, PhD
Mautner Chair in Community Well-Being
Dean and Professor
School of Education and Human Development
University of Miami

Why do we as humans continue to think and behave in ways that support a world, locally and globally, that is framed around inequalities and a predisposition for self-interest and self-destruction? Why do we keep doing this to ourselves? The study of beliefs and values is central to making sense of such a world. All credit to Craig Shealy and his colleagues for tackling this complex and underdeveloped field as a way of advancing our thinking and behaviour. This book offers a very accessible framework and tools that can be applied across all disciplines. Given that values are at the heart of what we all do, this is a reference for everybody.

Gary Shaw
International Education Division
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
East Melbourne, Victoria

When working in the international sector, we are taught to understand and manage cultural differences. This is not enough. Making Sense of Beliefs and Values: Theory, Research, and Practice *provides both theoretical and practical background on understanding how people work at a core level, regardless of their cultural background. Combining an understanding of cultural knowledge (macro) with individuals' beliefs (micro) is essential for effectively working in global and multicultural organizations. This book should be a must-read for all those leading people and groups.*

Christopher Shirley, MBA
Director, MEPI, CAYA, Business Development, CIED
Center for Intercultural Education and Development (CIED)
Georgetown University

In educating our children, we as a society put great emphasis on knowledge and abstract analytical thinking. Our instruction and even our assessments, including standardized tests, weigh these factors heavily. But if you look at what moves a society and changes it, you don't find knowledge and abstract analytical thinking having much to do with it. Rather, you find that societies move forward, and too often, backward, on the basis of the beliefs and values of their citizens and their leaders. This book will help you understand how those beliefs and values come to be, how they are organized, and how they translate into the actions that make our world either a better, or a worse place in which to live.

Robert J. Sternberg, PhD
Past President, American Psychological Association
Professor of Human Development
Cornell University

For those with an eye to addressing the presently inexorable trend towards increasing social injustice, religious intolerance and its associated conflict, environmental degradation, and international, as well as intra-national, aggression, this is essential reading. Not only does it show how systems of beliefs and values feed into such disharmony but also it maps out realistic ways of rectifying the situation.

Ron Toomey, PhD
Conjoint Professor of Education (Ret.), University of Newcastle
Consulting Researcher, Educational Transformations

This important book presents an interdisciplinary roadmap for understanding the practical importance of beliefs and values in today's increasingly global society. It is essential reading for all of us engaged in the work of global education.

Brian Whalen, PhD
President and CEO
Forum on Education Abroad

The book Making Sense of Beliefs and Values: Theory, Research, and Practice *is a must read for anyone concerned about the world we live in . . . from unprecedented violence to growing inequalities to more insistent and vitriolic rhetoric. While the magnitude of the problems (or potential for future problems) may seem overwhelming, the clarity of this book is soothing even while it invites us, indeed challenges us, to transform ourselves, more deeply understand the human condition, and cultivate our ability to intervene for positive change. The text outlines a wide-range of theories and research findings, culminating in a new theoretical and empirically-grounded framework for understanding our beliefs, needs, and ourselves. The book is extremely well-written and engaging, and it is frankly inspiring. Read it and then give it to others to read!*

Elizabeth Nutt Williams, PhD
Professor of Psychology and Department Chair
Director of Matriculation and Academic Planning
St. Mary's College of Maryland, the Public Honors College

MAKING SENSE OF BELIEFS
AND VALUES

Craig N. Shealy, PhD, is the executive director of the International Beliefs and Values Institute (IBAVI; www.ibavi.org) and professor of graduate psychology at James Madison University. Dr. Shealy works with the IBAVI's executive board to coordinate activities and initiatives such as *Cultivating the Globally Sustainable Self*, a research-to-practice summit series (www.jmu.edu/summitseries).

Dr. Shealy's research on the etiology, maintenance, and transformation of beliefs and values has been featured in a wide range of national and international publications and scholarly forums, and the Forum BEVI Project (www.forumea.org/research-bevi-project). Drs. Shealy and Merry Bullock, senior director of American Psychological Association's (APA's) Office of International Affairs, co-edit *Going Global*: *How Psychology and Psychologists Can Meet a World of Need,* a forthcoming volume from APA Books, which presents the work of leading psychologists in the United States and internationally.

A licensed clinical psychologist, Dr. Shealy is 2016 president elect of the APA's Division of International Psychology, a recipient of the Early Career Award from the APA's Division of Psychotherapy, a Madison Scholar at James Madison University, a Nehru Chair at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India, and a National Register Legacy of Excellence Psychologist.

MAKING SENSE OF BELIEFS AND VALUES

THEORY, RESEARCH, AND PRACTICE

Craig N. Shealy, PhD

Editor

SPRINGER PUBLISHING COMPANY

NEW YORK

Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed in this book are those of the individual authors and do not represent the official position of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, U.S. Government, or any specific VA facility or program.

The editor, publisher, and authors of this Work have made every effort to use sources believed to be reliable to provide information that is accurate and compatible with the standards generally accepted at the time of publication. The editor, publisher, and authors shall not be liable for any special, consequential, or exemplary damages resulting, in whole or in part, from the readers' use of, or reliance on, the information contained in this book. The publisher has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Special discounts on bulk quantities of our books are available to corporations, professional associations, pharmaceutical companies, health care organizations, and other qualifying groups. If you are interested in a custom book, including chapters from more than one of our titles, we can provide that service as well.

For details, please contact:
Special Sales Department, Springer Publishing Company, LLC
11 West 42nd Street, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10036-8002
Phone: 877-687-7476 or 212-431-4370; Fax: 212-941-7842
E-mail: sales@springerpub.com

Printed in the United States of America by McNaughton & Gunn.

For Lee and Sophie,
my love and light.

CONTENTS

CONTRIBUTORS

Kris Acheson, PhD, Lecturer and Director, Undergraduate Program in the Department of Applied Linguistics & ESL, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia

Tamara Baldwin, MSc, Associate Director, International Service Learning, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Brad Baltensperger, PhD, Research Professor of Geography, Michigan Technological University, Houghton, Michigan

Timothy W. Brearly, PsyD, MIRECC Advanced Psychology Fellow, W. G. Hefner VA Medical Center, Salisbury, North Carolina

Lindy Brewster, MSc, BA, President, OR Consulting Inc., Reston, Virginia

Brian Brubaker, MBA, IES Abroad, Carol Stream, Illinois

Sam Cochran, PhD, Professor Emeritus, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

Molly Coates, PsyD, Primary Care Psychologist, Pediatrics and Family Medicine, Healthcare Network of Southwest Florida, Naples, Florida

Jared Cozen, PsyD, LMFT, Psychology Assistant, Kaiser Permanente Mental Health Department, Antioch, California

Kelly Dyjak-LeBlanc, MA, Doctoral Candidate, C-I Psychology Program, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Adam J. Edmunds, PsyD, Psychological Counselor, Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania

Christopher M. Federico, PhD, Professor of Psychology and Political Science, Department of Psychology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Barry Glick, PhD, NCC, ACS, LMHC, LPCC, G + G Consultants, Rio Rancho, New Mexico

RT Good, EdD, Associate Dean and Professor of Management, Harry F. Byrd, Jr. School of Business, Shenandoah University, Winchester, Virginia

Steve Grande, PhD, Executive Director, Spencer Center for Civic and Global Engagement, Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Virginia

William Hanson, PhD, Associate Professor, Coordinator, Counselling Psychology Program Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

Vesna Hart, PsyD, Project Coordinator, International Network of Universities, Assistant Professor, Graduate Psychology, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Jenna Holt, PsyD, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, Virginia

Chitra Iyer, PsyD, School Psychologist, Bellevue, Washington

Sarah Jones, PsyD, Director, Center for Cadet Counseling and Office of Disabilities Services, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia

Shagufa Kapadia, PhD, Professor and Chair, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Director, Women's Studies Research Center, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, The M.S. University of Baroda, Gujarat, India

Jennifer Kelly, PhD, Assistant Professor, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

Lisa Legault, PhD, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Clarkson University, Potsdam, New York

Wenjuan Ma, Consultant, Center for Statistical Training and Consulting, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

Lauren Mays, PsyD, Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Counseling and Psychological Health, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, Massachusetts

Usha Nayar, Tata Chair Professor and FMR Deputy Professor, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Hajime Nishitani, PhD, MJur, Vice-President (International), Professor, Faculty of Law, Hiroshima University, Hiroshima, Japan

Victor Nolet, PhD, Professor, Woodring College of Education, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington

Rituma Patel, PsyD, Affiliate and Webmaster, International Beliefs and Values Institute, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Christen Pendleton, PsyD, Psychologist, Department of Pediatric Psychiatry, New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center, New York, New York

John Poston, PhD, Assistant Professor, Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University, La Mirada, California

Dawn T. Psyarchik, PhD, Professor, Department of Advertising and Public Relations, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

Jarrod Reisweber, PsyD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Richmond, Virginia

Doug B. Samuel, PhD, Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychological Sciences, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Seth Schwartz, PhD, Professor, Department of Public Health Sciences, Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, Florida

Craig N. Shealy, PhD, Professor of Graduate Psychology, James Madison University, and Executive Director, International Beliefs and Values Institute, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Sandra L. Shullman, PhD, Managing Partner, Columbus Office, Executive Development Group, Columbus, Ohio

Jessica Spaeth, PsyD, MSc, Licensed Psychologist, Coastal Carolina Neuropsychiatric Center, Jacksonville, North Carolina

Lee G. Sternberger, PhD, Associate Provost, Academic Affairs, Executive Director, Office of International Programs, Professor, Graduate Psychology, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Mary Tabit, PsyD, Postdoctoral Resident, Assessment and Evaluation Center, Warren E. Smith (WES) Health Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Charlene Tan, PhD, Associate Professor, Policy and Leadership Studies Academic Group, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Kees van den Bos, PhD, Professor of Social Psychology and Professor of Empirical Science, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Kayan Phoebe Wan, PsyD, Licensed Psychologist, Student Health Center, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, Missouri

Elizabeth Wandschneider, PhD, Assistant Director for Program Management, Office of Study Abroad, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

Felix Wang, MBA, Associate Executive Director, Office of International Programs, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

Marlana Webster, PsyD, Staff Psychologist, Primary Care Mental Health Integration, Hampton Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Hampton, Virginia

Randall P. White, PhD, Principal, Executive Development Group, Greensboro, North Carolina

FOREWORD

Why do people do what they do? Or more to the point, what makes us want to do what we do? In understanding what guides our actions, individually and collectively, *Making Sense of Beliefs and Values* is an extraordinary and essential book. However, when asked to write the foreword for this volume, I hesitated not because I questioned its basic perspectives or findings, but because I really wasn't sure how to begin. On the one hand, a casual flip through this tome will reveal the enormity of its scope, not just because of the comprehensive reviews of literature or the detailed nature of results, but because this book is a genuinely fascinating read. The initial conceptual framework, the Equilintegration or EI model, is as riveting as it is revealing in terms of why we human beings become who we are. More specifically, the first part of this book offers a powerful theoretically and empirically grounded framework for understanding the linkage between core human needs, the beliefs and values we call our own, how these constructs live within us, and how they are expressed in the wider world. As an educator and administrator by background, I can confirm that this perspective alone has the potential to shape how we understand who we are as human beings, including why we believe what we believe, and equally important, why we behave as we do.

For many years, this understanding of what shapes our action, or lack thereof, has been the core concern of my own life's work, and that of so many others around the globe with whom I collaborate in our shared quest for a more sustainable world. It is through this lens of seeking and creating a more sustainable future for all that I delved into *Making Sense of Beliefs and Values*, which is not a book on sustainability, but rather a framework and insightful way of understanding human behavior that can be so useful in a plethora of contexts. I deeply recommend this book, as it can help us, as it helped me, understand who we are, why we do what we do, and what might be done to create more sustainable societies, structures, and selves. However, I reiterate, on a theoretical basis alone I can foresee immense usefulness well beyond my own sphere of addressing sustainability.

In addition to this important conceptual foundation, what further distinguishes *Making Sense of Beliefs and Values* is that it seeks, and succeeds, in matters of application. Not only do we learn about why we are who we are, and what that means for our potential as a species, we encounter a comprehensive psychological measure, the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory or BEVI, in development for over 20 years, that demonstrates in an understandable manner how these complex processes emerge in the real world. That is no small feat, for in my experience, it is one thing to offer deep propositions about the nature of reality. It is quite another to test and demonstrate the validity of such propositions in empirical terms that are comprehensible by people like me, who are not statisticians. We all are among those whom researchers ultimately want to reach if their theories and findings are to influence policies and practices. From my perspective, the fact that this erudite volume remains true to the

deepest principles of sound scholarship, while translating concepts and data into a form that nonempiricists are likely to experience as meaningful, is the single greatest triumph of *Making Sense of Beliefs and Values*. Bridging the chasm between research and practice—as this book certainly does—should be applauded in its own right, for until we bring both of these communities together, in respectful and ongoing dialogue with each other, we will not address the "wicked problems" of our day, such as climate change, access to education, religious and ethnic conflict, or human rights, which populate headlines on a daily basis around the world.

Following presentation of the EI model and BEVI method, *Making Sense of Beliefs and Values* tackles these essential issues of research and practice head on, through a series of authoritative chapters: on *research*—culture, development, environment, gender, politics, and religion; and on *practice*—assessment, education, forensics, leadership, and psychotherapy. Because the final chapter of this book provides a concise summary of each chapter, along with compelling reflections on future directions, I won't offer specifics here, except to say that my sense is, whether you are an established advocate, educator, practitioner, or scholar in one or more of these topical areas, a student just starting out, or an engaged member of the public at large, you will experience these chapters as meaningful, captivating, and poignant. This is unusual to say about a scholarly book that joins together sophisticated analyses, convincing literatures, and compelling applications, which brings me to some final reflections on this book.

In my life, I have spent the last five decades trying to help us understand both the realities and possibilities of living on earth in the way that we do. I have done so because we have good reason to believe that our actions now are determining the kind of world that we are leaving behind, not only for our children, but for their children as well. Such a statement is based upon a well-grounded sense of my own human experience combined with thousands of analyses by top scholars around the world. I have witnessed anthropocentric-induced changes to the planet. I feel that what we are doing to our planet must be corrected. Issues such as biodiversity loss, water and soil degradation, and social issues such as racism and exclusion are all either created by humans or exacerbated by humans.

Climate change is a globally felt example of the many human-centered wicked problems we are creating and imposing, so let me work with this. Here, the mystery remains. Now that we know, why don't we act? The average European citizen emits as much carbon in 11 days as the average Bangladeshi in an entire year. The average North American citizen emits as much carbon in 7 days as the average Bangladeshi in an entire year. Yet it is the government and the people of Bangladesh who are expected to pay for the escalating costs of storm-proofing this low-lying country. This is not addressing a city such as New Orleans, Bangkok, or even Venice, but an entire coastline of one of the world's poorest yet most populous countries. If we are a major cause, what is our role?

By pumping tons of carbon and other gases into our atmosphere day after day, we are changing the very chemistry, and therefore, the very reality, of our living physical world, its flora and fauna, and the human civilizations that depend upon a particular atmospheric ratio of elements that have allowed humans to establish dominion over the earth, as we most certainly have. As stated in the opening chapter of *Making Sense of Beliefs and Values*, it is not hyperbolic to conclude that *we already have changed this chemistry*—that is not a matter of conjecture, upon which "nonscientist" politicians routinely comment, but an empirical fact for anyone who dispassionately examines the data, from ice cores, migration patterns, and growing seasons, to the changing intensity, range, and scope of weather events around the globe.

As UNESCO Chair on Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainability—and as one who has traveled literally around the world more than 50 times over many years to discuss these issues and advocate for change—what has been bewildering to me is why we stubbornly insist upon ignoring, minimizing, or denying what is by now overwhelming evidence that we already have altered the chemical makeup of our atmosphere. This alteration has, not surprisingly, begun to affect environmental systems around the globe. As a summary report from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) concludes, "Multiple studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals show that 97 percent or more of actively publishing climate scientists agree: Climate-warming trends over the past century are very likely due to human activities" (see climate.nasa.gov/scientific-consensus/). If I stretch myself to the point of incredulity, I possibly could imagine how some individuals could seize upon phrases in the above NASA report such as "very likely due" or "97 percent" to make the case that "we don't know for sure." From a scientific perspective, and in the strictest sense, that is true. We cannot be 100 percent sure that the "3 percent" of scientists who are not in agreement are definitely wrong, just as we cannot be 100 percent sure that "human activities" definitely are causing climate change, only that such changes are "very likely due" to what we humans are doing.

All that said, what is more bewildering to me is, even if I potentially and grudgingly grant such uncertainties—which always is the case with honest science—it still doesn't explain why we would hedge our bets on matters of such enormous and potentially irreversible consequence, which would profoundly affect our children and theirs, OR why we would so stubbornly deny such a monumental and global scientific consensus on these matters. In other words, even if the "97 percent" of scientists were wrong, as a matter of self-preservation at least, doesn't it stand to reason that we still should take actions to ameliorate what we "hypothetically" are doing to affect our climate in ways that are of such monumental consequence? In what other realm of human existence do we have such overwhelming data and consensus, and still find reasons within us to question, to doubt, to dismiss? Heavens knows, we implement profound, costly, often unpopular, and comprehensive policies all the time—in our judicial, educational, economic, health, and welfare systems—that have far less scientific consensus than we do around climate change. Racial profiling leading to mass incarceration, denial of schooling to girls, predatory lending, abstinence-only sex education, or regressive tax policies that exacerbate poverty, are only a smattering of examples among hundreds of possible candidates. Routinely, we develop, enforce, and fund such policies with very little scientific evidence, and even worse, do so when our scientific evidence concludes that such policies actually are wrong or even harmful in terms of outcomes. So why do we do support policies that directly are in opposition to that which we convincingly can demonstrate empirically?

To answer such questions, we have to go beyond, far beyond, the veneer of rationality, which—as *Making Sense of Beliefs and Values* points out time and time again—is an illusion in any case. Rather, we must go on a journey deep into the human mind and heart—and blaze a new path, illuminated not just by the light of the hard sciences—which are absolutely necessary, but also, are by no means totally sufficient. To fully move from understanding to informed and effective action we also must see by the light of the social sciences and humanities. I firmly believe that beliefs, values, ethics, and morality are crucial components in building the concerted global efforts we need to assuage these issues.

Put plainly, as one who has spent his life trying to facilitate change in the realm of awareness raising and educating for sustainability, I submit that we will not solve the wicked problem of sustainability only by a hard-nosed examination of physical

facts in our material world. Instead, we must understand that we are "believing and needing selves," who think, feel, and act in ways that are driven by highly complex processes. These processes often are unknown to us, even though they are in fact largely knowable already or in the near future if we have the right lamps to light our way. This book—*Making Sense of Beliefs and Values: Theory, Research, and Practice*—provides such light. If we see by it, a thicket of incomprehension will be cleared, and the sorely needed, more sustainable path forward will be illuminated. We need science for solutions to the "wicked" physical issues, but we also need the social sciences and humanities to move people to act upon the issues that we can solve. That inability to build informed collective action might itself be the greatest "wicked issue" we are facing.

In this spirit, I invite you to immerse yourself in this deeply readable and timely book, which not only describes why we humans create the wicked problems we do, but how we may solve them. Equally as important, *Making Sense of Beliefs and Values: Theory, Research, and Practice* could help societies learn to mobilize humanity to act effectively together, for ourselves here and now, and for future generations who will reap what we sow, for better or worse.

Charles Hopkins
UNESCO Chair
Reorienting Teacher Education Towards Sustainability
York University, Toronto

PREFACE

Contemplating a book that strives to "make sense of beliefs and values" is one matter; putting one together represents a qualitatively different leap of faith, evidenced in part by the fact that this volume has been in development for the past seven years, and is based upon well over two decades of scholarly and applied work. An undoubtedly feeble attempt to thank all who have participated in this process is made in the acknowledgment section. Here, some orienting perspective is provided so that readers of various backgrounds might encounter the material presented in this book in a way that is maximally meaningful and relevant.

At the outset, it should be noted that *Making Sense of Beliefs and Values* is written to be accessible for an engaged and educated public, regardless of background; at the same time, this book is intended as an appeal of sorts to the broader interdisciplinary, academic, and professional community. That is because the central goal of this volume—*making sense of beliefs and values*—is of considerable interest to us all, by dint of being human, but of specific relevance to those of us who spend our lives trying to understand these complex processes, and translate and apply what we learn to a myriad of real world issues, populations, settings, and contexts.

In terms of organizational structure, this book is divided into four interrelated parts. Part I consists of four chapters, which focus on the meaning, etiology, and assessment of beliefs and values. Specifically, Chapter 1 provides big picture context regarding how and why it is imperative that we "make sense of beliefs and values," given their ubiquity across multiple aspects of human functioning, and clear relevance to local and global actions, policies, and practices. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth examination of theory, data, and application related to three constructs—beliefs, needs, and self—that are integral to "Equilintegration" (EI) Theory, which seeks to explain how, why, and under what circumstances beliefs and values are acquired, maintained, and transformed. Chapter 3 continues this focus, but does so through the EI Self, a pictographic framework that illustrates how the interaction between our core needs (e.g., for attachment, affiliation) and formative variables (e.g., caregiver, culture) results in beliefs and values about self, others, and the world at large that we internalize over the course of development and across the life span. Taken together, Chapters 2 on EI Theory and 3 on the EI Self comprise the EI model, which is the major explanatory and interpretive framework through which we endeavor to "make sense of beliefs and values" in this book. Part I concludes with Chapter 4, which provides a detailed description and explanation of the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI), an assessment measure that has been used to evaluate the hypotheses and principles of the EI model, and is applied in a wide range of settings and contexts. Analyses presented in later research and practice chapters are drawn directly from the use of the BEVI with multiple populations in the real world.

Part II of this book—*Research*—essentially describes all that we have learned thus far through examination of the EI model and BEVI method across six separate chapters, which explore *culture, development, environment, gender, politics,* and *religion.* Part III—*Practice*—follows a similar approach, but focuses instead on the actual application of the BEVI in five separate domains: *assessment*, *education*, *forensics*, *leadership,* and *psychotherapy*. Although the demarcation between research and practice will become evident, we sought throughout the development of this book to include an emphasis on the "other side of the aisle" in each chapter. That is, research chapters strive to offer applied implications of the theory and data that are presented; practice chapters include data-based findings as well as considerations of areas for future research. In this way, we wished to recognize that research and practice on "beliefs and values" are inextricably linked and mutually informing. This overall commitment is reflected in other features of these chapters, including the comprehensive scope and nature of literature reviews, which attempt to situate each topic within a depth- and breadth-based milieu. Rounding out this book, Part IV consists of a single comprehensive and integrative chapter, which focuses on future directions and further reflections by envisioning how the world might look, feel, and be if we were to adopt a habit of "making sense of beliefs and values" as a matter of course.

Although the question of "audience" was touched upon earlier, some additional explication may be in order to help would-be readers navigate this material in a way that is most likely to be accessible. Of course, readers of all stripes are encouraged to complete the entire book as such an undertaking is most likely to illustrate the *what, why,* and *how* of beliefs and values in the deepest and widest sense. That said, some of the chapters (particularly those of a research and assessment nature) do include information, such as statistical analyses and psychometric information, which may be a bit daunting to the unversed. Nonetheless, regardless of focus, all chapters include relevant literature, accessible interpretations of findings and/or real world applications, clear summaries of fundamental points, and specific recommendations for future research and practice. In short, the material throughout this book—although complex at times—is presented in a manner that is meant to be maximally comprehensible and engaging, regardless of one's point of entry.

All that said, for readers who wish to know exactly what they are getting into, here is some guidance regarding what to expect before wading into any uncharted waters. First, if you are just beginning to think about why we believe what we believe—or want to reflect more deeply upon such matters—the introductory chapter offers a good overview of why we can and must do a much better job of "making sense of beliefs and values," both locally and globally. If you wish to go further, and delve deeply into a range of captivating literatures that bear directly on the nature, etiology, and dynamics of beliefs and values, Chapter 2 is an essential read, with Chapter 3 to follow in order to help translate such content into real world form. If the BEVI is your primary focus (i.e., you want to learn more about what the BEVI is and what it assesses), there can be no substitute for a thorough read of Chapter 4.

Moving from Part I into Parts II and III, it should be emphasized that research and practice chapters deliberately have been written in a way that allows each to "stand alone." So for example, if you are a scholar who is interested in matters of culture, development, ecology, gender, politics, or religion—or a practitioner working in the area of assessment, education, forensics, leadership, or therapy—it should be possible to gain sufficient understanding of the implications and applications of the EI model and BEVI method for one or more of these topical areas simply by reading whatever chapters fall within your purview.

Finally, although I probably should not say so, in sympathy for all of the students (bright and motivated juniors and seniors in high school, undergraduates, and graduate/professional students) who are most fortunate to be offered the "invitation" to engage with the material in this tome, "CliffNotes" of sorts are included in Part IV, the final chapter, which provides an overview of major recommendations from each of the research and practice chapters as well as an in-depth discussion of "future directions" and "further reflections." Fair warning, though—there is a lot of content in this book, and any instructor worth his or her salt could easily extract a nugget or two from one or more chapters in order to separate the diligent sheep who have read from the slacker goats who have not.

In the final analysis, the most important goal of this book is to provide relevant findings and meaningful applications for serious researchers and practitioners who wish to consider how and why "making sense of beliefs and values" may enrich and extend their work. On the other hand, we also want to reach additional devotees of the human condition—including, but not limited to, organizational leaders, educators, and students, to journalists, policy makers, and the clergy—as well as the intrigued public at large, who all desire to be that much more informed about these most pressing issues of our day. That is because the overarching quest here—to "make sense of beliefs and values"—is and should be a matter of deep importance to all thinking and feeling human beings, regardless of educational level, disciplinary background, or professional affiliation.

Hopefully, this preface offers a measure of guidance for such diverse audiences to encounter the material from this book in a way that meets them where they are, rather than the other way around. It is in this spirit, then, that we heed the wisdom of Laozi, who declared the following over two millennia ago: *A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.* So let us take a deep breath and begin at the beginning, by examining the whys and wherefores of our "belief in belief," as we step forth on a fascinating journey that is of profound relevance to us all.

<div style="text-align: right">

Craig N. Shealy
James Madison University
International Beliefs and Values Institute

</div>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Next, I must thank my students, beginning with the University of Maryland programs in Asia and Europe, who reviewed the early versions of the BEVI, and pondered aloud with me the nature and meaning of "beliefs and values" as we went about our lives in countries and communities that originally were not our own, until we made them more so. And, to my students at James Madison University (JMU), I only can offer my profound appreciation to all of you who lent your kind support, thought, and assistance as we cleared brush and burrowed down into a veritable village of interconnected rabbit holes, over so many years of discussions, presentations, and dissertations, contemplating the meaning of this factor analysis or that correlation matrix. You have been sojourners with me along the way, and I always will be grateful for your abiding engagement with the theory, research, and practice described in this book. I hope our work together—exemplified by the multiple chapters that follow, on which many of you serve as authors—was enriching and meaningful for you, as it most certainly has been for me. Thank you all.

Likewise, to my faculty colleagues, what can I say? My heartfelt thanks go out first to my comrades-in-arms in the Combined-Integrated Doctoral Program in Clinical and School Psychology at JMU, superbly led by my good friend and respected colleague, Gregg Henriques, and joined in solidarity by the incomparable Ken Critchfield, Elena Savina, Anne Stewart, Trevor Stokes, and the late, great Harriet Cobb, who would be so pleased that this book *finally* is completed, as well as my friends and colleagues in the inimitable Department of Graduate Psychology and Madison International Learning Committee, and in so many other departments and divisions across JMU, exemplified most recently by the Summit Council and Host Committee in support of the Cultivating the Globally Sustainable Self Summit Series, which is highlighted within this book. And, to the many core advisors, teachers, and mentors during my own intellectual path—including Jerry Beker, W. D. Blackmon, Barry Burkhart, Paul Companik, Randall Flory, Jean Goldsmith, Diane Koch, George Ledger, Elissa Lewis, Phil Lewis, James Miller, Marie Sanders, Joan Solie, Rick Weinberg, and Paul Woods, to highlight only a few—I thank you for your support and nurturance of my fledgling intellectual self when I needed it most.

To my administrator colleagues, again there are too many to mention, but I'll note several who simply must be recognized. To Bill Walker, who thankfully headed the search committee that brought me to JMU, along with other key administrators and leaders—Jon Alger, Robin Anderson, Jerry Benson, Doug Brown, Harriet Cobb, Maggie Burkart Evans, Pamela Fox, Linda Halpern, Sharon Lovell, Kate O'Connell, Ronald Reeve, Sheena Rogers, Linwood Rose, Lee Sternberger, Heather Ward, and Phil Wishon—all of you lent historic support at key points in time and/or continue to provide essential assistance as we contemplate derivative implications of this and allied work from colleagues at JMU as well as our regional, national, and international partners. Although you may never receive such due in public accolades, I hope you recognize that we faculty simply could not accomplish what we do without your ability and willingness to subordinate ego in the service of supporting sustained programs of inquiry and practice, such as the 2003 Consensus Conference or, most recently, the Cultivating the Globally Sustainable Self Summit Series. Such activity is, and should be, at the heart of the academy, creating "enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives," as JMU nobly aspires to do and be.

To my splendid friends who serve with me on the executive board of the International Beliefs and Values Institute—Devi Bhuyan, Jennifer Coffman, Steve Grande, Fletcher Linder, Roderic Owen, David Owusu-Ansah, Lee Sternberger, and Teresa Harris, who also works so ably as managing director of IBAVI, and has provided indispensable support and guidance on countless occasions—I thank you for your

This is a sample from MAKING SENSE OF BELIEFS AND VALUES: THEORY, RESEARCH, AND PRACTICE
Visit This Book's Web Page / Buy Now / Request an Exam/Review Copy

Acknowledgments   **xxiii**

thoughtfulness, guidance, creativity, humor, and investment over so many years now in our shared conviction that there is great merit in "making sense of beliefs and values," and how they are linked to actions, policies, and practices around the world. I could not have done my part without all of you. Thank you for believing in me.

Likewise, to all who have joined the Summit Series, as we grapple with issues that are highly resonant with the chapters and themes in this book, I thank you all for the gracious gift of your time, inspiration, and self. We've already envisioned and pursued so much of merit, and I look forward to all we will learn and accomplish together in the years to come.

To my esteemed collaborators who have served helpfully and selflessly on allied papers, presentations, dissertations, or committees, including Robin Anderson, D. Lee Beard, Harriet Cobb, Eric Cowan, Ken Critchfield, Michele Estes, Teresa Harris, Gregg Henriques, Cara Meixner, Carol Lena Miller, Renee Staton, Anne Stewart, Lee Sternberger, Tim Thomas, and Phil Wishon, and so many other valued colleagues at JMU; to the many distinguished coauthors in the United States and internationally who lent their time and expertise to one or more chapters in this book; to Nancy Hale and the superlative folks at Springer Publishing Company for their excellent efforts and steadfast support; to Brian Whalen, the Forum-IBAVI Working Group, and the Forum on Education Abroad, for their crucial and constructive collaboration on the multiyear, multisite Forum BEVI Project; to the legion of statisticians and programmers who have played a key role at various phases of this process—and let me give a singular shout out to Wenjuan Ma and Craig Salee, gifted statistician and programmer, respectively. I thank all of you not only for me, but on behalf of all involved. We could have not accomplished what we did without your extraordinary skill, commitment, and perspective over so many years.

Within the American Psychological Association (APA)—particularly APAGS (the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students) lo so many years ago, Division 29 (Psychotherapy), Division 52 (International Psychology), Merry Bullock and the Office of International Affairs, and APA writ large—I have such respect for all you are and do. Thank you to those who kindly served as mentors and supporters (you know who you are), for believing in me, and for giving me spaces and places to explore ideas, pursue initiatives, surmount challenges, and to witness what it means to provide transformative leadership that matters in the real world, all of which shaped the letter and spirit of this book. For all of the warm hospitality I have received, and venues where I have had the good fortune to contribute and serve, I have been forever changed, and I thank you for the honor of knowing and working with you all.

No set of acknowledgments would be complete without expressing gratitude to the hundreds of psychotherapy and assessment clients I have been privileged to know and care for over the years. So much of what I have learned about life and living, I have learned from all of you. Your courage and capacity to grow and develop— even in the face of odds that so often seemed insurmountable to us all—have been deeply humbling, instructive, and affirming as I have striven to forge my own life path. I have learned as much from you as ever I instilled through thousands of hours of work together over the past 25 years. I hope this book provides a measure of richly deserved tribute to all that you've taught, given, and been to me.

To my iconoclast parents, and my sibs, thank you for raising me under such a colorful big top, which no doubt was formative in my trying to understand why we believe what we believe in the first place. To our beloved Wilhelm clan, I am grateful for your good-natured forbearance each time I stole away to hammer a particularly

vexing chapter into submission. Quidditch and other nutty antics have been deeply restorative, and I thank you for being there for us over so many memorable years together.

To my wonderful friends—you also know who you are—thank you for your faith in me, and for enduring countless gabby hours with good humor regarding this or that point or process, which undoubtedly was orbiting out of some arcane belief/ need/self space. To take but one example of such indulgence, to Jennifer and Tom Zitt, as I promised then, I am thanking you now for allowing me to toil away on a perfectly sunny afternoon in a Sicilian sand cave, so I could make some bloody deadline for this book, on what otherwise was a grand romp across Italy. As Clarence declares in the final moments of *It's a Wonderful Life*, "No man is a failure who has friends." I understand and value those words, thanks to all of you.

Finally, and in closing, this book would not exist if not for the enduring love and support of my brilliant and beautiful wife, Lee Sternberger. Lee, I cannot express the wonder and appreciation I have for all you have been and done over the 22 years of our remarkable journey together thus far. This book, and its EI model and BEVI method, have grown up together with us both, much to your dismay I am sure at times, although you have borne this process with grace and our trials with grit. Without your beliefs and values—in me and all I have been trying to do and say over these past two decades—*Making Sense of Beliefs and Values* simply would not and could not have happened. And to our lovely and gifted daughter, Sophie, I thank you for entering our world with such wisdom, humor, and spirit, and for tolerating my all-consuming obsession with this endeavor. Your presence and perspective have profoundly inspired me, this work, and its ultimate message of faith, hope, and love for you and yours in the decades to come. For these reasons, and so many more, I dedicate this book to you both with gratitude beyond measure and love beyond words.

PART I

MAKING SENSE OF BELIEFS AND VALUES: THE MEANING, ETIOLOGY, AND ASSESSMENT OF BELIEFS AND VALUES

Craig N. Shealy   1

OUR BELIEF IN BELIEF

The world we see that seems so insane is the result of a belief system that is not working.

—William James

Open a web browser, turn on a radio or television, or pick up a newspaper anywhere in the world and one ineluctable fact immediately becomes clear: Beliefs and values are at the very heart of why we humans do what we do—and who we say we are—to ourselves, others, and the world at large. From politics, religion, education, and the arts, to marriage, family, gender, and sexuality, what arguably is most interesting about the varying opinions we express on such topics is not whether this belief is "right," or that value is "wrong." Much more important is understanding the complex interactions (e.g., among affect, cognition, context, culture, and development) that culminate in a unique constellation of beliefs and values for every human being, as well as how and why these different versions of reality inevitably are linked to the actions, practices, and policies of individuals, groups, organizations, governments, and societies all over the world. Why? Because our lack of knowledge regarding this linkage is placing us at increasing risk of causing negative and potentially irreversible consequences for societies around the world, humanity as a whole, and planet Earth.

At one level, these considerations regarding human nature and society are as old as recorded history, which can be read as nothing more or less than a catalog of causes and campaigns that were justified on the basis of beliefs and values, and fit a unique time and place. However, it might also be argued that matters have become much more complicated of late, for if the past century and the beginning of the present one teach us anything, it is that we now have the means to express our beliefs and values in ways that decimate entire ethnic or religious communities, undermine economic stability around the world, or damage the global environmental systems necessary to sustain life. By way of orientation to this basic premise, consider the belief-based implications of "dirty bombs," just one of many exemplars we will explore in this book, ranging from the acceptance, or not, of climate change, to arguments regarding a "tough-on-crime" agenda, to the role and impact of "hyper-partisanship," to our beliefs regarding what makes a "great teacher" or a "bad leader."

For decades, radioactive materials have been used in millions of applications, from industry, medicine, and research. Such materials could be combined with traditional explosives to create a "dirty bomb" (e.g., Medalia, 2011). Now, any group with the motives and means to acquire and detonate just one such bomb in a strategically selected capital city somewhere in the world could cause social, economic, political, and military havoc across the entire globe. How likely is such a scenario? An article from the *New Scientist* offers the following perspectives:

> A terrorist attack using a dirty bomb is "a nightmare waiting to happen," says Frank Barnaby, a nuclear consultant who used to work at the UK's atomic weapons plant in Aldermaston in Berkshire. "I'm amazed that it hasn't happened already". . . [and] Eliza Manningham-Buller, director-general of the UK's counter-intelligence agency MI5, said a crude attack against a major western city was "only a matter of time." (Risk of radioactive "dirty bomb" growing, 2004)

Although we may be able to develop regulatory and containment strategies that will limit unauthorized access to these materials (and global efforts in this regard have long been under way), technology is silent on motive. That is, such measures, even if effective for some indeterminate period of time, will not address the underlying issue of *why* particular individuals and groups would be motivated to engage in such horrific actions in the first place.

Of course, the historical record is clear that we humans always have had varying motives for the destruction of others and the larger world, either as an explicit objective or an unintended consequence of our actions (e.g., Bongar, Brown, Beutler, Breckenridge, & Zimbardo, 2007; Staub, 2013). What distinguishes the contemporary era is our unprecedented means for doing so. From terrorism and genocide, to global warming and the degradation of our natural resources, the challenges we now face as a species are of unparalleled scope and scale. As such, it is neither unreasonable nor alarmist to conclude that the single most important lesson from the past century—and the beginning of this one—that is within our collective purview and relevant to a more peaceful and sustainable 21st century, is the need to understand the central mediating role of beliefs and values across the entire range of human functioning, from the private and public justifications we harbor for the perpetration of violence against others, to the way we treat and regard cultures, religions, and species different from our own, to our attitude and subsequent actions vis-à-vis the protection and sustenance of planet Earth.

BELIEFS, VALUES, AND VERSIONS OF REALITY

The human tendency and apparent need to legitimize or defend actions, policies, and practices such as these—on the basis of beliefs and values that are held to be self-evident—suggests an active but not necessarily conscious attempt to convince self or others about the "truth" or "goodness" of what may be called a particular "version of reality" (VOR).[1] Theoretically, one's VOR could refer to the entire range of human

---

[1] Selected aspects of chapters in this book include content that has been authored by Shealy for the International Beliefs and Values Institute and Cultivating the Globally Sustainable Self websites as well as adapted and/or excerpted from the following publications: (a) Shealy (2015); (b) Shealy (2014); (c) Shealy, Bhuyan, & Sternberger (2012); (d) Shealy (2005); (e) Shealy (2004).

expression, conduct, and existence, from the way in which one presents self to others, to opinions about how the world and people within it should function or be structured, to deeply held convictions about who one is, and the degree to which one's thoughts, feelings, or actions are internally consistent with this core sense of self. Fundamentally, then, one of the basic propositions of this book is that we humans are designed and inclined to assure ourselves and others regarding the validity and integrity of our own beliefs and values, which is to say, that our personal worldview or VOR is correct, defensible, and good (e.g., Aronson, 2012; Moskowitz, 2005). As Newberg and Waldman (2006) observe,

> Beliefs govern nearly every aspect of our lives. They tell us how to pray and how to vote, whom to trust and whom to avoid; and they shape our personal behaviors and spiritual ethics throughout life. But once our beliefs are established, we rarely challenge their validity, even when faced with contradictory evidence. Thus, when we encounter others who appear to hold differing beliefs, we tend to dismiss or disparage them. (p. 5)

In short, the beliefs and values that comprise one's VOR function as a lens or filter through which self, others, and the world at large are experienced and interpreted (Shealy, Bhuyan, & Sternberger, 2012).

This perspective suggests a fundamental paradox in that two human beings are capable of asserting diametrically opposed VORs while simultaneously declaring with complete certitude that one's own VOR is true and good whereas the other's is not. In doing so, individuals who express diametrically opposed VORs appear often to seek out a basis for justifying why their particular VOR is not only good or true, but also better or superior to another's. And one of the most striking and defining characteristics of such processes is the demonstrable absence of awareness of the basic constructivist insight that one's own beliefs and values may, in the end, be nothing more or less than that . . . one's own (e.g., Aronson, 2012; Gergen, 1998, 1999; Gerhardt & Stinson, 1995; Kuchel, 2003; Martin & Sugarman, 2000; Neimeyer & Raskin, 2000; Panepinto, Domenici, & Domenici, 2012; Raskin, 2012). To be sure, human beings will claim that their beliefs and values are right or superior to those of others because they are derivative of, congruent with, or prescribed by a larger system of thought or practice (e.g., political or religious), which has declared itself to be "right" or "true." But, if there is no clear and credible way to ascertain whether claims about the inherent "truth" or "rightness" of one's beliefs and values are "more" valid than another's, then there is no external means by which support for such claims can reliably be mustered. *None of this is to say that specific beliefs and values are not or cannot be true, right, or better than others*, only that such claims may not be justifiable on the basis of empirical evidence and/or universal opinion.

FROM AURORA AND BOSTON TO FALWELL AND ROBERTSON: CASE STUDIES IN VERSIONS OF REALITY

Believing something to be "the real truth"—even vehemently—has no more power to make it so than nonbelief has the power to make it not so. That is because there is no inherent and necessary linkage between that which is or is not believed and that which is or is not "truth" in any absolute sense. Belief exists in a realm that may or may not be aligned with "reality" or "truth," despite the fact that human beings

behave as though there is a direct and inviolable linkage between what they believe and what might, in fact, be real or true (e.g., Aronson, 2012; Moskowitz, 2005; Newberg & Waldman, 2006; Shealy, 2004). This phenomenon is apparent especially in subjective spheres such as politics and religion. One need only tune in to "talk radio" or political "talk shows" on television in the United States, where even under the best circumstances—when respectful listening, honest dialogue, and an open exchange of perspectives actually occur—devotees of the major political parties will argue for the inherent goodness or rightness of their particular beliefs and values, which may be expressed in the form of preferred and often diametrically opposed perspectives regarding particular sociopolitical events, proposals, or policies. Such "debates" often appear to unfold on the basis of a priori assumptions about reality that (a) are designed to identify and present confirmatory rather than disconfirmatory evidence and (b) do not appear to recognize how such VORs become internalized (i.e., claimed as one's own) in the first place. Instead, the mere fact that such VORs are *held to be true* often appears to be all that is necessary and sufficient to contend that such VORs *are in fact true*.

These paradoxical processes often become deeply apparent in the sphere of religion. For example, at the most basic level, contrast person A who believes that the only way to "get to heaven" is to believe in X, with person B who believes that the only way to "get to heaven" is to believe in Y. The rather ironic and disturbing fact that both belief systems cannot be true—if the validity of X is predicated on the invalidity of Y (and vice versa)—seems often lost on persons A and B. In short, at the level of expressed conviction and certitude in politics and religion, at least, these tautologies often do not appear to be recognized as such.

At a deeper level, consider the role of religious beliefs vis-à-vis the rash of mass killings in the United States and around the world over the past decade. Although any horrific exemplar could be cited, let us focus on the Aurora, Colorado theater shootings of on July 20, 2012 as well as the Boston Marathon bombings on April 15, 2013 as they typify a fundamental challenge we face collectively in "making sense of beliefs and values." First, ponder the observations of Rob Brendle,[2] founding pastor of Denver United Church, written shortly after the Aurora, Colorado theater shootings, in which 12 people were killed and 70 injured.

> There are at least four influences on human events: God's will, to be sure; but also the will of Satan, our adversary; peoples' choices, for better or for worse; and natural law (gravity, collision, combustion, and the like). It is difficult to know which force causes the circumstances that devastate us. But it is enough to know that God need not be responsible for them.

Next, regarding the Boston marathon bombings, in which 3 people died and an estimated 264 others were injured, consider first the view of Brandon Levering, pastor of Westgate Church in Weston, Mass: "As our city quakes from the effects of sin in this world — the evil, the violence, the injuries and loss of life — we pray that your holy and healing presence would be made known."[3] Along related lines, the Very Reverend Gary Hall, dean of the National Cathedral in the United States, reflected upon the Boston bombings as follows:[4]

---

[2] Retrieved from http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2012/07/28/my-take-this-is-where-god-was-in-aurora

[3] Grossman, C.L. (2013). Boston Marathon blast puts same question on everyone's lips: Why? The News Leader, Staunton, VA, Section A, Page 6, Wednesday, April 17, 2013.

[4] Retrieved from www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=167399098&m=167399089

In a tragedy, there really isn't much to say aside from just being with the people who are suffering. The problem of evil, and the problem of why God allows suffering, is probably the major religious problem for all religious traditions. And no tradition really finally gives a satisfactory answer. Almost every tradition just holds it up finally as a mystery. So, in the face of that, it seems to me that people of faith are called not so much as to try to explain why something happened, as to simply stand with, and put our arms around, and care for people as they go through tragedy.

What unites these perspectives? Aside from the tragic nature of these events—which rightly calls upon us all for deep and abiding compassion and care—what is most striking from the standpoint of "making sense of beliefs and values" are (a) the genuine sense of bewilderment expressed by eminent spiritual leaders about *why* these terrible killings occurred and (b) the causal explanations that are offered regarding why these events happened (e.g., "God's will," "the will of Satan," "peoples' choices," "natural law," "sin").

So, at the outset of this book—and with genuine respect—it seems worth asking if the preceding reactions (e.g., bewilderment) and explanations (e.g., "the will of Satan") to these terrible events are really the best we can do? For example, might additional or alternative factors more parsimoniously explain these events? Why cannot we—why should not we—"try to explain why something happened," if we have a theoretically and empirically grounded basis for doing so? For instance, consider the following rudimentary observations regarding the nature of mass killers since 1982: "Forty four of the killers were white males. Only one of them was a woman. . . A majority were mentally troubled—and many displayed signs of it before setting out to kill" (Follman, Aronsen, & Pan, 2014, p. 1). So, it would appear that being male, White, and unstable are correlated positively with a killing propensity whereas mirror attributes (e.g., female, non-White, and stable) are not.[5, 6]

But for present purposes, the larger question is: What possible benefit is there in throwing "God's will"—or Satan's for that matter—into the mix? Unless God or Satan is preternaturally hostile toward White males who are emotionally disturbed—and kindly inclined toward stable females of whatever hue—it simply makes no sense to indict these entities as plausibly playing a leading role in the occurrence of such tragedies. Worse still, rather than bringing all we know and could learn in order to illuminate *why* these terrible events occur, invoking God or Satan as causally salient serves inadvertently to obfuscate. Are we well served by a shared shrug—however reverent—regarding the fundamental question of why we believe what we believe, and do what we do (i.e., must these tragedies be—and remain—"mysteries")? Surely the victims of such crimes—and the rest of us who vicariously are victimized—deserve better.

The next time one of these tragedies occurs, and there will be many, would it not be refreshing to hear religious leaders pair their call for God's consolation, which clearly has deep meaning to so many—with a simultaneous plea for redoubled efforts to understand how and why relatively few males become filled with such profound

---

[5] Of course, "highly correlated" should not be confused with "highly causal" since the vast majority of White, unstable, males do not engage in killing sprees.

[6] The question of why such variables are predictive indeed is relevant and worthy of study (e.g., see Chapter 8, on gender, for an in-depth discussion of how boys are socialized as well as the attendant negative implications for access to emotion in self and other; see Chapter 13 for the role of "beliefs and values" in our criminal justice system, which focuses largely on punishment over prevention or rehabilitation).

hate that the only recourse imaginable to them is to visit their vitriol upon self and other—and what to do about this lamentable phenomenon? For example, while never condoning such acts, perhaps it would be useful to listen—deeply—to the explanations such killers sometimes offer for what they believe, and why they do what they do, even if we rightly find their "explanations" to be disturbed at best, if not abhorrent (e.g., see Garbarino, 2015)?[7] Would not such an approach ultimately provide greater insight and understanding than well-intentioned bromides regarding "God's will?" In addition to demonstrating that religion and science need not be in opposition, this tack also might provide an antidote to dropping attendance and weakening fidelity to church doctrine, particularly by young people, who tend to see less need for animosity between religion and science, or competing religious creeds, and instead are seeking pragmatic and meaningful solutions to our challenges in society and in life (e.g., America's Changing Religious Landscape, 2015; Dickerson, 2012).

Although the examples of religious beliefs and values vis-à-vis mass killings in Aurora and Boston have their own complexities, adherents to such etiological paradigms clearly are approaching these matters with deep compassion as well as an earnest desire to be of service to people who have been traumatized deeply. Contrast the perspectives of such religious leaders with some of their brethren. Here we have a news account of comments by the Reverend Jerry Falwell and religious broadcaster Pat Robertson, which occurred 2 days after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States.

Robertson and Falwell: God Gave Us "What We Deserve"[8]

The Associated Press

The Rev. Jerry Falwell and religious broadcaster Pat Robertson said Tuesday's terrorist attacks happened because Americans have insulted God and lost the protection of heaven.

"We have imagined ourselves invulnerable and have been consumed by the pursuit of . . . health, wealth, material pleasures and sexuality," Robertson wrote in a four-page statement issued Thursday by the Christian Broadcasting Network.

Terrorism, he said, "is happening because God Almighty is lifting his protection from us."

---

[7] For a glimpse into "the mind" of such an individual, consider the beliefs that James Holmes articulated for his mass killings in Aurora, Colorado: www.cnn.com/2015/06/05/us/james-holmes-theater-shooting-trial/index.html. In doing so, review the sources of scholarly and applied information that Holmes reportedly investigated in an attempt to understand his own self-recognized disturbance, which apparently were grounded substantively in a "neuroscience" perspective. As recorded in a notebook he kept, which emerged during his trial, "So always, that's my mind," he wrote. "It is broken. I tried to fix it. . .Neuroscience seemed like the way to go but it didn't pan out. In order to rehabilitate the broken mind, my soul must be eviscerated. I could not sacrifice my soul to have a 'normal' mind." Unfortunately, worthy and relevant as it is, "neuroscience" in its current and foreseeable state, simply cannot, by itself, explain much less "fix" this type and level of mental disturbance, despite the fact that Holmes apparently sought a curative explanation from this field, and was receiving psychiatric treatment. Consistent with a number of themes and findings presented throughout this book, the fact that Holmes was deeply motivated to seek an explanation and cure for his ills through the paradigm of neuroscience should compel substantive contemplation by all of us in the mental health field. More specifically, as scholars, educators, practitioners, and leaders, we all should reflect upon the "treatment-based" implications and applications of the epistemologically and values-based explanatory frameworks we endorse for "why people believe what they believe" and "do what they do" as well as how our preferred "treatments" are justified by such frameworks (e.g., see Coates, Hanson, Samuel, Webster, & Cozen, 2016; Cozen, Hanson, Poston, Jones, & Tabit, 2016).

[8] Robertson and Falwell: God gave us 'what we deserve.' (2001, September 15). *The News Leader*, p. A2.

Falwell, a Baptist minister and chancellor of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, said Thursday on Robertson's religious program "The 700 Club" that he blames the attacks on pagans, abortionists, feminists, homosexuals, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the People For the American Way.

"All of them have tried to secularize America, I point the finger in their face and say, 'You helped this happen,'" Falwell said.

He added later, "God continues to lift the curtain and allow the enemies of America to give us probably what we deserve." "Jerry, that's my feeling," Robertson responded. "I think we've just seen the antechamber to terror. We haven't even begun to see what they can do to the major population."

Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, a gay rights organization, said Friday the comments of Falwell and Robertson "were stunning. They were beyond contempt. They were irresponsible at best, and a deliberate attempt to manipulate the nation's anger at worst."

Robertson, who founded the Christian Coalition and unsuccessfully ran for the 1988 Republican presidential nomination said in his statement that Americans have insulted God by allowing abortion and "rampant Internet pornography." He also chided the U.S. Supreme Court for, among other things, limiting prayer in public schools.

"We have a court that has essentially stuck its finger in God's eye," Robertson wrote. "We have insulted God at the highest level of our government. Then, we say, 'Why does this happen?'"

Robertson was among leaders on the religious right who backed President Bush in last year's election. A White House official called the remarks "inappropriate" and added, "The president does not share those views."

Falwell said Friday that he did not mean to blame any one group.

"But I'd say this is a wake up call from God," Falwell told The Associated Press. "I feel our spiritual defenses are down. If we don't repent, then more events might happen in the future."

Bill Leonard, dean of the Wake Forest University Divinity School in Winston-Salem N.C. compared Falwell and Robertson's comments with militant Islamic rhetoric that has been condemned worldwide.

"It trivializes theology. It trivializes the dead," Leonard said. "It suggests that God was somehow protecting us more than other countries—Britain, Israel—that had terrorist attacks in the past."

"This is not a time to be blaming anyone, but to huddle together. To lament and cry out."

Asked to comment on Falwell and Robertson's comments, a spokesman for the American Civil Liberties Union said, "We are not dignifying it with a response."

As indicated, if one is disinclined toward such beliefs, reactions may range from outright dismissal ("not dignifying [them] with a response"), to objections on logical grounds (Does the fact that terrorists could successfully attack other nations—Britain, Israel—imply God has not been providing them protection?), to outrage (such comments were "stunning," "beyond contempt," "irresponsible at best, and a deliberate

attempt to manipulate the nation's anger at worst"). Moreover, as one commentator notes, the stark and unequivocal tone of such remarks seems strikingly similar to those of the late Osama bin Laden and his followers, in that a problem is identified (e.g., Americans are "consumed by the pursuit of . . . health, wealth, material pleasures, and sexuality"), which has effects (i.e., "God Almighty is lifting his protection from us"), and which in turn has a solution (e.g., "If we don't repent, then similar events might happen in the future").

   But apart from one's personal reaction to these statements, such comments actually seem to reflect refreshing candor on the part of Falwell and Robertson, in that they were giving full and open voice—in the heat of the moment (i.e., two days after the attacks)—to deeply held beliefs that seemed entirely justified, defensible, and internally consistent to them; in fact, from their VORs, as men who have represented the views of millions of Americans and seek to "lead" others in matters spiritual, they perhaps felt obliged to offer this perspective, since not doing so would violate their duty to lead others, and the nation, toward their concept of a better end for all of us.

   In the quest to make sense of beliefs and values, it is important first to move beyond personal and emotional reactions to comments like these, understandable though they are, and consider basic questions of etiology. That is, how is it that people who witness the same event can hold such radically different beliefs about why it occurred? Moreover, why is it that people who witness the same event are compelled to focus on such radically different aspects of it? For Falwell and Robertson, these attacks provide "data" about causal dynamics and processes at a metaphysical level that, from their perspective, clearly are operative in our three-dimensional world: God has been "insulted" and angered by our profligate and secular ways, and has therefore decided to "lift the protection" that apparently has shielded us from such horrific events historically. Although absurd, illogical, and offensive to many, such beliefs suggest a complex but largely mechanistic and deterministic VOR in which events, outcomes, and processes on Earth may be determined by an omnipotent and omniscient entity who is capable of being enraged by our actions and impelled to "teach us a lesson" that will set us on the correct path once again.

   If you do not share this VOR, imagine for a moment what it would be like to see things in these terms: all of your own behavior and that of others, all events in the world, natural and otherwise, ultimately are under the potential control of an inscrutable yet all-powerful and capricious entity who seems strikingly human (e.g., this entity appears to think, perceive, feel, and behave) and could, at any moment, lash out at us or create a long-term plan for our demise if it concludes that we are sufficiently disobedient or in opposition to its idea of who we should and must be. On the other hand, presumably, if we demonstrate appropriate deference to and congruence with its idea of whom we should and must be, protection and intercession become our just reward. An adherent to such a VOR certainly would remain vigilant to evidence about where we stood as individuals and as "a nation," and rightly would fear and decry signs that we were straying from this prescribed "path" as a harbinger of bad things to come. And of course, since such individuals appear to believe that they articulate a rendering of the Christian faith that is sovereign, literal, and true, such fears and concerns arguably are well founded (e.g., can certainly be supported by a source document, the Bible, that such individuals believe directly communicates this entity's perspective on things). From all of this, then, the link for such individuals between, say, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament and the destruction of the World Trade Center Towers in New York City is logical and inevitable, since such destruction is

permitted and/or caused by a God who is capable of insult and outrage, and inclined toward violent retribution as a corrective measure, particularly when our collective "sin" (e.g., tolerance and promotion of homosexuality, feminism, and pornography, and disavowal of prayer in schools) is experienced by this entity as rampant, unyielding, or simply too much to bear. The point is not to validate or invalidate such thinking, but to note that even if we experience another's beliefs as personally "unbelievable," it still is the case that to the adherent, such beliefs often are experienced as (a) internally consistent, (b) a logical outgrowth of a larger system of thought, (c) a crucial element in legitimizing, justifying, or making sense of events in the world, and (d) an ineluctable part of being human, in that it simply is not possible to be completely void of "belief."

To contemplate this reality from a more universally accessible viewpoint, consider that we live in a probabilistic universe where many phenomena and events are mysterious, debatable, not entirely predictable, or subject still to discovery; where the meaning and purpose of life cannot unequivocally be confirmed by all; and where reality often cannot be tested against some inviolable and absolute standard that is clear and agreed upon by everyone across time and place. In such a milieu, it simply is not possible to avoid having to accept some things on "faith," even if that faith is limited to an implicit conviction that oxygen still will be accessible the moment you complete this sentence. Even then, with probabilities so high as to be virtually certain, they are not entirely so, and we cannot be completely sure. That is because in truth, we simply do not know what the next moment will bring, at any level. Having no good alternative, we tend to accept such uncertainties "on faith" and do not think much about them, occupying ourselves with other matters over which we seem to have some control.

If such processes are operative even within the temporal and material realm, imagine how much more equivocal matters become around issues of political ideology or religious faith. Here, it seems (current and historical evidence suggests, in fact) that "anything goes," that anyone can come to believe anything about anyone or anything. In this subjective realm, it can seem that there are no rules, no boundaries, no universally agreed upon sense of what is right and what is wrong. Because that is the nature of this level of reality, it indeed is the case that within oneself, one's own convictions may be experienced as correct, defensible, and good even if, theoretically, the entire human race expressed a heartfelt and diametrically opposed belief. For example, even if the entire species believed, to a person save one, that the Earth was round, it is still possible that one individual among us could believe differently. True, such an obstinate person may be persuaded to believe as we do, or we could beat or torture that individual until he or she recanted or even came to share our belief. But the mere expression of belief typically does not in itself have the power to eliminate or invalidate the mental space in another where a contrary belief may continue to exist.[9] Anyone who has ever felt compelled to assert or argue for the legitimacy of one's own beliefs and values (and who has not?), but in the end, does not convince others, knows how frustrating this reality of being human can be, which also is why the weakest form of evidence for the validity of one's own beliefs is to cite the beliefs of another.

The fact that human beings appear capable of believing just about anything, is a quite separate matter from the fact that the processes by which beliefs and values are acquired, maintained, and modified are knowable, albeit imperfectly and

---

[9] Indeed, Charles K. Johnson, the late president of the International Flat Earth Research Society, maintained for nearly 30 years until his death in 2001 that "people with a great reservoir of common sense. . .don't believe idiotic things such as the Earth spinning around the sun. Reasonable, intelligent people have always recognized that the earth is flat." Retrieved June 3, 2014, from www.lhup.edu/~dsimanek/fe-scidi.htm

incompletely. That is, while we may not be able to alter the fact that we are built to believe in just about anything (and probably would not want to), we do know something about why people come to believe and value that which they do, and the forces and dynamics that tend to be associated with such processes and outcomes (e.g., Aronson, 2012; Feather, 1995; Newberg & Waldman, 2006; Rokeach & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Schwartz, 2012; Shealy et al., 2012). Such knowledge is no small thing, because with it we also know something about how to apprehend and potentially shape what actually is held to be true.

OUR BELIEF IN BELIEF: 9/11 AND BEYOND

As a dramatic exemplar of such processes, consider again the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. These malignant and iniquitous acts were distinctive at a number of levels: the coordination of attacks in broad daylight in major metropolitan areas; the indiscriminant killing of as many people as possible, most of whom were civilians with no involvement in military operations or affairs; the calculated use of airliners as weapons of mass destruction, and the deliberate selection of planes filled to capacity with fuel for long flights; the apparent willingness and desire of the terrorists, several of whom are purported to have strong family ties, to sacrifice their own lives in pursuit of their larger objectives; and perhaps most striking, the vainglorious justification for all of this in the name of Islam and the Muslim people.

If these attacks appear unprecedented, however, it is because of the brazen intent and graphic magnitude of their impact, rather than because the beliefs and behaviors of their principle agents are unknown to us. Certainly, the varied and concomitant justifications for the destruction of others are manifest in our recent collective history as a species, from Nazi Germany and the Holocaust to more recent ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Rwanda; to the enslavement of millions of Africans and subsequent lynching of thousands more in the United States; to practices of footbinding, suttee, and genital mutilation that have been perpetrated against millions of women; to contemporary bombings and killings that all are justified in one way or another by governments, organizations, and the individuals who represent or comprise them across the entire ideological, economic, sociocultural, and geopolitical landscape (e.g., Aronson, 2012; Bongar et al., 2007; Staub, 2013).

Of course, destructive justifications that emanate from the human psyche are apparent on a less massive scale. In our recent past, for example, consider Matthew Shepherd, the gay male from Wyoming who was beaten, tied to a fence, and left to freeze to death on the grounds that he had made sexual advances toward two men in a bar. Or, James Byrd, Jr., the Black man from Jasper, Texas who, for racially motivated reasons, was beaten, chained to the rear of a pickup truck, and dragged to his death. And of course, these are just a few national "exemplars." Click on the news or pick up a paper any day of the week. There, you will see evidence for more of the same— more or less dramatic perhaps, in terms of scope or detail—but not qualitatively different in terms of the intrapsychic dynamics that compel people to behave in these ways toward other living beings, and certainly no less traumatic for those who bear the consequences.

How should we respond to such events? What can we claim legitimately in terms of knowledge or expertise about how, why, and under what circumstances human beings are compelled to commit and subsequently justify such acts? As will be discussed throughout this book, answers to questions like these likely depend upon one's point of departure: our life histories, backgrounds, and aspirations, which

culminate in the beliefs, identities, and roles to which we ascribe. As such, the chapters that follow are written in a way that should be accessible to an engaged and educated public, regardless of background; at the same time, they are also intended as an appeal of sorts to the broader interdisciplinary, academic, and professional community. That is because the central goal of this book—*making sense of beliefs and values*—is of considerable interest to us all, by dint of being human, but of specific relevance to those of us who spend our lives trying to understand these complex processes, and translate and apply what we learn to a myriad of real world issues, populations, settings, and contexts.

Within the broader academic community, in particular, it is worth asking how we might further such understanding, both explicitly and deliberately? For example, as scholars and practitioners, how do we heed Phillip Zimbardo's post-9/11 call ". . . to act, to apply everything we know about human nature" (Murray, 2002, p. 24)? More specifically, how would we go about the business of applying "everything we know about human nature" to a topic as vast and multidetermined as understanding why, how, and under what circumstances individuals will commit and justify violent and destructive acts toward other human beings? Since so many interacting forces and factors are likely to influence the timing and nature of events like these, does not the inherent complexity of such phenomena suggest that our scholarly reach will exceed our grasp? After all, our theories are imperfect, and our methods imprecise. Only in the past several decades have we begun to gain sufficient capacity—from a measurement and statistical standpoint—to examine and predict the complex interactions among behavior, cognition, affect, biology, development, society, culture, and life circumstances, while simultaneously seeking to comprehend the religious and spiritual forces that provide meaning and motive to so many people all over the world.

And yet, with all of these limitations and caveats, we do know something—quite a bit actually—about how and why people come to believe and value what they do. For example, we have evidence to suggest that economic and political factors are certainly relevant if not necessary to the construction of ideologies like those of the Third Reich, or the Taliban, for that matter. In this regard, consider the observations of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter about global conditions:

> Nearly a billion people are illiterate. More than half the world's people have little or no healthcare and less than two dollars a day for food, clothing, and shelter; some 1.3 billion live on less than *one* dollar a day. At the same time, the average household income on an American family is more than $55,000 a year with much of the industrialized world enjoying the same, and in some cases an even higher, standard of material blessings. . .The nations of the European Union have set a public goal of sharing four-tenths of one percent of their GNP with the developing word. But the United States and most other rich nations fall short of this goal. (Carter, n.d., pp. 1–2)

When such disproportionate inequities are juxtaposed with the perception—right or wrong—that the United States often is indifferent to views other than its own, or the effects of its policies on the rest of the world, it is easier to understand why extremist ideologies are directed at us (e.g., Consider this America, 2002; Fisher, 2013; White, 2002).

Nonetheless, economic and political factors—crucial though they are—do not explain either the "complex psychological reasons [that] give rise to the terrorist impulse, which is to purge through a spasm of violence a soul that feels corrupted by

the modern world" (Ignatius, 2001, p. B7), or why so few people exposed to these debilitating conditions ever resort to violence, terrorist or otherwise. In short, otherwise valuable analyses that attempt to explain extremism only or primarily on economic or political grounds will inevitably lack a measure of depth, because the crucible for these dark forces is—and must be—the human psyche. Although nonpsychological factors certainly do facilitate the emergence of extremist beliefs (indeed, all beliefs), such "states" ultimately are mental and biological as much as they are economic or political; for those who are motivated to harm or annihilate others often find ways to justify such conduct, which implies internalization of, or receptivity to, beliefs about who "others" are and what "they" deserve (e.g., Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Aronson, 2012; Bongar et al., 2007; Moskowitz, 2005; Newberg & Waldman, 2006; Shealy, 2005; Staub, 1996, 2003, 2013).

MAKING SENSE OF BELIEFS AND VALUES: THE VITAL ROLE OF EDUCATORS, SCHOLARS, AND PRACTITIONERS

We humans are nowhere near as free to discern and control intrapsychic forces and dynamics as we fancy ourselves to be. Rather, as discussed throughout the various chapters of this book, abundant evidence suggests that what we believe and value as good or true is a function—at least in part—of our unique developmental, life, and contextual experiences, which interact with powerful affective and attributional processes that are neurobiologically mediated, and of which we may have little awareness (e.g., Aronson, 2012; Feather, 1995; Newberg & Waldman, 2006; Rokeach & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Schwartz, 2012; Shealy, 2005; Wegner, 2002). Therefore, a plausible strategy could find us striving to identify extant and emerging programs of inquiry that logically are aligned with the larger task of understanding these complex phenomena. Psychology certainly would play a key role in the construction of such a framework. Toward that end, and a true integration of our "scientist–practitioner" ideal (e.g., Gaudiano & Statler, 2001; Henriques, 2011; Magnavita & Achin, 2013), it would be necessary for us to consider perspectives and contributions that derive from a range of different epistemologies, activities, and subfields—from abnormal, biological, clinical, cognitive, cultural, developmental, family, personality, political, and social psychology—abandoning along the way our unfounded prejudices about who is and is not qualified to comment on such complicated matters.

But our active presence and collective contribution, though necessary, would not be sufficient. Other perspectives from allied fields of inquiry and practice are also needed, including, but not limited to, anthropology, biology, economics, journalism, philosophy, political science, religious studies, and sociology, not to mention rich and compelling theory, data, and analyses that transcend any specific domain. As Braithwaite and Scott (1991) have observed, "The study of values is central to and involves the intersection of interests of philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists" (p. 661) (for a sampling of interdisciplinary perspectives and approaches, see Boudon, 2001; Gioseffi, 1993; Inglehart, Basáñez, & Moreno, 1998; Inglehart, Basáñez, Díez-Medrano, Halman, & Luijkx, 2004; Kelley & De Graaf, 1997; Leuty, 2013; Mays, Bullock, Rosenzweig, & Wessells, 1998; McElroy, 1999; Newberg & Waldman, 2006; Ryan, Curren, & Deci, 2013; Sargent, 1995; Schwartz, 2012).

As educators, scholars, and practitioners with demonstrable interests and expertise in such matters, we are positioned well to offer compelling data and theory that can help make sense of beliefs and values to policy makers and the public at

large. Collectively, we have access to a wide range of theoretical, empirical, and applied subfields with direct relevance to an understanding of these constructs[10]; we also possess the methodological sophistication and research tools necessary to measure and evaluate a myriad of relevant hypotheses and applications. This area of inquiry also offers extraordinary opportunities for interprofessional collaboration across a range of disciplines (e.g., Arredondo, Shealy, Neale, & Winfrey, 2004; Association for International Studies, 2014; Center for the Study of Interdisciplinarity, 2014; International Network of Inter- and Transdisciplinarity, 2014; Johnson, Stewart, Brabeck, Huber, & Rubin, 2004). As Milton Rokeach, the eminent social psychologist and pioneer in the study of beliefs and values declared over four decades ago,

> . . . the value concept, more than any other, should occupy a central position across all of the social sciences—sociology, anthropology, psychology, psychiatry, political science, education, economics, and history. More than any other concept, it is an intervening variable that shows promise of being able to unify the apparently diverse interests of all the sciences concerned with human behavior. (Rokeach, 1973, p. 3)

Nonetheless, despite the demonstrable global need to explicate how actions, policies, and practices are mediated by the implicit and explicit beliefs and values of individuals, groups, governments, and societies around the world—and the vast analytic capacity of the international academic community to meet this need—formal theories and models of beliefs and values remain relatively rare. As Fiedler and Bless (2000) note, "In all the huge and wide-spread literature on the psychology of cognition and emotion, there is almost no reference to research on beliefs" (p. 144). Likewise, Musek (1998) observes that, "Despite the growing interest in the study of values. . .no great attention has been devoted to individual values in relation to political and religious orientation" (p. 47). Similarly, Grube, Mayton, and Ball-Rokeach (1994) comment that "very little research" has been conducted on promising belief/value frameworks such as "belief system theory and value self-confrontation"; as such, "our understanding of how people organize their cognitive lives and the implications this organization has for behavior remains unfulfilled" (p. 172). From an applied perspective, Kuchel (2003) reports that "very few studies have examined the role of values in. . .clinical decision-making and diagnosis" (p. 24). Finally, as Leuty (2013) observes, "The lack of research on values and needs has led to great misunderstanding of the definition and importance of these constructs." (p. 363)

A central thesis of this book is that scholarship focusing explicitly on human beliefs and values has not progressed further due to a lack of definitional clarity and conceptual explication regarding: (a) what beliefs and values are and are not; (b) the ontological and contextual factors and processes that are relevant to the etiology, maintenance, and transformation of beliefs and values; (c) the relationship between beliefs and values and other biopsychosocial mechanisms and processes that must concurrently be defined and articulated (e.g., needs and self); (d) theoretical frameworks that optimally may contain and/or account for the interaction among all of these constructs; and (e) methodologies for measuring and evaluating various hypotheses and principles that would be predicted by such frameworks.

---

[10] As defined by Hubley and Zumbo (2013), a "*construct* may be conceived of as a concept or a mental representation of shared attributes or characteristics, and it is assumed to exist because it gives rise to observable or measurable phenomena" (p. 3).

This book attempts to address these issues by offering (a) a theoretical model, Equilintegration or EI Theory, that specifies a number of testable hypotheses regarding the relationship between needs, values, and self, and suggests further areas of inquiry; (b) a pictographic framework, the Equilintegration or EI Self, that illustrates how and why the beliefs and values we call our own are the functional result of an expression of adaptive potential and core need, which are mediated by a complex interaction among developmental processes and formative variables; and (c) an assessment method called the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory or BEVI that has been used in a wide range of research and applied contexts, and also is designed to evaluate and further develop EI Theory and the EI Self (Shealy, 2004, 2005; Shealy et al., 2012). In addressing such matters, first, we must describe and define in sufficient detail the three core components of this explanatory system: *beliefs*, *needs*, and *self*. As such, relevant literatures and emerging definitional and explanatory guidelines for each of these "construct components" are explicated next, followed by an overview of EI Theory, the EI Self, and the BEVI, which attempt to integrate these component parts into a coherent whole.

REFERENCES

Altemeyer, B., & Hunsberger, B. E. (1992). Authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism, quest, and prejudice. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *2*(2), 113–133.

America's changing religious landscape. (2015). *Pew Research Center: Religion & Public Life.* Retrieved from http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious -landscape/

Aronson, E. (2012). *The social animal* (11th ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Arredondo, P., Shealy, C., Neale, M., & Winfrey, L. (2004). Consultation and interprofessional collaboration: Modeling for the future [Special Series]. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 60*(7), 787–800.

Associated Press. (2001, September 15). The Rev. Jerry Falwell and religious broadcaster Pat Robertson. Robertson and Falwell: God gave us 'what we deserve'. *The News Leader*, p. A2.

Association for International Studies. (2014). Retrieved on May 7, 2014, from www.units .miamioh.edu/aisorg/

Bongar, B., Brown, L. M. Beutler, L. E., Breckenridge, J. N., & Zimbardo, P.G. (Eds.). (2007). *The psychology of terrorism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Boudon, R. (2001). *The origin of values: Sociology and philosophy of beliefs*. London: Transaction Publishers.

Braithwaite, V. A., & Scott, W. A. (1991). Values. In J. P. Robinson, P. R. Shaver & L. S.Wrightsman (Eds.), *Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes* (pp. 661–753). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Carter, J. (n.d.). *A tale of two worlds*. Retrieved June 3, 2014, from www.cartercenter.org/ documents/1541.pdf

Coates, M., Hanson, W., Samuel, D. B., Webster, M., & Cozen, J. (2016). The Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI): Psychological assessment implications and applications. In C. N. Shealy (Ed.), *Making sense of beliefs and values* (pp. 371–406). New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Cozen, J., Hanson, W., Poston, J., Jones, S., & Tabit, M. (2016). The Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI): Implications and applications for therapeutic assessment and intervention. In C. N. Shealy (Ed.), *Making sense of beliefs and values* (pp. 575–621). New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Center for the Study of Interdisciplinarity. (2014). Retrieved July 26, 2014, from http://www .csid.unt.edu/

Consider this America . . . Nine Views from Around the World. (2002, January 6). *The Washington Post*, pp. B2–B3.

Dickerson, J. S. (2012, December 16). The decline of evangelical America. *Sunday Review*, p. 5.

Feather, N. T. (1995). Values, valences, and choice: The influence of values on the perceived attractiveness and choice of alternatives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 68*(6), 1135–1151.

Fiedler, K., & Bless, H. (2000). The formation of beliefs at the interface of affective and cognitive processes. In N. A. Frijda, A. S. Manstead, & S. Bem (Eds.), *Emotions and beliefs: How thoughts influence feelings* (pp. 144–170). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Fisher, M. (2013, January). *Who loves and hates America: A revealing map of global opinion toward the U.S.* Retrieved June 3, 2014, from http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/01/11/who-loves-and-hates-america-a-revealing-map-of-global-opinion-toward-the-u-s/

Follman, M., Aronsen, G., & Pan, D. (2014). *A guide to mass shootings in America*. Retrieved from http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/07/mass-shootings-map

Garbarino, J. (2015). *Listening to killers: Lessons learned from my twenty years as a psychological expert witness in murder cases*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Gaudiano, B. A., & Statler, M. A. (2001). The scientist-practitioner gap and graduate education: Integrating perspectives and looking forward. *The Clinical Psychologist*, *54*(4), 12–18.

Gergen, K. J. (1998). From control to construction: New narratives for the social sciences. *Psychological Inquiry*, *9*, 101–103.

Gergen, K. J. (1999). Psychological science in a postmodern context. *American Psychologist*, *56*(10), 803–813.

Gerhardt, J., & Stinson, C. S. (1995). "I don't know": Resistance or groping for words? The construction of analytic subjectivity. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, *5*(4), 619–672.

Gioseffi, D. (Ed.). (1993). *On prejudice: A global perspective*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Grube, J. W., Mayton, D. M., & Ball-Rokeach, S. J. (1994). Inducing change in values, attitudes, and behaviors: Belief system theory and the method of value self-confrontation. *Journal of Social Issues, 50*(4), 153–174.

Henriques, G. (2011). *A new unified theory of psychology*. New York, NY: Springer.

Ignatius, D. (2001, October 28). The psyche of Bin Laden. *The Washington Post*, p. B7.

Inglehart, R., Basáñez M., & Moreno, A. (1998). *Human values and beliefs: A cross-cultural sourcebook*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Inglehart, R., Basáñez, M., Díez-Medrano, J., Halman, L. & Luijkx, R. (2004). *Human beliefs and values: A cross-cultural sourcebook based on the 1999–2002 values surveys*. Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores.

International Network of Inter- and Transdisciplinarity. (2014). Retrieved May 7, 2014, from http://www.inidtd.org/

Johnson, C. E., Stewart, A. L., Brabeck, M. M., Huber, V. S., Rubin, H. (2004). Interprofessional collaboration: Implications for combined-integrated doctoral training in professional psychology. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 60*(10), 995–1010.

Kelley, J., & De Graaf, N. D. (1997). National context, parental socialization, and religious belief: Results from 15 nations. *American Sociological Review*, *62*, 639–659.

Kuchel, S. (2003). *Individualism and collectivism: A study of values and inferencing in psychotherapy* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). McGill University, Montreal.

Leuty, M. E. (2013). Assessment of needs and values. In K. F. Geisinger (Ed.), *APA handbook of testing and assessment in psychology* (pp. 363–377). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Magnavita, J. & Achin, J. (2013). *Unifying psychotherapy: Principles, methods, and evidence from clinical science*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Martin, J., & Sugarman, J. (2000). Between the modern and the postmodern: The possibility of self and progressive understanding in psychology. *American Psychologist, 55*(4), 397–406.

Mays, V. M., Bullock, M., Rosenzweig, M. R., & Wessells, M. (1998). Ethnic conflict: Global challenges and psychological perspectives. *American Psychologist, 53*(7), 737–742.

McElroy, J. H. (1999). *American beliefs: What keeps a big country and a diverse people united*. Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher.

Medalia, J. (2011). *"Dirty bombs": Technical background, attack prevention and response, issues for congress*. Retrieved June 24, 2014, from http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R41890.pdf.

Moskowitz, G. B. (2005). *Social cognition: Understanding self and others*. New York, NY: The Guildford Press.

Murray, B. (2002, January). 'Mr. Psychology' has a message for America. *Monitor on Psychology, 33*(1), 24–27.

Musek, J. (1998). Political and religious adherence in relation to individual values. *Studia Psychologica, 40*(1–2), 47.

Neimeyer, R., & Raskin, J. (2000). *Constructions of disorder*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Newberg, A., & Waldman, M. R. (2006). *Why we believe what we believe: Uncovering our biological need for meaning, spirituality, and truth*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Panepinto, A. R., Domenici, D. J., & Domenici, V. A. (2012). An introduction to the special issue on creatively construing constructivism. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology, 25*(3), 181–183.

Raskin, J. D. (2012). Evolutionary constructivism and humanistic psychology. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, 32*(2), 119–133.

Risk of radioactive "dirty bomb" growing. (2004, June 2) Retrieved August 7, 2006, from https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn5061-risk-of-radioactive-dirty-bomb-growing/

Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Rokeach, M., & Ball-Rokeach, S. J. (1989). Stability and change in American value priorities. *American Psychologist, 44*(5), 775–784.

Ryan, R. M., Curren, R. R., & Deci, E. L. (2013). What humans need: Flourishing in Aristotelian philosophy and self-determination theory. In A. S. Waterman (Ed.), *The best within us: Positive psychology perspectives on eudaimonia* (pp. 57–75). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Sargent, L. T. (Ed.). (1995). *Extremism in America*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Schwartz, S. H. (2012). An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values. *Online Readings In Psychology and Culture, 2*(1), 1–20. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1116

Shealy, C. N. (2004). A model and method for "making" a C-I psychologist: Equilintegration (EI) Theory and the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI). *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 60*, 1065–1090.

Shealy, C. N. (2005). Justifying the Justification Hypothesis: Scientific-Humanism, Equilintegration (EI) Theory, and the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI). [Special Series]. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 61*(1), 81–106.

Shealy, C. N. (2014). Education for sustainability research: Why it matters. In D. Sobel, S. J. Gentile, & P. Bocko (Eds.), *A national blueprint for education for sustainability* (pp. 27–28). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Shealy, C. N. (2015). *The Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI): Overview, implications, and guidelines*. Test manual. Staunton, VA: Author.

Shealy, C. N., Bhuyan, D., & Sternberger, L. G. (2012). Cultivating the capacity to care in children and Youth: Implications from EI Theory, EI Self, and BEVI. In U. Nayar (Ed.), *Child and adolescent mental health* (pp. 240–255). New Delhi, India: Sage Publications.

Staub, E. (1996). Cultural-societal roots of violence. The examples of genocidal violence and of contemporary youth violence in the United States. *American Psychologist, 51*(2), 117–132.

Staub, E. (2003). Notes on cultures of violence, cultures of caring and peace, and the fulfillment of basic human needs. *Political Psychology, 24*(1), 1–21.

Staub, E. (2013). Building a peaceful society: Origins, prevention, and reconciliation after genocide and other group violence. *American Psychologist, 68*(7), 576–589.

Wegner, D. M. (2002). *The illusion of conscious will*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

White, B. (2002, February 3). Elite cast debates poverty at forum. *The Washington Post*, p. A3.