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# Interdependent Self-Construal: A Link to Psychological Resilience

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Claremont McKenna College

**Interdependent Self-Construal:  
A Link to Psychological Resilience**

submitted to  
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and  
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by  
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for  
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## **Chapter One**

### **What is identity?**

The concept of identity is a complex idea. The construction of identity is a higher order mental process, and Vygotsky (1978) believes that all higher level mental processes occur twice for a person: once in the mind of an individual—in a private sphere—and again at the level of a relevant social group—in the greater social world. Identity involves several components and factors, revolving around the concept of selfhood, which all intertwine into a product that is ‘you.’

Firstly, it is important to make the distinction between the ‘self’ and ‘identity.’ According to Hammack (2014), identity deals with qualities of sameness and distinction and is concerned with the link between the interior psychological world and the exterior social world of language and categorization, whereas self is solely concerned with the interior world and one’s consciousness of it. Think of it as two circles, where the inner circle of self lies entirely within the outer circle of identity. Cross (1997) described the self as a social product. To Cross, the self is consistently and dynamically taking shape through one’s interactions with the external world and close others. Hammack (2014) explains the difference between the concepts by postulating self as an individual psychological process and identity as a social process and social tool that people use to navigate and understand the social world and their inner psychological world. In other words, the process of understanding one’s self is purely an internal psychological process, and the process of understanding one’s identity involves engaging with the outer

social world, to figure out one's place in it, in order to present the inner self to exterior world. In this way, identity development is both an internal and external process (Hammack, 2014). Thus, it is clear that theories of identity mostly explore the link between the interior world and the exterior world (Hammack, 2014).

### **Theoretical bases for identity**

Most identity theories are based off the work of two theorists, William James and George Herbert Mead, who examined the interplay between the inner world and the outer world (Hammack, 2014). In 1890, James looked at identity as a more internal process, defining it as a “consciousness of personal sameness,” but believed that the private internal process and public social process did work together (Hammack, 2014, p. 13). A famous quote by James regarding one's social identity remarks that “a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind”—a statement that observes this interplay of the inner world and the outer world (Hammack, 2014, p. 13). On the other hand, Mead in 1910 viewed identity from a more social and developmental stance, stating that the self is an entity which has a developmental process spanning from birth through adulthood that arises from social experience and social activity (Hammack, 2014). Both theorists mention a distinction between the linguistics ‘*I*’ and ‘*me*’ in their perspectives. James views the ‘*I*’ as representing the cognitive, interior self and the ‘*me*’ as the explicit, tangible identity that others rely on. In fashion, Mead approaches the *I/me* distinction from a more social viewpoint, asserting that the ‘*I*’ is one's response to others and the outer world, and the ‘*me*’ refers to one's identification within a greater social group (Hammack, 2014). Another theorist, Charles Horton Cooley, analyzed this interplay and conceptualized the

term “looking glass self” to refer to how identity is constructed through one’s social interaction as the reflections of one’s self provided from others gives insight to an individual of one’s self (Hammack, 2014).

Moving forward, identity will take on a few forms, so it is critical that the three forms of identity—personal identity, social identity, and ego identity—are distinguished from one another. Personal identity refers to aspects of biography that are known or shared in social interaction. Social identity is defined by how a person is classified into social categories. Ego identity refers to the extent in which one can experience a sense of who they are and act in accordance to that sense to maintain continuity and sameness (Hammack, 2014).

### **Identity construction as a social process**

To examine how identity is developed a few concepts have to be explored. First it will be discussed how identity is constructed through social interaction and narration, then followed by describing how identity is constructed through an internal process. In 1963, Goffman spoke about how in interaction social identity and personal identity are concerned with the perceptions of others as an individual engages in practices of identity management (Hammack, 2014). In his theory, Goffman describes how individuals enact in personal identity information control in social interaction as they purposefully decide which aspects of their personal biography to disclose to others (Hammack, 2014). An individual comes to realize if the person they are interacting with views themselves as a member of the same social group, and through this, social identity is born since a sense of belonging is established (Hammack, 2014).

Taking a discursive approach to identity development, Korobov (2010) proposed his discursive positioning theory, which refers to how positioning comes to determine identity. Korobov (2010) defined positioning as a close analysis of the discursive practices of making statements describing, affirming, and rejecting psychological states and emotions, and these practices are additionally examined by the way in which they align or reject social category membership. From this view, positioning is understood as the way in which the explicitness or subtleness of statements made in interactions underscore the dynamics of social relations (Korobov, 2010). This critical approach to discursive positioning is deemed important because in the course of interaction most personal identity and social categorical statements are not directly named, but rather indexed or inferred to through associating with features of a category (Korobov, 2010). Thus, the discursive positioning theory is concerned with how social acts of positioning directly or indirectly mention features of social categories that are “inference-rich” in regard to social and cultural identities (Korobov, 2010, p. 268).

The term positioning can be substituted by the notion of making claims (Schachter, 2014). In Schachter’s chapter titled “Integrating ‘Internal,’ ‘Interaction,’ and ‘External’ Perspectives: Identity Process as the Formulation of Accountable Claims Regarding Selves,” he proposes a suggested integrative model that highlights how claims are involved in the processes of identity development (Schachter, 2014). Just like positioning, a claim made by an individual is intended to, explicitly or implicitly, describe some essence of one’s self, and Schachter states how “identity is not who a person is but a claim about who a person is” (Schachter, 2014, p. 230). This branch from the discursive positioning theory is crucial since the model includes a vital caveat:

identity claims are made expecting that they will be affirmed—bringing to light the idea that an identity claim requires a claimant and an addressee (Schachter, 2014). The addressee assumes a position of power as they are expected to evaluate the identity claim and then either validate, ignore, resist, or counter the remark by the claimant (Schachter, 2014). The social component of this model is apparent since the claimant's subsequent actions are possibly determined by the addressee's response, and moreover, due to this exchange, the claimant's identity claim is solidified as they can be held accountable by the addressee (Schachter, 2014).

In 1986, Tajfel and Turner established the social identity theory, which is a social and cognitive framework based in the social concept of categorization (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). They define social identity as the social categories that one perceives themselves to belong to, which is based upon specific aspects of an individual's self-image (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). They state how there is an important evaluative component to their theory as they believe individuals label personal self-images as either positive or negative and that individuals strive to obtain a positive selfhood (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Thus, as individuals journey toward a positive selfhood, they act in ways that will continue or enhance this positive self-image (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). These theories follow Mead's theoretical line as they focus on the social world and social interaction in the development of identity.

### **Identity construction as a personal process**

Following James' theoretical line comes Erik Erikson's theory of development which is primarily concerned with an internal identity crisis (Hammack, 2014). Similar to Mead, though, Erikson viewed identity as a developmental process across the lifespan,

reaching a critical point during the adolescent years brought about by the commencement of puberty (Hammack, 2014). In the fifth stage of Erikson's theory, which is set during adolescence, he believes that identity becomes increasingly important as adolescents grow more concerned with their social roles, wrestling with coming to terms of how to connect their established, past self and skills to the favored models of the day (Hammack, 2014). According to Erikson, the identity process is one of simultaneous observation and reflection in which the individual examines the self based on how others judge the individual's self and how the individual judges one's own self (Hammack, 2014). Placing an emphasis on ego identity, which he defines as an accumulated confidence that one's ability to uphold inner sameness is matched by the sameness and continuity that one has for others, Erikson blends James' internal, cognitive perspective with Mead's social perspective (Hammack, 2014). Erikson interprets the adolescent years as being a psychosocial moratorium, meaning that these years represent a transitional period in which the individual freely experiments as they try to find a niche in some part of their world to define one's self (Hammack, 2014). At this juncture, Erikson vies that the inner and outer worlds converge (Hammack, 2014). The product of this merge is the active creation of a new person, and one who successfully navigates this process develops a healthy personality where one's identity provides a feeling of continuity, self-sameness and meaning for others (Hammack, 2014). With this lens, the question of identity is a psychosocial reevaluation that arises at a specific moment in one's life that considers an entire chapter of life, and thus youth are internally urged to either replicate or veer from society's status quo in their creation of a new person (Hammack, 2014).

Following Erikson's footsteps, James Marcia (1966) classified individuals in his identity status theory by their place in Erikson's development process through two dimensions: exploration and commitment. Marcia's (1966) four levels are titled achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion, and individuals are placed in a particular level based on their sense of ego identity when facing a crisis. Individuals high in exploration and commitment have obtained the state of achievement. In Marcia's (1966) description, these individuals have experienced a crisis and after thoroughly exploring the options available to them, they have settled and are committed to an occupation and ideology. Individuals low in exploration and commitment is described as being in a state of diffusion. One who is high in exploration but low in commitment is defined as in a state of moratorium and one high in commitment but low in exploration is classified as in a state of foreclosure. The identity status theory and its dimensions of exploration and commitment can be seen as linked to narrative identity as, with each progression of exploration or commitment, a new life-defining stage is set.

Aligning with Erikson and Marcia, Grotevant (1987) believed the conceptualization of identity is developmental, but also extended identity into the realm of being contextual, focusing on the process of identity exploration. Grotevant (1987) defined identity exploration as a problem-solving behavior that is aimed at deriving information about one's self or setting so that one can make important decisions about one's life. Identity exploration was described across four personality dimensions by Grotevant, being self-esteem, self-monitoring, ego-resiliency, and openness to experience. Based on these dimensions, it is seen that this identity model is concerned with the development of ego-identity, as defined by Erikson, since this perspective holds

a future-looking view. This process permits the internal self-categorization and affirmation of personality qualities over time (Hammack, 2014). Making practical decisions about one's life sets the stage for one to "know" their self and for others to engage with this identity, and identity exploration is important in the identity development process because it allows an individual to actively work on and construct their identity (Hammack, 2014).

### **Identity construction as a narrative process**

Focusing on the future and the past, theories of narrative identity stem from arguments of philosophy that examine how narrative stories place an emphasis on meaning-making for individuals, and this idea urged theorists in psychology to recognize the personal narrative as a defining feature of identity development (Hammack, 2014). Furthermore, Bamberg (2011) suggests that narrative acts encourage other self-related actions such as self-disclosure, self-reflection and self-critique, which brings about better self-awareness, self-consciousness, and self-understanding. Finding basis in James' focus on continuity and coherence of identity, the narrative identity perspective views the active linking of events and experiences into one's life story as an aid to this end (Hammack, 2014). Thus, it is seen that the narrative process of identity construction is concerned with the development of ego-identity. Freeman (2014) argues that human development is best described as a process of narrative development, where individuals construct and reimagine their identity over and over throughout life's course, hoping to achieve a sense of meaning and coherence. Building from James' *I/me* distinction, McAdams understands the process of narrative construction—the linking and connecting of events into a coherent structure—as representing *I*, whereas *me* represents the personal

narrative or story as the product (McAdams, 1996). Similar to Erikson who saw identity as a developmental process, McAdams (1996) views identity as an internalized and evolving life story. Later, McAdams (2001) posits that narrative life stories provide a sense of purpose, unity, and coherence from story-building's intrinsic nature to be reflective, connective, and thematic.

In search of coherence and unity, life stories are ever-evolving and frequently require reconstructing as they reflect on the past and anticipate the future. As a result, multiple processes need to be enacted that require cognitive and social skills that are not developed until adolescence and further refined through emerging adulthood (McAdams, 1996). As Bamberg (2011) states, narrating requires organizing characters in time and space in order to answer the critical who-am-I question, and it is not until late adolescence that individuals can grasp this concept. For this reason, developing personal narratives becomes more important into the early adulthood years as individuals become more aware of their social environment and fully mature (McLean & Syed, 2014). In 2013, McAdams proposed a theoretical framework that posits the self as progressing through the course of development from a social actor, to motivated agent at the end of childhood, to autobiographical author into adolescence and early adulthood (McAdams, 2013). In the adolescent years, the self as author emerges and is primarily geared toward self-continuity, focusing on constructing a life story (McAdams, 2013). In this view, identity development is most concerned with the combination of interior cognitive thought and exterior meaning through intentional, purposeful personal narrative work (McAdams, 2013). The primary function of constructing a life story is to achieve

integration of the internal and the external as the life story shows how the self is unique, but connected to society as a whole (McAdams, 1996).

As McAdams and Freedman examined the influence of the larger life story on identity, other theorists have focused on the role of small stories and storytelling as a process in identity development, which find grounding in Mead's theoretical work emphasizing social factors (Hammack, 2014). Thorne (2000) looked at personality development through the process of personal memory telling. From her lens, narrative is not a private process of identity formation, but developed in social interaction (Thorne, 2000). Here, storytelling is seen as a process, where one externalizes internal thoughts and feelings through expression. In the same vein, Bamberg (2011) argues that in small social interactions identities are able to be developed when the individuals involved in interaction construct meaning collectively, doing so by attending to claims and associating claims to social categories, drawing parallels with the idea of positioning.

In sum, narrative theories of identity suggest that individuals build personal narratives in the attempt to achieve continuity and coherence through connecting their life events and experiences. These narratives instill a sense of meaning and purpose over one's life course through engagement with broad life stories and small-scale social interactions pertaining to storytelling, with a keen focus on meaning-making, and this process is especially apparent in adolescence and the emerging adulthood years (McLean and Syed, 2014).

## **Chapter Two**

### **Individual differences in self-construction:**

#### **Independent self-construal vs. interdependent self-construal**

In viewing individual differences of self-construction, cross-cultural psychologists Markus and Kitayama (1991) have identified and examined two types of self-construal: independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal. The step to understanding these two forms of self-construction is vital to this paper's argument. Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggest that the independent versus interdependent construal of self represents the most fundamental and overarching schemata of an individual's selfhood. Independent self-construal is characterized as defining one's self by personal attributes, traits, goals, and achievements (Cross, 1997). An independent individual views one's self as separate from others as one's principal aim is to maintain a sense of autonomy and uniqueness, focused on staying true to one's own internal preferences, skills, convictions, and goals (Cross, 1997). In many Western cultures, there is a strongly held belief regarding the separateness of different individuals, and in internalizing this belief, such individuals learn to define themselves as independent of others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). People of this character are known to be labeled as individualistic, egocentric, autonomous, and self-contained (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). On the other hand, interdependent self-construal is characterized by a connectedness to others, where self-representations are woven together with representations of close others and social contexts (Cross, 1997). The principal goals of interdependent individuals are to develop

self-defining relationships with relevant others and to maintain bonds with close others (Cross, 1997). Labels such as holistic, relational, and connected can be used to describe interdependent individuals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Being interdependent involves viewing oneself as a part of a greater social relationship and understanding that one's behavior is contingent upon what the individual perceives the thoughts, feelings, and actions of close others to be (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In an interdependent construal of self, the other plays a central role in the setting and context, and since interdependent individuals are hyperaware of other's thoughts, feelings, and needs as well as the overall situation, the other dynamically participates in defining the interdependent individual (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For such individuals, internal attributes assume a secondary role and are seen as situationally specific as one's opinions, abilities, and characteristics must be regulated in the presence of significant others to account for the primary goal of interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Additionally, such individuals are not characterized as "bounded" since one's self changes shape with the nature of the specific social situation and context, and thus one's uniqueness of self arises from the original web-work of relationships that one has developed (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Many non-Western cultures uphold the basic philosophical faith of connectedness among human beings and the rest of nature, and this has led these cultures to foster more interdependent individuals focused on maintaining interdependence with others and their surroundings (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

### **Two forms of interdependence**

Differences between collectivist and individualist cultures have caused a split between the interdependent self-construal concept. In collectivist cultures, there is a high

importance placed on group membership as an individual's position within a group dynamic determines one's behavior (Cross, Bacon & Morris, 2000). One's place in the group factors into how one acts according to their role in the group by placing the group's need ahead and above their own needs (Cross et al., 2000). This group-oriented dynamic of interdependence is not as prominent in North American culture, and especially differs from the culture present in the United States (Cross et al., 2000). In America, there is a recognized and observed unimportance of group membership since individuals are seen to act with little loyalty toward in-groups as in-groups are much larger and place less demands on members. Thus, individuals in America behave rather casually in regard to group membership. This does not mean that interdependence ceases to exist in individualist cultures like America. Rather, it is seen that Americans are more likely to include close others like a spouse, best friend, parent, or close colleague into their self-representations as individuals and their relevant close others create a relational dynamic that replaces an in-group dynamic (Cross et al., 2000). Kashima et al. (1995) conducted a study that displayed the difference between collectivist-oriented self-construal, the concept of relatedness, and individualist-oriented self-construal, so it is necessary to make the distinction between these two forms of interdependence.

### **The role of the other in the interdependent self**

With interdependent individuals, the other assumes a vital role as they are accounted for in one's self-representation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Compared to persons with an independent self-construal, the other will be given more weight, be of more importance, and be more central in an interdependent individual. In turn, a few consequences come from possessing an interdependent self since the other is of such

importance (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Firstly, the sole creation of relationships will become an interdependent individual's primary goal, such that their well-being and sense of achievement is contingent on the relationships they have created and fostered (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Thus, an appreciation and need for others is more heightened for an interdependent self than an independent self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Secondly, the needs, desires, and goals of close others are at the forefront of an interdependent individual's mind as an interdependent individual's connectedness to others obliges one to constantly be aware of close others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Moreover, Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggest that because the goals of close others are so central, at times these goals can enter the minds of interdependent individuals, and seemingly by osmosis, be experienced as one's own personal goals, bringing forth a vicarious experience of success if these goals are met. Thirdly, because upholding close relationships is of major importance, the fulfillment of another's goals, needs and desires become an essential requirement for reaching personal goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). An underlying assumption exists in this case. In a relational dynamic, the promoting of another's goals expects the reciprocal action of promotion of one's personal goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The reciprocal action of a close other is crucial for making interdependent social relationships thrive. When engaging with a close other who is trusted and seen as good-intentioned, one puts forth the effort of being responsive and cooperative to show their engaged commitment in reciprocal interaction and mutual support (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In order to create strong, connected interdependent relationships, the display of this commitment is needed. Being reciprocal requires the ability of perspective-taking, which requires a covert ability to feel and think what others

are feeling and thinking, and when this skill is used to aid close others in fulfilling their wishes and understanding their aims, the self and the other are promoted (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

## **Chapter Three**

### **Identity development from an interdependent self-construal perspective**

As interdependent self-construal has been described in detail, this next section will hold the main argument of the paper in determining how an interdependent construal of self provides an individual with more and better opportunities to develop one's identity. This argument has several parts in which the components of interdependent self-construal and the theories of identity converge in examining how interdependent individuals possess the tools to achieve a more well-rounded sense of identity as described by theorists in the previous chapters. In assessing how an interdependent construal of self enhances identity development as a whole, social identity, personal identity, and ego identity will be discussed.

#### **Development of social identity:**

##### **Identity development through social interaction and narration**

One's social identity is a significant part of the overall identity profile, and through certain social acts, an individual can advance one's understanding of their social self. Interactional experiences represent a key manner in which individuals can promote their understanding of self. The discursive positioning theory states that social acts of positioning index and highlight features of social categories, and as a result of such indexing, an individual is seen to align with said socio-cultural identities (Korobov, 2010). In other words, a sense of self rises to existence by associating with social categories (Bamberg, 2011). Constructionists like Korobov view the use of language as

an instrument for human beings to simultaneously construct and understand the world (Korobov, 2014). Through engaging in social interaction with others, one is able to moment-by-moment find one's place in this world in terms of personal morals, beliefs, interests, and desires. The act of positioning one's self along self-defining dimensions is how individuals figure themselves 'out,' and in deciding what is truly believed, often there are private reflections and public discussions as the realm of thinking is intrapersonal and interpersonal (Harre, 1999). In this view, thinking about the world and one's position within it and its elements is not a personal act exclusively but also a social-public activity (Harre, 1999).

Narration in everyday interactional space assumes an important role in formulating and navigating identities as acts of positioning are used as identity devices to cast the talking individual into certain categories, labeling them with an identity of people in these categories (Bamberg, 2011; Korobov, 2010). For example, imagine two individuals, (A) and (B), in conversation while at lunch at a restaurant, and during this interaction, (A) tells a story about a recent break-up with a close other that ended badly. In this telling, (A) may directly or indirectly infer to certain aspects of one's self in how one dispels this story through associating one's self to particular ways of thinking and beliefs that constitute how (A) perceives one's self to be. This discursive manner of positioning shows how social actions can be used for social interaction, but further, it displays how social actions can be used to define social identities (Korobov, 2010). An interdependent individual is at a benefit in this way. As interdependent individuals define themselves in terms of the relationships they have with others, they may have more opportunities to engage in interactional behaviors like positioning. For such individuals,

these interactions promote the discovery of social identities since close others present a safe environment for an interdependent self to self-disclose, reflect, and objectify aspects of one's own personality. In these relational interactions, acts of self-narration, self-disclosure, self-reflection, and self-critique can raise an interdependent individual's self-awareness, self-understanding, and self-consciousness (Bamberg, 2011). Since interdependent individuals tend to create a network of close others, it is likely that they will experience far more high quality, close, interactional opportunities than others, where they can raise their self-understanding of their social identity.

McAdams (2006) views that narration and the telling of life stories in conversation and interaction are not merely retellings of past events and life chapters, but that they possess the ability to be instances of character definition. In the emerging adulthood years, people make attempts at composing and pulling together disparate events of their life, and self-defining stories are an effective way of creating this collection of self (McAdams, 2006). For interdependent individuals, the making of claims and life narration in interaction with a close other lead one to self-discovery as the close other—an important, trusted individual committed to the relationship—is given the agency to affirm, rebut, or deliberate a said claim about one's self that is heard by the interdependent individual in a tone of great importance (Korobov, 2010). In turn, these reciprocal exchanges aid an interdependent individual in making sense of their position in the world. It is not an easily feasible task conceptualizing how an individual can view and present one's self as similar to one's past self, all-the-while displaying personal change and growth in one's journey. Thus, acts of narration in the presence of a close other can greatly help an interdependent individual practice this navigation process since active life

story narration is used to sort out aspects of identity that are formulated over time (Bamberg, 2011). In this view, human beings' crafting of who we are is fundamentally grounded in the conversations that people practice in everyday social interactions, and in this realm social identity is negotiated, tried out, accepted or rejected in a continuous navigation process (Bamberg, 2011). Interdependent individuals have the opportunity to promote their own identity development by using their close others as a backboard to bounce identity claims off of in the interactional arena, and as a result, their social identity achieves a well-defined shape. More than others, interdependent individuals reap the benefits of narration and social interaction for identity development due to their self-construct that emphasizes the importance of close others and acts of social engagement.

### **Including close others in one's self-representation**

Past research states that individuals usually rate their own abilities as greater than their peers, but recent research revealed that highly relational interdependent individuals tend to view themselves as more similar to their peers than individuals with low relational character types—in other words, independent individuals (Cross et al., 2002). In turn, highly relational interdependent individuals insert close others into their self-representations, which leads to similar descriptions between an individual and close others (Cross et al., 2002). This pattern to include others in the self is illustrative of the goal to maintain a sense of closeness in a relationship for interdependent selves, but also as a way to enhance their perception of self. Interdependent selves derive self-worth from being similar to close others and sustaining harmony with close others (Cross et al., 2002). These findings speak toward how interdependent individuals are able to discover inner aspects of themselves from observing and including close others into their self-

representation. Interdependent individuals who include a close other into their self-representations tend to vicariously share the other's characteristics, and this adopting of a trusted other's attributes allows one to take on new coveted personality styles while avoiding the 'leg-work' of identity exploration (Aron, Aron, Tudor & Nelson, 1991). This nature of adopting a close other's personality traits occurs because of the mutual influence that close relational partners have on each other (Aron et al., 1991).

For example, imagine the instance that an interdependent individual makes a new friend and they quickly grow a close bond. As time passes, the interdependent individual will attend to their new friend's character and attributes closely, due to their nature of always being cognizant of others, and will begin to assimilate with the close other, aligning themselves as more similar than different to their friend (Cross et al., 2002). In turn, any nuanced characteristics of the new friend that are viewed as positive and desired will soon appear in the interdependent individual's self-composition. Further, van Baaren, Maddux, Chartrand, Bouter, and Knippenberg (2003) found that interdependent individuals are more likely than others to non-consciously adopt and mimic the behaviors of others. One's identity development is aided from this viewpoint as an interdependent self is able to extend upon and add onto their personality with little effort when they include close others into their self-representations. This authentic absorption of a close other is a powerful technique for identity development since an individual is allowed to build and construct their social identity by associating one's self to the social categories occupied by close others through adopting the characteristics of close others. Additionally, as interdependent individuals are more likely to accommodate for a relational partner in order to create a harmonious connection, these individuals

experience and welcome the expansion of one's self when dealing with a close other (Cross et al., 2002). If such a person is involved in multiple close relationships it is likely that the expansion of one's self may be greater (Cross et al., 2002). In this way, such individuals are able to explore and experience more self-defining moments in the presence of close others since they are comforted by relational bonds, enabling them to reach outside of their normal realm of experience and existence. As an interdependent individual's uniqueness stems from their network of close relationship, one is not bounded by their own experiences and benefits from the flexibility and expansion of self that close others provides. This allows such individuals to encounter various thoughts, beliefs and life experiences that can aid their identity development.

Another consequence of interdependent self-construal is how relational knowledge is processed, organized and retrieved from memory (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Given their disposition, such individuals do not seem to organize information about the self and others in the same way that independent individuals organize information, in a manner of placing characteristic traits as the primary base in the cognitive structure (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Rather, interdependent selves organize information about the self and others in a situational-specific manner (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This nature of information organization comes from how a social situation is situated into an interdependent individual's self-representation along with the close other (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Being intensely aware of the social setting and the close other's role in a specific social setting causes the two entities to be intertwined into an interdependent individual's self-representation, and this causes relational-interdependent individuals to remember close others relative to the social context

(Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In turn, these individuals do not tend to think of their self and others in a generalized sense but more of a situational-specific sense (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Because of this, it is more likely that interdependent selves do not fall victim of the fundamental attribution error, which is a basic tendency to perceive behavior as caused by one's internal personal attributes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This error is dangerous when thinking about perceptions of identity since it may make one generalize the aspects of one's self or others based upon a single behavior or social action instead of being aware of the external variables of the context that could be playing a part. As interdependent individuals are trained to observe close others in terms of the greater social context, they grow to view themselves in the same way, analyzing their identity on a moment-to-moment basis (Cross et al., 2002). With the goal to understand one's self, this style of self-critique is powerful since it allows one not to be too harsh on their self, understanding that there are other cards at play, looking at all things involving. In identity development, this dynamic is key to recognizing self-defining instances, realizing that in certain social settings individuals act out their true disposition. In this way, social identities are developed as an interdependent individual learns to categorize their self and others into multiple personality profiles, understanding that an identity is a culmination of several selves.

### **Perspective taking**

In the realm of perspective taking and empathy, interdependent selves are better than most at understanding the emotions of others (Cross & Madson, 1997). An interdependent construal of self causes these individuals to view perspective taking as a means of building connections with close others as they are focused on understanding

them (Cross & Madson, 1997). In a study by Ickes, Robertson, Tooke, and Teng (1986), they found the tendency for women, who are more likely to possess an interdependent self-construal, to assume the perspectives of their relational partner automatically and unintentionally, and that this attribute was motivated by the feeling of satisfaction of shared thoughts and emotions. This notion feeds into the thought of Pennebaker and Roberts (1992) who believed that interdependent selves derive a reading of their own emotions through observing the emotions of others, stating that the ability to take on the feelings of others may aid such individuals in recognizing their own emotional flares. Achieving an understanding of one's own emotions is vital to obtaining a strong sense of self, and as interdependent individuals acknowledge their own emotions in the mirror of close others in a social context, they are at a great benefit for identity development. Further, the vicarious experience of positive and negative events of close others that interdependent selves go through can promote an understanding of self as it allows one to identify certain situations that evoke positive or negative responses (Cross & Madson, 1997). Perspective taking gives one the opportunity to observe external social events from an analytical viewpoint—taking into account one's personal perspective and the perspective of others. As certain exterior events can be internally experienced by interdependent individuals, in attempting to understand why this occurs, acts of perspective taking empower self-evaluation, self-thought, and self-disclosure, which in turn promote identity development. In this light, an interdependent individual's social identity is able to take shape in the way that one incorporates close others into one's perception of the inner and outer world, growing to understand their social self in

different contexts and situations, learning how their views of their self may vary across settings.

### **Relationships and self-disclosure**

Close others and relationship dynamics are of extreme importance to interdependent individuals, and the nature of these relationships can provide such individuals with profound identity insight. Intimacy is described as an interpersonal process by Reis and Shaver (1988), in which the process commences when one person communicates personal, revealing information to another person who is the listener. The process continues when the listener responds to the speaker by disclosing personally relevant information and expressing emotion (Reis & Shaver, 1988). This process has a keen emphasis on two actions: self-disclosure and partner responsiveness. Intimacy is seen to grow when these actions occur in part of the speaker and the listener in a state of shared reciprocity (Reis & Shaver, 1988). As intimacy is defined by the feeling of closeness between two individuals that develops through personal disclosure, it is believed that certain types of self-disclosure are more compelling in creating intimacy (Reis & Shaver, 1988). Self-disclosure, or the revealing of one's core self, comes in the form of factual self-disclosure or emotional self-disclosure, and researchers have found that emotional self-disclosure is associated with instilling a greater air of intimacy (Laurenceau, Barrett & Pietromonaco, 1998). In their study, Laurenceau et al. (1998) found that feelings of intimacy were closely associated to feeling understood, accepted and cared for by a relational interactional partner. Further, it was found that emotional self-disclosure was a better predictor of intimacy than factual self-disclosure (Laurenceau et al., 1998). For a relational-interdependent individual, the presence of a close other

evokes a mood that promotes self-disclosure as they are urged to reveal aspects of one's self in order to create a greater bond in the relationship. As emotions, thoughts, opinions, and judgments of others and the self are more apparent in such individuals over factual information, it is seen that interdependent selves are more likely to express emotional self-disclosure over factual self-disclosure (Cross et al., 2000; Laurenceau et al., 1998). Thus, interdependent individuals are better equipped for creating intimate bonds with others. In the spilling-out of one's self, such individuals allow their close others to further understand their internal mechanisms and thoughts, which gives the relational close other chances to affirm and validate aspects of one's self. As a result, in social interaction with a close other, an interdependent individual is given the opportunity to observe and discuss the emotional externalizations, obtaining a more thorough view of their self. This idea goes back to Korobov's (2010) theory of discursive positioning and Schachter's (2014) writings on the making of claims. In all, identity development is seen to benefit from such intimate relationships as one is better able to understand their self through engaging in social acts of self-disclosure.

### **Development of personal identity:**

#### **Sensitivity to emotion**

As interdependent self-construal leads to understanding one's social identity, interdependent self-construal also lends itself to understanding one's personal identity. In their article, Cross and Madson (1997) examined self-construal in relation to gender and found that women tend to develop an interdependent self-construal and men tend to develop an independent self-construal due to several social factors that influence the way women and men behave and define their identity. Cross and Madson (1997) argued that

interdependent self-construal and sensitivity to emotion go hand-in-hand; stating that early in development, interdependent individuals are trained to recognize the importance of discussing emotions, specifically in the context of social interaction. In childhood, an interdependent individual may be exposed to a home environment that is concentrated on valuing the discussion of emotion. In turn, such children learn to become experts with their emotions and this expertise will only increase as they continue to develop an interdependent self-construal since they realize that emotional skills are crucial for the primary goal of interdependence (Cross & Madson, 1997). Research shows that girls are socialized to be more aligned to their emotions than boys as girls are generally seen to exhibit more interdependent self-construal traits (Dunn, Bretherton & Munn, 1987). Through this socialization, girls learn to value emotional awareness and the role of emotions in relationship, concluding that girls' development of emotional awareness is related to their interdependent nature (Cross & Madson, 1997). Thus, it is seen that an interdependent self-construal is important for developing a keen attention to emotional experiences, and this ability can profoundly enable individuals to become aware of their emotions so that they can handle the complex internal mixings of thoughts and feelings.

### **Emotional expression**

The expression of emotion is a key component of self-presentation in social settings (Cross & Madson, 1997). Theorists argue that women and interdependent individuals may not hesitate in disclosing emotions and thoughts with close others as this form of self-disclosure is an effective way of promoting intimacy in relationships (Cross & Madson, 1997; Reis & Shaver, 1988). Morton (1978) described this type of emotional sharing as evaluative self-disclosure. Cross and Madson (1997) view that evaluative self-

disclosure is especially important in the development and continuousness of close intimate relationships. In parallel, Altman and Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory suggested that relationships become closer and more satisfying as members in relationships immerse themselves in the practices of intimate, personal evaluative self-disclosure. As intimacy and interdependent self-construal are linked by the fact that close relationships enhance an interdependent individual's sense of self, evaluative self-disclosure is of prime importance for raising one's self-worth and self-esteem (Cross & Madson, 1997). This construal of self benefits such individuals since they intrinsically engage in emotional expression as a manner to raise one's self-worth, and this leads interdependent selves to further identify evaluative self-disclosure as a means to increase their understanding of self. Derlega, Durham, Gockel, and Sholis (1981) suggested that men and independent individuals tend to avoid acts of evaluative self-disclosure since they feel that this act may threaten their self-structure by enabling others to understand, predict or control their behavior. Because interdependent selves are not afraid of appearing dependent and vulnerable to close others since they are not bounded by their need to feel autonomous and separate from others, they are able to openly express their emotions, effectively externalizing their internal processes and becoming closer to their self (Cross & Madson, 1997). Due to this nature, such individuals may even seek out opportunities to engage in evaluative, emotional self-disclosure in order to understand one's inner debates and deliberations. As a result, interdependent individuals experience more instances of self-evaluation and self-reflection from their willingness to openly engage in evaluative self-disclosure, and this enhances their identity development by increasing their self-understanding and self-awareness.

Evidence from my personal life supports this argument. I have found that with my interdependent personality that my male friends feel more inspired to engage in intimate, evaluative self-disclosure with me, particularly when the social setting is closed-off to others and socially comfortable to the members at hand. Cross and Madson (1997) argued that men may not be compelled to engage in acts of evaluative self-disclosure when in the presence of others who share their self-construal type and interest in maintaining uniqueness and independence. Further, explaining that men who gain their self-esteem from displaying themselves as independent, opinionated, and autonomous may be especially cognizant of the rules and social behaviors associated with independent self-construal when around others who align with these social guidelines (Cross & Madson, 1997). As I am often open to the expression of thoughts, beliefs, predicaments, and feelings, I have sensed that my personal identity and nature has an impact on how my male counterparts engage with me socially. In these social interactions, I am committed to emitting a non-judgmental air which comforts others and allows them to not be afraid to appear vulnerable and to share their internal thoughts and emotions. Cross and Madson (1997) stated how it should be expected that independent individuals would develop close relationships with people possessing an interdependent self-construal. Moreover, studies have shown that men engage in more intimate self-disclosure with women rather than men friends, and Cross and Madson (1997) suggest that this difference may be because interdependent individuals evoke and elicit more self-disclosure from members of either gender. As an interdependent male in an independent society, I have grown to wholesomely understand my personal identity because of my self-construal type.

In many social situations, my interdependent self-construal has aided my identity development by instilling an emphasis in evaluative self-disclosure and kind responsiveness. In instances of close friends confiding to me a troubling romantic, academic, or ethic situation, I've found that their perspective on the issue may fundamentally differ with mine, and through discussing this discord and analyzing each cognitive step leading up to one's present perspective, both parties reason closer to figuring out the workings of their internal thought process. Thus, I've determined that discussions like such can only come about if partners in interaction focus on mutual responsiveness and thoughtful self-disclosure—traits evident in interdependent individuals. These qualities have provided me with ample opportunities to discuss my thoughts and feelings with close friends and significant others, whatever the setting. As a result, I have been able to flesh out many aspects of my personality and identity that may not have concretely surfaced otherwise. Additionally, the consciousness of being aware of others' thoughts, feelings and emotions has allowed me to obtain a vantage point in which I am able to analyze the behaviors of others and close others, and this has led me to observing the internal processes of others and myself with a critical eye. This viewpoint has helped my personal identity development as I am able to recognize desirable behaviors, reject negative influences, and speak my thoughts and beliefs.

### **Perception of emotional states**

A theory of emotional perception put forth by Pennebaker and Roberts (1992) describes how men and women differ in deriving an understanding of internal emotions. Studies have found that men are consistently more accurate at perceiving their own physiological changes than women due to increased attention on internal stimulus,

concluding that women seem to implement a different strategy for perceiving and defining their emotions that is a more cognitive method (Pennebaker & Roberts, 1992). In their theory, Pennebaker and Roberts (1992) argue that individuals differ in their approach to internal physiological cues and external situational cues due to socialization pressures, and, in turn, further states that this affects how men and women differ in perceptions of anger or stress-related emotions. One explanation for this difference deals with social status and social power (Pennebaker & Roberts, 1992). Individuals who exercise social power in an attempt to achieve a higher social status have been shown to be less attentive to social-emotional cues in their exterior world, whereas individuals who exhibit lower levels of social power have been shown to be more attentive to these cues and are more skilled at deciphering such cues (Pennebaker & Roberts, 1992). As women, compared to men, appear to assume a lower social status in most social interactions, their heightened attention to social-emotional and nonverbal cues can be explained by this theory (Pennebaker & Roberts, 1992). These cues are then enlisted for assessing the external situation, perceiving the situational cues as reasoning for internal emotions (Pennebaker & Roberts, 1992). Cross and Madson (1997) view that this difference in emotional perception approach is a function of self-construal rather than gender. Since independent and interdependent individuals differ in their self-construal goals, where independent selves are motivated to promote their inner traits and skills to raise their self-esteem and interdependent selves are motivated to promote close relationships to gain self-worth, the argument by Cross and Madson (1997) appears plausible. Interdependent individuals are keenly aware and attentive to their surroundings, which would explain how a thorough understanding of the exterior world could lead to attributing internal

emotions to the happenings outside of the interior world. In developing a straight forward, coherent personal identity, the ability to balance internal workings and an understanding of the exterior social world is vital, and interdependent individuals are more equipped than others to execute this balance.

### **Nonverbal communication**

Nonverbal expression is an important factor in emotional expression (Cross & Madson, 1997). Nonverbal expression and the recognition of nonverbal expression plays a major role in the act of evaluative self-disclosure between relational partners since these acts lead to building intimacy between individuals (Cross & Madson, 1997). Intimacy is built as declarations of personal emotional episodes elicit reciprocal intimate behavior and expressiveness from close others, and this allows an individual to then open up, expressing evaluative self-disclosure, thus learning more about one's self as a result (DePaulo, 1992). Acknowledging and developing manners in which to express emotions and thoughts nonverbally aids one in addressing emotional uprisings by finding a subtle but efficient outlet. For an interdependent individual, nonverbal expressiveness is an important skill as it facilitates the development of close relationships, enriching an interdependent sense of self (Cross & Madson, 1997). Nonverbal decoding skills allow individuals to sense the thoughts and feelings of others, and as these are goals of interdependence, proficient ability in this asset promotes the interdependent sense of self (Cross & Madson, 1997). Further, nonverbal channels are known to be leaky and often dispel information about how a person is truly feeling (Cross & Madson, 1997). Awareness of nonverbal expressiveness may greatly aid an interdependent individual in

understanding the thoughts and feelings of others and of one's self, bettering the personal identity development process.

### **Self-enhancement**

Interdependent individuals gain self-esteem through experiencing that they can maintain and advance intimate close relationships (Cross & Madson, 1997). As a result, interdependent individuals seek out and develop skills and behaviors that moderate the development of close relationships as they are focused on communal efforts (Cross & Madson, 1997). Research shows that maintenance behaviors like accommodation and willingness to sacrifice are associated with greater relationship quality and stability, and due to their nature interdependent individuals are more likely to exhibit such maintenance behaviors (Mattingly, Oswald & Clark, 2011). Such maintenance behaviors place an emphasis on mutual responsiveness among relational partners, and therefore interdependent individuals in a relationship are likely to positively respond to the maintenance behaviors of a close other (Mattingly et al., 2011). This type of response may cycle back and enhance an interdependent self-construal as positive reciprocated responses are given great attention and importance, establishing the looping of mutual responsiveness (Mattingly et al., 2011). A mutual responsiveness dynamic is crucial for interdependent individuals to develop a strong sense of identity as they rely on close others for communal strength, to validate or reject aspects of one's self and engage in evaluative self-expression as a means in discovering aspects of one's personal identity.

Interdependent individuals appear to gain self-enhancement from their close peers in another sense. Boucher (2014) found that high relational interdependent individuals display positive illusions for their close friends in the form of a better-than-average

effect. When rating best friends, common acquaintances, and one's self on personal attributes, high relational interdependent individuals rated their best friends higher than everyone else significantly more often than low relational interdependent individuals (Boucher, 2014). Further, Boucher (2014) found that high relational interdependent selves are more likely to give higher ratings on communal attributes that favor creating and maintaining close relationships over attributes associated with independence. This finding is important because relationship satisfaction and positive relational illusions were highly correlated with the perception that a close other is better-than-average on communal attributes (Boucher, 2014). This notion of the better-than-average effect of best friends by interdependent individuals promotes self-enhancement through positioning one's self amongst a desired social group that values similar attributes and by giving one the sense that they are able to achieve interdependent goals.

### **Conflict solving**

Conflicts may be addressed differently depending on the nature of self-construal (Cross & Madson, 1997). Interdependent selves may prefer to approach conflict resolution in a way that preserves and promotes existing relationships due to their self-construal goals (Cross & Madson, 1997). Moreover, research has shown that interdependent self-construal and self-compassion are significantly related and that self-compassionate individuals are more likely to resolve conflicts in a manner that the needs and desires of others are consulted (Yarnell & Neff, 2013). In valuing the needs of close others as well as one's self, self-compassionate individuals are able to approach conflict in a level-headed, rational way. This approach delivers a warm sentiment around conflict resolution for such individuals such that commonly felt internal emotions of anger and

frustration do not arise to the surface in conflict-stricken situations, permitting issues to be addressed objectively and fairly. Through such a fashion, an interdependent individual is able to reach a truer understanding of how one thinks and feels about the idea in contention by overseeing the needs and desires of all parties in attendance. This style of conflict resolution is powerful in determining genuine beliefs and thoughts about controversial topics and problematic situations, and interdependent individuals are better enabled to acquire such a style due to their self-construal nature, which as a result can lead to greater personal identity development.

### **Development of ego identity:**

#### **Identity development through the use of life story**

Interdependent individuals encounter more and better opportunities to develop the last component of identity, ego identity, and this advance is achieved through viewing one's lifetime in the form of a life story. Erikson described ego identity as the extent to which one can experience a sense of who one is and act in accordance to that sense to maintain continuity and sameness (Schachter, 2014). Bamberg (2011) views that the ability to use narrative in the telling of one's life is important for the development of ego identity as the process of narration builds a basis for further identity development to occur. In narration, major life events are placed in successive order based on importance, and these life events are imagined as being basic building blocks for the construction of one's identity (Bamberg, 2011). In this process, the main goal is to condense life's chapters and unite the important parts to resolve as much ambiguity as possible to establish an answer to the who-am-I question that can be further analyzed as time goes on (McAdams, 2013).

Through narration and the constructing of a life story, an individual aims to combine the “reconstructed past, experienced present, and imagined future” (McAdams, 2013, p. 279).

In McAdams’ (2013) article, he states that the stage of autobiographical author that emerges in adolescence and continues through the emerging adulthood years is primarily concerned with self-continuity, synthesizing critical life events into a coherent life story. Life stories have defining character as one’s identity can be described as the stories that human beings live by (Bamberg, 2011). In today’s world, lives are told by defining and describing a character and following that character’s development through time (McAdams, 2013). Performing such a task requires a mode of internal and external organization to achieve continuity (Bamberg, 2011). To Bamberg (2011), internal organization of character references personal traits and organizes actions as outcomes of these traits, whereas external organization of character development uses the overarching plot of story as a manner in which to organize the actions of humans. Bamberg (2011) argues that the interplay between internal and external organization that is explored in narration is powerful in envisioning life as a story, and in this way, this method is important for identity development.

The ability to recognize important self-defining life events in the scope of one’s life plot is critical in determining one’s character as the thoughts and feelings surrounding important life events are indicative to one’s character. This idea is called autobiographical reasoning, and it refers to how autobiographical authors strive to express and communicate what their self-defining life events mean (McAdams, 2013). The expression of these thoughts and feelings are extremely moving in the process of identity development as one is able to grow closer and more connected with one’s self

through such an act—actively solidifying an important life event into meaningful terms, lessons, and insights (McAdams, 2013). An emotional understanding of one's major life events shapes how an individual perceives the world and one's personal identity. As narrative lends itself to practicing the navigation of identity, interdependent individuals who engage in life story narration better their position for self-discovery, especially when dispelling a life story to a trusted close other. The telling of one's life story in temporal form of major events and the ensuing actions brings an individual's character to existence, helping better explain and conceptualize to the close other who their relational partner is. When the close other perceives one's life story to match the person and character that presently exists, an interdependent individual's ego identity is promoted as they become aware of their sense of sameness and continuity. The telling of one's life story is related to Marica's (1966) terms of exploration and commitment. As an individual goes about disclosing one's story in a trustful, genuine manner, there is a focus on stating and reflecting upon the ways in which one has explored aspects of one's personality, and a parallel focus on explaining the ways that one has remained consistently committed to specific aspects of one's personality. Ego-identity is enhanced throughout this life story telling process since the process is aimed at helping an individual decipher how they have experienced varying situations, but have remained to stay true to one's self.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Interdependent self-construal and psychological resilience**

In this paper thus far, theories of identity have been defined and interdependent self-construal has been examined through its effects on identity development, concluding that an interdependent self-construal provides an individual with more and better opportunities to experience and refine identity development. In this final chapter, interdependent self-construal will be linked to resilience through each concept's ties to self-compassion. The following sections will explore how the qualities and behaviors of interdependent self-construal lead to resilience when paired with a self-compassionate frame of mind. First, the research link between interdependent self-construal and self-compassion must be explained.

Recent research conducted by Akin and Eroglu (2013) has shown that interdependent self-construal and self-compassion are significantly related, finding that people who are high in self-compassion are more likely to be high in interdependent self-construal as well. This relationship is founded in the commonality of each concept. Interdependent self-construal places an emphasis on connectedness, awareness of self and others, and social behaviors, and self-compassion is described by Neff (2003) through defining the three facets of self-compassion: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. In practice, self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness overlap and interact with one another, developing an overarching self-compassionate state of mind (Neff & McGehee, 2010). Through this conceptual harmony, it is argued here that an

interdependent self-construal, when coupled with a self-compassionate personality, may lead to the fostering of psychological resilience in such individuals.

### **Components of self-compassion**

The most important aspect of self-compassion is self-kindness as the other components of self-compassion rely on self-kindness to function. Self-kindness refers to being kind and understanding towards oneself in moments of imperfection and failure instead of being brutally self-critical and self-judgmental (Neff, 2003). Common humanity is the second dimension of self-compassion (Neff, 2003). It entails viewing one's happy or painful experiences as not solely personal and thus isolating, but rather as experiences that are shared by all human beings in the collective human experience (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). Common humanity asks one to recognize that all human beings have their imperfections and flaws; that the human race was created flawed; and that if one's flaws are exposed or felt that there was another individual in time and history that shares that experience with one. This perception permits an individual to feel and exist as a part of the larger human experience, combating alienation which could lead to harsh criticizing of one's self for bad moments, failures, and downsides (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). This element of self-compassion places an importance on one's relatedness to all other human beings, and when in a close intimate relationship, connectedness to a significant other (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). Mindfulness is the third and final component of self-compassion, which refers to an acute awareness that permits an individual to accept life's tribulations without being overwhelmed and consumed by them (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). Here, the connection to the thought of common humanity is clear. With mindfulness, one is able to observe the thoughts and feelings of the self and others in clarity, bypassing the

urge to avoid or change them, and thus is able to come to terms with one's internal motions and the movements of the external world (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). Through this awareness, one is able to not be controlled by over-identifications and generalizations, which can be damaging to one's understand of self and the outer world (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). Thus, self-compassion and its parts act as an effective adaptive technique for rethinking positive and negative emotional events and social events through degrading the emphasis of negative experiences and thoughts by surrounding them with positivity through the channels of kindness and common humanity beliefs, and open-minded mindfulness. These channels may be seen to leak into one's character and character development process, creating avenues for positive attributes to be developed and positive moments to be experienced.

### **Interdependent self-construal and self-compassion:**

#### **The link to psychological well-being and resilience**

The following section explains how self-compassion and interdependent self-construal may lead to psychological well-being and resilience. In many works, resilience has been described as the ability to recover from adversity through the dynamic processes of protective techniques that belong to an individual (Loh, Schutte & Thorsteinsson, 2014). These protective techniques can be obtained through developing certain skills and qualities due to one's experiences, family, peer or community environments (Loh et al., 2014). In their study, Fredrickson et al. (2009) found that individuals high in trait resilience were more likely to extract positive meaning from the problems they face in life. Additionally stating that positive emotions alter the ways in which individuals think, suggesting that positive emotions evoke a mindset that is flexible, tranquil, open to new

information, creative and optimistic (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh & Larkin, 2009).

Further, self-compassion is shown to be a significant predictor of positive mental health among adolescents and young adults, and Neff, Rude and Kirkpatrick (2007) concluded that self-compassion was significantly associated with two important dimensions of positive mental health, happiness and optimism (Neff & McGehee, 2010). Neff et al.'s (2007) research suggests that self-compassion is associated with adaptive coping skills as self-compassionate individuals are less likely to dwell on negative life events, and these findings may help explain how self-compassionate thinking can retain optimistic expectations about the present and the future. When examined, interdependent self-construal and self-compassion can contribute to the development of psychology resilience as they are woven together. On one hand, the characteristics and goals of interdependent self-construal that emphasize emotional self-disclosure with others; enhance the other in one's perspective of the world; highlight one's connectedness to others; and allow interdependent selves to thoroughly comprehend themselves build together to help one reach psychologically resilience. On the other hand, the characteristics and goals of self-compassion help approach the same end by wrapping experiences in positive instances provided by acts of self-kindness, kindness to others, open-mindedness, and a faith of common humanity. Coexisting in an individual, living by the qualities of interdependent self-construal and self-compassion may lead one to becoming resilient, taking precedence in the maturing adolescent years through early adulthood. This may be especially relevant in the first years away from home and during the transitional, hyper-social, developmental years of college. In this manner, self-

compassionate interdependent individuals may be more apt to display resiliency in their characters and perceptions of the future.

### **Self-compassion versus self-esteem**

Within the realm of positive mental health, self-compassion is shown to include many of the psychological upsides of self-esteem while managing to exclude some of the shortcomings of self-esteem (Neff, 2003). Possessing self-compassionate means carrying a positive emotional stance, which is created through being kind and caring toward one's self (Neff, 2003). These acts of self-kindness help suppress negative thoughts of self-judgment and critique which can lead to feelings of depression and anxiety by producing personally kind thoughts and inciting positive, productive behaviors (Neff, 2003). Unlike self-esteem processes, Neff (2003) argues that self-compassion does not include self-judgment into its process because such practices lead to tendencies of self-centeredness. Rather, self-compassion focuses on feelings of kindness toward one's self and others and one's connection to common humanity, maintaining an emphasis on human connectedness while degrading the act of social comparison (Neff, 2003). As interdependent individuals also focus on removing social comparison from their internal processes, self-compassion and interdependence appear to work in tandem in this aspect. Encouraging compassion toward one's weaknesses and failures allows for an honest, thoughtful acknowledgement of these occurrences, so that the emotions surrounding an event can be understood and actions can be taken to prevent these happenings in the future (Neff, 2003). In this way, these compassionate acts can help an individual become resilient. In contrary, encouraging one's self-esteem in the face of failure means providing unrealistic praise that is unhealthy and dangerous for recognizing and coming

to terms with negative life events and harmful behaviors (Neff, 2003). Thus, possessing self-compassion gives individuals the opportunity to assess themselves and their experiences in a healthy, productive manner. For interdependent selves, self-compassion allows the promotion of self-understanding and self-worth by instilling a heightened importance on kindness and connectedness—a goal of interdependence—in times of pain, failure, or adversity. In turn, this helps increase an interdependent individual's psychological well-being in such cases, enhancing their personal resilience.

### **Recognizing one's position in human existence**

Traditionally, adolescents often embody the idea of the personal fable, which stands for believing that one's experiences are unique and that no one else could ever possibly understand the emotions and situation a person is going through (Neff & McGehee, 2010). The components of self-compassion combat the idea of the personal fable by enforcing an emphasis on one's connectedness to humanity, aiding the development of a resilient attitude within an individual (Neff & McGehee, 2010). If self-compassion is established in adolescence, it could have a significant positive impact on the rest of a person's life. Understanding that suffering and failure are universal elements of life that all human beings encounter—regardless of race, nationality, or status— allows an individual to look past these negative events, being consoled by humanity's accepting hug. Akin and Eroglu (2013) found that isolation is negatively related to interdependent self-construal, and feelings of isolation stem from failing to recognize that one's imperfections are a natural part of the human experience that is shared by everyone. Further, research has shown that isolation is associated with depression, which can severely damage one's psychological well-being (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). As

interdependent individuals already stress maintaining a connectedness to others, if such individuals practice self-compassion and grasp an understanding of their place in the human experience, feelings of isolation may rarely enter one's psyche. If this is true, positive emotions may arise from sensing a connection to common humanity, causing one to feel balanced, understood, well, and resilient when dealing with a difficult situation.

Self-compassion's component of mindfulness further aids individuals in accepting their life problems and being able to move past them (Neff & McGehee, 2010). Through the awareness that all issues are shared amongst people, interdependent individuals are aided by self-compassion in recognizing their stories' position amongst the story of mankind; as a page in an epic novel. Self-compassionate mindfulness does not allow the negative events of one's story to take over the entire enterprise because such events do not separate an individual from others, but rather connects an individual to the rest of humanity and its history. This idea has powerful implications. My personal story aligns with this thought. In my adolescent years, my home situation was rocky and unstable as it consisted of several moves to different apartments in different towns and the night-to-night uncertainty of household necessities like electricity and water. There was barely any balance. The self-compassionate mind state that I was able to achieve helped me avoid negative thought cycles as I frequently reminded myself that I was not alone in this struggle, taking a chapter from man's resilient story. After time, I was able to come to terms with my situation, not wanting to avoid or alter any aspect of my life because I grew to own and embrace my position; a position of pride. Realizing that others in history have overcome similar difficult situations to pursue successful, satisfying lives

happened to create a resilient gear in my mental vehicle, gifting an enduring innate drive. During my adolescent years, I observed my hardships as life-defining moments that could either make or break me. My self-compassionate interdependent self-construal helped me understand my story's position and to pour it out on a page and in social interactions from a mindful perspective that launched a reflective, thoughtful chapter of my life as I was urged to examine and act on my life story so that I could overcome my obstacles and not crumble under the mountain of personal trials and tribulations.

### **Open-mindedness**

Learning to accept one's self and others is a powerful trait rooted in open-mindedness and self-kindness, which has clear routes to resilience. Interdependent individuals have a positive association with relationships due to their construal type, and when individuals have a positive association with relationships, they are more prone to have an open-minded view toward developing new relationships (Cross et al., 2002). This personality trait may help explain why highly relational individuals have a tendency to attend to relationship information more thoroughly than others as such information is associated with positive thoughts and feelings (Cross et al., 2002). Further, Cross et al. (2002) found that highly relational individuals have a tendency to attend to relationship information more thoroughly than others. This tendency to focus on relationship-oriented information is produced in these individuals because, in regards to relational stimuli, they have a tightly organized cognitive network that is superior to others (Cross et al., 2002). These processes produce a heightened sense of relational self-worth in highly relational individuals through recognizing their ability to create close relationships and attend to relational bonds (Cross et al., 2002). Relational self-worth is brought about by self-

compassion, as self-compassionate individuals develop to accept themselves and others through acts of self-kindness.

Akin and Eroglu (2013) found that self-judgmental behavior is negatively related to interdependent self-construal. Self-judgmental acts distance an individual from their inner self as being self-judgmental entails rejecting one's own thoughts, feelings and impulses, which results in an individual feeling ashamed for their imperfections, causing a divide between one's inner self and others (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). Self-kindness contrasts the thought process of self-judgment by placing an emphasis on self-care and human connectedness through an openness to one's and others' features, and research shows that self-kindness is related with greater emotional well-being and greater interpersonal relationship well-being (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). Thus, open-mindedness lessens the likelihood of over-identifying with one's flaws, and Akin and Eroglu (2013) suggested that over-identification can be damaging to an individual's emotional resilience. Over-identifying with one's imperfections places an individual in a bounded state where one is conflicted by their own limitations and self-image, making it difficult to escape negative thoughts and feelings about one's self (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). Additionally, these thoughts can lead to generalizing one's personality type based upon one specific trait or behavioral instance (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). What's worse is that over-identification can be ascribed to others as well (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Not being able to escape negative thoughts about one's self can destroy relational bonds with others, but moreover, it may make it difficult to connect with others on a deeper level (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). As interdependent self-construal has a positive association with openness to experience, openness to relationships, and being aware of the others and

feelings of others, such individuals are more likely to avoid over-identification and generalization, which aids them in developing a fundamental open-minded stance (Cross et al., 2002). Self-kindness leads into a mindset that is supportive and caring, welcoming others into one's positive or negative life events, increasing the chances for intimacy to be created and built upon (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). Additionally, openness to others thoughts and emotions is produced from this mindset because self-kind individuals equally care for others' thoughts as much as their own (Neff, 2003). From this, a self-kind individual's relational cognition is born (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). In other words, one's connectedness to others is brought to the forefront of cognition. This in turn leads to a greater feeling of human connectedness, enabling an individual to accept diversity, personal differences, and personal flaws as common existences—causing one to be kind to one's self and others (Akin & Eroglu, 2013). This nature allows one to observe different points of view through the ability to take on others' perspectives and be open-minded. These traits can enhance one's psychological resilience because in novel situations a self-compassionate interdependent individual can be kind and open to one's and other's thoughts and feelings. Being open-minded achieves resilience in that it avoids self-judgmental acts, creates self-kindness and kindness to others, and promotes intimacy in interpersonal relationships.

### **Seeking expansion of self**

The open-mindedness present in self-compassionate interdependent individuals welcomes self-expanding experiences that provide many opportunities to adapt to new stimuli, cope with difficult and novel emotional sensations, and engage in foreign social interactions. Research suggests that highly relational individuals, or interdependent

individuals, may be more likely to accommodate for a relational partner so that one can create or sustain a harmonious connection (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The act of accommodation requires giving up a personal position in order for the other stance to come out on top and become the status quo. From this, accommodation by interdependent individuals may cause experiences that welcome the change and expansion of one's opinions and beliefs when committed to a close relationship (Cross et al., 2002). If one is actively involved in multiple close relationships, this expansion can be even greater (Cross et al., 2002). As behaving appropriately in these self-defining relationships is important for an interdependent individual, when the demands differ from relationship to relationship, one's behavior has to be able to vary across situation and interaction (Cross et al., 2002). This relational nature may bring about important behavioral change and social flexibility for such individuals. Knowledge of how to navigate and juggle varying relationships and demands can be of great benefit for an individual, especially in novel situations. Vying that this social nature takes root in the concept of open-mindedness, self-compassionate interdependent individuals may be more likely than others to fluidly move between social identities, belonging to and respecting the facets of varying social groups in one breath.

Neff (2003) found that self-compassionate people reported being equally caring and kind to others as they are to themselves. Caring and kindness toward others moments of hardship or imperfection can benefit an individual through the perspective-taking learning opportunity to experience another's predicaments and situations. As Cross and Madson (1997) explained that interdependent selves are able to vicariously share the experiences of others due to their self-construal goals and behaviors, it can be seen that

such individuals are capable of increasing emotional resilience and absorbing related helpful information from being self-compassionate. From this viewpoint, interdependent individuals are able to grow and stretch themselves through the “taking on” of others situations. This sense of understanding is a great tool for an individual, particularly if one is a curious, intrinsically interested explorer of life and its degrees. Moreover, this expansion of self includes the healthy consumption of positive and negative experiences, which is critical for developing a stable emotional mindset and finding a personal balance in one’s inner world. This ability can benefit such individuals in novel settings and situations as they try to make bonds with new people, build networks of close relationships, and grow comfortable in a place that is not home.

During unfamiliar social interactions, interdependent individuals are more skilled at eliciting self-disclosure from others than are individuals with an independent self-construal, and this trait is of great use when attempting to break through the surface of another, but also when attempting to extract insights from one’s self (Cross et al., 2002). Additionally, when highly relational individuals were asked to get to know a new person, they were seen to be more likely than others to reveal personal information and gain the reputation of responding sensitively to their social partner (Cross et al., 2000). Eliciting self-disclosure from others gives individuals the platform to understand another’s thoughts, emotions and life story in an intimate discussion. For interdependent individuals, a key component to eliciting self-disclosure may be how they possess a tendency to disclose self-relevant information with others, as self-disclosure helps build a bridge of intimacy between two people (Morton, 1978). Further, by eliciting self-disclosure from others, such individuals give themselves a chance to engage in

evaluative, emotional self-disclosure, which can better their understanding of self in that moment. In this context, when self-disclosure is reciprocal, the knowledge derived from these intimate social interactions can be used to further develop one's understanding of one's own personal thoughts and feelings. As a result, such individuals can adapt to new settings, find condolence in new faces and stories, and define their emotional stance in uncommon environments due to their ability to actively discover an understanding of their own thoughts and emotions through engaging in and eliciting self-disclosure with others. In all, these characteristics aid one's psychological resilience, in that such traits give an individual the ability to adjust to unfamiliar settings and people in a natural social manner. If one possesses a self-compassionate interdependent self-construct, this social transgression may be even more natural, permitting greater resiliency growth.

### **Dealing with adversity**

Self-compassion and interdependent self-construal collide as they help people with these qualities confront change and adversity, and as a result, such individuals are able to appear resilient in conflict situations and novel settings. In relational conflicts with a close other, self-compassionate individuals reported that they resolve conflicts by compromising rather than through devaluing their needs or the needs of others (Yarnell & Neff, 2013). Differing from accommodation, this conflict resolution strategy balances the needs of the self and the needs of close others. Through valuing the needs of both parties, conflicts are able to be resolved in a healthy productive manner (Yarnell & Neff, 2013). Moreover, Yarnell and Neff (2013) found that self-compassionate individuals reported feelings of authenticity more frequently than individuals who lack self-compassionate traits. Akin and Eroglu (2013) stated that self-compassion's component of common

humanity allows individuals to accept their identity and to act in alliance with their innermost thoughts and beliefs, enabling them to implement themselves in a genuine manner in social situations. Thus, self-compassionate individuals' nature to be accepting of who they are enforces the ability to act genuinely when faced with a conflict (Yarnell & Neff, 2013). In turn, such individuals stated that they felt less emotional turmoil when deciding how to deal with relational conflict with close others (Yarnell & Neff, 2013). These two findings may be related and this potential relation can help explain how resilience is brought about from possessing a self-compassionate personality. As such individuals embody this demeanor, it may lead to better conflict management. They are able to approach important, thorny conflict situations with a stable, level-headed, respectful stance and remain unshaken by the predicament because their internal emotions and understandings are clear and calm. Problem-solving from this balanced, productive position can increase the quality and satisfaction of interpersonal relationships, which can improve an individual's psychological well-being when facing conflict (Yarnell & Neff, 2013).

Confronted with conflict, as interdependent individuals are innately social beings, they may seek out opportunities to engage in evaluative self-disclosure in order to understand their inner debates and deliberations, especially in times of internal rifting or adversity. Thus, interdependent selves may be more likely to build close bonds with others in order to self-disclose personal thoughts and emotions, as discussed in the previous section. This essence of interdependent individuals may stem from their family dynamic. Neff and McGehee (2010) found that self-compassion is related to maternal support and the degree of family functioning, stating that individuals from a close,

harmonious, supportive family were shown to be more self-compassionate. As interdependent self-construal is seen to take root from one's early childhood family dynamics and self-compassion and interdependent self-construal are significantly related, these findings help explain the manner in which such individuals treat themselves in times of adversity and suffering (Neff & McGehee, 2010). Family dynamics that emphasize evaluative self-disclosure, emotional skills, and emotional support can directly and indirectly impact a self-compassionate interdependent individual's internal dialogues from observing and experiencing these types of family interactions (Neff & McGehee, 2010). The inner dialogues that such individuals embark on provide the supportive, kind nature that one would receive from their caring family. This notion can greatly impact an individual's level of resilience as one's inner thoughts will revolve around positivity, self-kindness, and optimism, and in the case of dealing with adversity, this style of thought is critical for maintaining emotional well-being.

My family experience undoubtedly aligns with this rhetoric. In my childhood and throughout adolescence, my immediate family acted as the greatest support group a troubled youth could receive, particularly when I faced personal problems and external tribulations. My mother made it a trademark of our familial brand to always be honest with each other, pushing for one another to believe that we can rely on family regardless of the circumstance. For this reason, we were best friends, acting as mutual caregivers for each other. I believe that this nature was a central reason why my relationships with my mother and older sister were never based in difficulty and argument like so many other family relationships. My family dynamic allowed me to never feel conflicted when debating about whether I should tell my mother an issue of mine, as I grew up with the

belief that truthfulness and authenticity can never do one wrong. Additionally, these experiences gave me ample opportunities to practice self-disclosure and other important social skills in the comfort of my accepting, caring home. Since leaving from under my mother's roof, this has been beneficial to me in many instances of conflict, debate, deep thought, acknowledging that I should listen to my genuine intuitions and present myself and my story in the most honest way. From such a family dynamic, Neff and McGehee (2010) noted that self-compassionate individuals gain self-worth, support, and a sense of connectedness through the secure attachment to familial bonds, and in this way, self-compassion is viewed as a channel for family factors to impact personal well-being. In my experience, my efficacy for dealing with problems and stressors was enhanced from my family's compassionate nature as I gained a sense that if I remained honest to myself that everything—no matter the clouds on the day—would be alright.

### **Being leaders**

Shakespeare stated that life is merely a stage and that each one of us are just actors within the play. In the game of life, some people play their part better than others, emerging on the winning side of things, whereas the rest fall into the losing side. These statements comment on how navigating the external social world as human beings has its best practices and techniques. Human beings have been observed to be motivated by two main concerns or goals through the course of life: social acceptance—or getting along with others, and gaining status—or getting ahead (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Research by Hogan and Kaiser (2005) has shown that effective leaders exhibit skills in both of these spheres, proving them to be successful actors on life's great stage. As interdependent individuals innately possess a disposition that prioritizes the creation and maintenance of

interpersonal relationships, they are intrinsically motivated and committed to being kind to others and to building connections with the others around them—satisfying one major concern of life. And thus, this essence places interdependent individuals ahead of the pack in the quest to becoming effective, social leaders.

Individuals of an independent self-construal may be more oriented around gaining status or getting ahead due to their construct's foundation. From the independent perspective, achieving status may be a venture that encompasses rather self-centered, egotistical acts such as back-stabbing, cutting corners, and insensitivity, which are all values that may deter attaining the other main goal of human beings—getting along with others. From the interdependent perspective, an innate focus on getting along with others may help achieve the other main life goal—getting ahead. Moreover, when interdependence is matched with self-compassion in an individual's personality profile, this insight may ring true even more so. In this way, when taken together, self-compassion and interdependence may be two important components in creating world-class, effective leaders.

Due to the nature of their construct, interdependent individuals are extremely aware of group processes (Cross et al., 2002). An in-depth understanding and awareness of group processes can help interdependent individuals recognize the needs and desires of the group, and this skill is important because realizing that a gap exists in the needs of the group is a quality not every person possesses. Additionally, this hyper-awareness of group dynamics can lead interdependent individuals to observing the importance of certain group resources like leadership, which are vital to the endurance of a group (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). The recognition of leadership as a critical, highly valued

resource to a group is the first step toward assuming responsibility and the role of a leader in a social group. Taking action as a leader is the next step and arguably the most important. As interdependent individuals are well in-tune with their own strengths and weaknesses, such individuals are capable of knowing when and where to use their personal skills and traits, and in order to be an effective leader, this awareness is important in avoiding stepping on other's toes and convoluting the situation further. In groups, individuals perform better when they have positive relationships and experiences with other members, and an interdependent individual, who approaches one's self and group members with compassion, may be seen as greater managers and leaders (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Further, effective leaders understand that group members have varying personalities and needs that require different degrees of attention and care.

Interdependent individuals were shown to have better organized relational cognitive structures than non-interdependent individuals, which means they are better able to attend to a multitude of personalities and relational information, and these skills are required in order to be an effective leader (Cross et al., 2002; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

Two specific qualities of interdependent individuals provide them with the unique ability to understand group dynamics thoroughly: perspective taking and the tendency to include others into self-representations. It is here that a self-compassionate mindset will have its greatest impact as such a mindset will only heighten the social power of these two traits. The skill of perspective taking asks one to enter the psyche and viewpoint of another with the goal of comprehending how they view the inner world, the greater social world, and the specific issues that impact these worlds. An interdependent individual achieves perspective taking through a desire to understand close others and the emotional

experiences that they encounter. As perspective taking is wrapped in values of kindness, connectedness, and mindfulness, it enhances an individual's ability to understand and identify with another. This is a level of understanding that is emblematic of profound world leaders like Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela. In its entirety, this ability is about gaining a strong sense of empathy. Empathy is what has allowed such great leaders to align with the thoughts and feelings of others in their fight against oppression, racism, and other social diseases. Thus, it is clear that the ability to feel empathic toward others' problems is a critical trait to becoming an effective social leader, and self-compassionate interdependent individuals may be best suited with the tools to excel in this field. Growing connected to others through internalizing empathy, such individuals are able to understand and get along with others in this world like no other persons.

The inclusion of others into one's self-representation holds an essence that is akin to perspective taking, in that it focuses on bringing one's self closer to another. This nature in turn results in a tendency to observe the similarities between one's self and others rather than the differences—a quality that has several worldly, peaceful implications. This thought at a universal scale would drastically change the workings of the social world. This thought is what Martin Luther King Jr. and many other social leaders died for, and is one that is deeply imbedded in interdependent individuals. As interdependent individuals are mindful of their connectedness to others in the word of self-compassion, they unite themselves into mankind's fabric, causing them to focus on the human goal of getting along with others.

In all, these two traits may help create the framework for humanistic, conscious, social leaders. As these qualities are rooted in interdependent self-construal and promoted through self-compassionate behaviors, individuals who possess a combination of these perspectives may be more likely to become social leaders in their groups and world leaders in society.

The construal of an interdependent individual causes one to engage in identity development in an inner personal manner as well as an external social manner. As Hogan and Kaiser (2005) stated, identity can be thought of as an inner story that is continuously revised internally in the private sphere, and the way in which identity is defined by the outer social world is commonly known as one's reputation. In understanding what makes for an effective leader, reputation has an enormous effect on one's image as a leader (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). With this in mind, the inner personal story of an individual takes a back seat to the more important dimension of reputation when thinking about effective leadership. As interdependent individuals engage with close others and their social world in discovering their identity, such individuals are predisposed to be concerned with their reputation. As a result, these individuals, in acting on the life's stage, recognize their identity and reputation and can learn how to shape their reputation by molding how others perceive them and think about their character.

One's reputation is created when a side of one's identity—the "bright side" or the "dark side"—is revealed in a social sphere, and this is mostly done through social acts and behaviors (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). From this angle, one's reputation is mainly constructed from one's past behaviors. As shown by Markus and Kitayama (1991), an interdependent individual is better equipped for managing the exposure of the "bright

side” or the “dark side” of one’s identity because of their self-construct. Interdependent individuals have a tendency to understand how their behaviors and emotions affect the others around them since they believe in a fundamental connectedness to others and emphasize their relationships with others, creating the bond between one’s self and the other to be much closer (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). As a result, interdependent individuals are less likely to express ego-focused emotions such as anger, frustration and pride as it may be very important to not express these intense ego-focused emotions (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For interdependent individuals, the expression of such emotions may endanger their relationships with others and degrade their social reputation, which is why such individuals may be better at suppressing the “dark side” of their identity in a social environment. Additionally, due to the interdependent individual’s keen understanding of self and one’s personal “derailers” and “dark side” aspects, one can actively work to suppress and fix these aspects of one’s personality in order to protect their reputation (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Self-management, in this sense, stems from self-awareness, and the nature of self-compassionate interdependent individuals stresses self-awareness (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In contrast to ego-focused emotions, interdependent individuals may be more likely to express other-focused emotions such as sympathy, empathy, and interpersonal communion, which approaches human being’s main goal of getting along with others, increasing the likelihood of interdependent individuals to be seen as social leaders (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

As interdependent individuals may be more prone to expressing emotions that highlight the “bright side” of their identity, their personalities may cater to being seen as

effective leaders more than others. Researchers have identified five dimensions on which the “bright side” of personality is formed— adjustment, extraversion, likeability, prudence and openness (Hogan & Kaiser, 2008). In Neff et al.’s (2007) study, self-compassion was significantly positively correlated with each dimension. Additionally, there is ample data suggesting that the five dimensions listed above predict job performance at every level of an organization (Hogan & Kaiser, 2008). These findings suggest that interdependent self-construal, when coupled with self-compassion, may predict effective leadership. Thus, self-compassionate interdependent individuals are at a great advantage when building their leadership platforms as they are cognizant of the eyes and minds of others when going through daily or adverse situations, which has many implications for how one handles one’s self and how others expect one to behave.

Hogan and Kaiser (2005) stated that one’s past behaviors and reputation are the best predictors of future behaviors, and in this light, the link to resilience is observed. If individuals are able to understand that their present actions—in the midst of difficulty—will help them in the future when thinking about how to confront adversity and troubles, they are preemptively able to grow resistant to stress and negative emotions that could infiltrate their character. Further, the ability to display one’s “bright side” when facing tough times may be one of the most powerful boosters of reputation from outsiders looking in. As interdependent individuals are prone to view their life story in a series of situational-specific events, they may be better able to record, recall, and rely on these high points of resiliency (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Revealing and living out one’s “bright side” on a daily basis and in difficult circumstances is a personal mental high point, and the remembrance of these high points for future looming predicaments may be

a key element in fostering resiliency in individuals. If an interdependent self assumes a self-compassionate viewpoint as well, this ability may only be seen to increase as self-compassion teaches one to be kind to one's self in times of failure and imperfection and not to dwell on such events since they are shared by all of humanity. As self-compassionate interdependent individuals have trained themselves to sustain their interdependence, express their "bright side" in difficult times, and not ruminate on negative life events, they may have a better chance of growing resistant to negative emotions when defining themselves. Moreover, they may be better able to move upward and forward in life, progressing and succeeding in future ventures due to their nature, and this may lead them to be act and be seen as effective leaders and successful navigators of life's game.

## **Conclusion**

This paper presented the argument that interdependent self-construal may lead to psychological resilience in individuals. First, several identity theories were laid out to provide a framework for the complex concept of identity and the more complex process of identity development. These theories were grounded in James' and Mead's theories of identity that focused on exploring the connection between the interior psychological world and the exterior social world. The identity roles of personal identity, social identity and ego identity were dispelled in order to further understand the concept of identity. Next, interdependent self-construal was explained and differentiated from independent self-construal in terms of each self-construal type's characteristics, goals, and views of the other. As a result, interdependent self-construal was shown to be the more socially-oriented perspective, which has implications for how an interdependent individual interacts with others and the greater social world.

Interdependent self-construal was investigated in order to assess how interdependence may lead to more and better opportunities for identity development. Interdependent self-construal's effects on identity development was examined in regards to personal identity, social identity and ego identity. In such individuals, social identity is enhanced through social acts of discursive positioning, narration, perspective taking, and self-disclosure in interaction as these acts aid one in approaching a better understanding of one's self and one's social identities. Personal identity is enhanced through an interdependent individual's sensitivity to emotion, style of emotional perception,

tendency to express emotion, ability to decipher and use nonverbal cues, manner of achieving self-worth, and conflict resolution techniques. Ego identity is enhanced through an interdependent individual's use of narrative in the telling of one's life story. Thus, through the active promotion of these three types of identity, interdependent individuals are able to experience more and better opportunities of identity development.

Lastly, the leap from interdependent self-construal to psychological resilience is made through the rhetorical linking of self-compassion. As self-compassion is significantly related to interdependent self-construal and the attainment of positive psychological traits, a self-compassionate mindset may build the bridge between interdependence and resilience. Through self-compassion's protective, adaptive characteristics of self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness, interdependent individuals may be able to grow resilient to life's woes when these qualities are woven into one's personality profile. Recognizing one's place in the story of human existence through a belief in common humanity and mindfulness allows one to realize that one's personal faults do not isolate one from the rest of humanity, but brings one closer to others through the shared experience. Obtaining an open-minded perspective through interdependence and self-compassion permits an individual to approach novel situations with a positive, accepting stance that may help to assess one's emotions and gain an understanding of a new friend or group in an unfamiliar environment. In these novel settings, self-compassionate interdependent individuals may be able to successfully explore their surroundings and their internal emotions due to their nature, allowing them to thoroughly experience and understand their position in life at that moment in time. Such individuals may be better equipped for dealing with adversity in troubling or trivial

scenarios since they come from caring, supportive backgrounds, which carries into their demeanor. As a result, self-compassionate interdependent individuals may have the tools to become social and world leaders due to their disposition that asks them to be aware of their “bright sides” and “dark sides,” the greater situation or group dynamics, and others. Relying on these tools, such individuals may be able to develop a reputation that gives them the clout of a leader, and this reputation may even help such individuals become resilient on their own accord as they observe their past displays of character to be high points that they can base future actions on.

In sum, interdependent self-construal, and the skills that come about from it, can lead to psychological resilience. Self-compassion plays a critical role in this venture as interdependent self-construal traits only become heightened when paired with a self-compassionate mindset. This paper has implications for all, but has prime importance for adolescents and individuals entering early adulthood as early adulthood is a time where identity development is at the forefront. Understanding this paper’s elements may greatly enhance an individual’s understanding of self through revealing several manners in which an individual can actively promote his or her identity development. Moreover, this paper’s elements may help individuals become more in touch with themselves and with all of humanity as it attempts to share information that can help individuals interact with others and the world around them in a communal fashion, making the world we reside in a much better place.

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