

REPLY



Approach and Avoidance Dynamics: How Expanding the Scope Informs Motivation Science

James F. M. Cornwell^a , Abigail A. Scholer^b, and E. Tory Higgins^c

^aDepartment of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York; ^bDepartment of Psychology, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario; ^cDepartment of Psychology, Columbia University, New York, New York

ABSTRACT

We have argued for a balanced perspective on the relative benefits and costs of approach and avoidance motivation, and that thinking hierarchically about these motives contributes to a better understanding of goal pursuit. Having received several scholarly commentaries on these primary claims, in this reply, we further clarify the roles of regulatory fit and intelligibility in goal pursuit, examine surviving and thriving at different levels of the motivational hierarchy, and demonstrate that thinking hierarchically about approach and avoidance motivation provides a wealth of opportunities for additional research into the dynamics of motivation.

KEYWORDS

Approach, avoidance, promotion, prevention, self-regulation, goals, hierarchy

We are excited and grateful to have the opportunity to consider the thoughtful and thought-provoking ideas of such an array of experts in the field of motivation. We are also gratified to see that, in spite of what differences we may have in terms of methodological or theoretical focus, there appears to be a consensus that it is time to put aside simplistic notions of approach versus avoidance and take a more complex and multilevel perspective on motivation. The diversity of ideas explored in the commentaries was itself inspiring, some presenting evidence or applications in support of the framework, others pushing us on important issues and suggesting places where more conceptual and empirical developments would be useful. Indeed, the varied and erudite nature of these commentaries provides us the opportunity both to clarify further our model of approach and avoidance motivation and to consider together implications for what the future of research on approach–avoidance motivation might look like.

In this brief response, we want to accomplish three things. First, we address some issues for clarification. Specifically, we want to address comments regarding the phenomenon of regulatory fit and questions concerning the nature of goal pursuit. Second, we engage with some of the larger theoretical points made by the commentaries and highlight areas where they resonate most strongly with our hierarchical model of approach and avoidance. Last, we reinforce the importance of additional lines of research outside of the scope of the original target article that will serve to further illuminate the dynamics of approach–avoidance motivation.

Clarifying Regulatory Fit

To begin, we thank Cheng and Chau (this issue) for their insightful comments regarding the multiple ways in which

regulatory fit may arise. It is particularly helpful that their commentary raised the issue of context, because it provides us the opportunity to highlight that we are, in fact, in agreement about how regulatory fit can occur. Cheng and Chau note how regulatory fit can potentially arise by synchronizing motivational orientations up and down the hierarchy (e.g., an eager approach strategy that fits with an individual's underlying promotion goal; Freitas & Higgins, 2002). Although the source of this goal is sometimes an individual's chronic predisposition, it can also arise as a function of the situation (what Cheng et al. refer to as strategy-situation fit). For instance, early studies in regulatory fit independently manipulated aspects of the environment and an individual's strategy to examine downstream effects (Higgins et al., 2003; Spiegel, Grant-Pillow, & Higgins, 2004). Specifically, the original formulation of regulatory fit theory proposed that if the form of goal pursuit “fit” the context in which the individual was enacting that pursuit, the means would “feel right,” thereby intensifying the experience of the outcome as having greater value (Higgins, 2000). Thus, regulatory fit, in many cases, is indeed dependent on the context, consistent with the reasoning of Cheng and Chau. We agree that this source of regulatory fit is an essential one to acknowledge and explore further (Scholer et al., 2018). The work of Cheng and colleagues provides excellent directions for this kind of work.

Furthermore, beyond the actual experience of fit, we also want to take this opportunity to clarify our position on the malleability of motivational orientations in response to contextual demands. It is true that individuals may have chronic propensities toward either approach or avoidance goals, strategies, or tactics. However, and critically, it is also true that in the actual goal pursuit process, the motivational

orientation is functioning as a state; to understand and predict behavior, one must identify the current state, which may be influenced by both chronic and momentary factors. The chronic orientation of individuals toward, for example, approach or avoidance goals at the system level means that in a motivationally ambiguous situation, the more chronically accessible motivational orientation would be activated as a state (Higgins, 1996; Higgins & Scholer, 2008). In line with the reasoning of Cheng and Chau, however, there are certain kinds of situations that do not have this kind of ambiguity and instead are experienced as motivationally prescriptive, whether implicitly or explicitly, because of their relevance to particular orientations (Cheng, Lau, & Chan, 2014; Eitam & Higgins, 2010). For example, two authors of this response have infant children. If we were seeking babysitters to care for those children, we would want them to see the situation of crossing the street while pushing a stroller as a situation calling for strategic *avoidance*, regardless of their chronic disposition toward strategic approach motivation. We would certainly seek out babysitters who regard crossing the street with an infant as something to be done vigilantly (by continually checking for oncoming traffic until reaching safety) rather than eagerly (say, seeing how quickly they can cross while successfully dodging cars).

Other situations, such as those in an achievement or athletic context, are more motivationally ambiguous. Are students aiming to get a good grade or avoiding a failing grade? Are those involved in a soccer shoot-out seeking to maximize their successful shots on goal or minimize their misses? It is intriguing that Elliot and Gable (this issue) raise the possibility that the specific form that fit takes within the hierarchy may lead to different outcomes (i.e., not all fit is created equal, and not all fit may be beneficial). Heretofore, much of the research on regulatory fit has investigated the fit between system-level regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997) and strategic-level approach/avoidance (i.e., promotion/eager strategies and prevention/vigilant strategies). In this research tradition, the nature of approach or avoidance at the system level is typically held constant; for instance, everyone is approaching a desired end-state, but it is represented as a gain (promotion) or a nonloss (prevention) and people are employing approach or avoidance means at the strategic level. Elliot and Gable lay out a complementary question of whether fit between approach goals and approach strategies versus avoidance goals and avoidance strategies have distinct outcomes, suggesting that there are situations in which different combinations up and down the hierarchy could have emergent effects for good or ill. This interesting possibility will require more attention from researchers in the future.

The Nature of Goal Pursuit in the Hierarchical Framework

The second area that requires additional clarification in light of our model is the nature of goal pursuit itself. Harmon-Jones and Harmon-Jones (this issue) raise concerns that our model requires too much in the way of *conscious* goal pursuit. This could exclude both impulsive motivations of

humans and the motivations of nonhuman animals, which as far as we currently understand may not have the same experience of consciousness that humans do. However, the hierarchical framework makes *no* assumptions or requirements that the goal pursuit process itself be *conscious*. We recognize that the language used in such a framework—goals and strategies in particular—can easily summon images of conscious deliberation; however, even the use of the term *goal* requires no assumption of conscious intention (e.g., Critcher & Ferguson, 2016; Custers & Aarts, 2010; Ferguson & Cone, 2013; Hassin, 2013; Moskowitz, 2002). Further, the hierarchical framework for approach and avoidance motivation, like other hierarchical models of self-regulation (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1998; Kruglanski et al., 2002), allows for discussion of both top-down and bottom-up influences on regulation, as Szumowska and Kruglanski (this issue) also discuss. It can operate over both long and short time horizons.

In sum, the hierarchical model is a means of clarification that aims at *intelligibility*. Even motivations that are not conscious in their execution can make sense when understood from the perspective of an organism's underlying motives and goals. For example, in the summer of 2016, West Point cadet Thomas Surdyke was at the beach with another cadet and a new friend they met that day. Without warning, a rip tide dragged the latter young man out to sea and nearly drowned him. Surdyke followed him out and managed to keep him afloat until a paddleboarder was able to reach them and hoist him out of the water. However, the exhaustion of battling the current and the amount of seawater Surdyke swallowed left him unconscious, and despite paramedics' best efforts he died 4 days later. He was posthumously awarded the Soldier's Medal, the highest award for valor bestowed by the U.S. Army in noncombat situations (McGurn, 2016).

Acts of instinctive selfless heroism have always been troublesome for motivational researchers who rely on conscious processes because they appear to take place without any conscious deliberation at all. Cadet Surdyke did not have time to assess the situation, to evaluate his desire to save his new friend and to avoid risk to his own life—he simply acted. Still, although his motivations may not have been *conscious*, they were still clearly *intelligible* in that he was still involved in “goal pursuit” when saving a life at the eventual cost of his own. A hierarchical model of motivation in particular helps to make his goals intelligible. He was *approaching* the desired end-state of saving his new friend's life. Because saving a life is restoring a status quo ante (i.e., removing him from danger), this involves the movement from a -1 negative state to a 0 restored state; therefore, he was approaching this goal in a vigilant *avoidance* strategic manner. Such situations call for great risk taking, and therefore he adopted a risky *approach* motivational tactic (Scholer, Zou, Fujita, Stroessner, & Higgins, 2010).

Such an application is possible for more banal cases of human and nonhuman animal behavior. Indeed, the hierarchical model provides us the ability to understand behavior that is otherwise puzzling. For example, monkeys are

frequently grouped into bold versus shy categories depending on their general propensity toward risk-taking; in this case, bold roughly corresponds to “approach” and shy roughly corresponds to “avoidance” (see Wilson et al., 1994)—behavioral differences in eating in the open, hiding, and so on. As might be expected, bold monkeys are faster to approach food when it is placed into their environment compared to shy monkeys. However, when an object placed in their environment is not obviously gain related, shy monkeys can actually be faster to approach it. Franks et al. (2013), for example, found that the cotton-top tamarin “shy” monkeys wanted to check a new object to ensure that it was safe, whereas the “bold” monkeys saw no potential gain from the object and thus failed to approach it. It is notable that this object posed no immediate threat to the monkeys, but to maintain safety and security, shy monkeys were motivated to exert effort to approach it. We can see the same behavior among humans when we, for example, hear a strange noise in the house and want to check it out, in spite of the real possibility that we will not like what we find.

The Value of Intelligibility

This calling of attention to the hierarchical model as making motivation intelligible is particularly useful in light of other commentaries our target article received. Balcetis and Cole (this issue) highlight multiple examples of individuals engaging in approach behaviors in the service of system- or strategic-level avoidance (Cole, Balcetis, & Dunning, 2013), as well as cases of individuals engaging in avoidance behaviors in the service of a system- or strategic-level approach (Cole, Dominick, & Balcetis, 2019). Jia, Hirt, and Nowak (this issue) explore the implications of the hierarchical framework for understanding when and why approaching indulgence (e.g., eating the chocolate cake) is not always detrimental to self-control and can actually serve long-term (approach) goals that, on the surface, seem at odds with chocolate cake consumption. Further, Brewster, Wilson, and Strauman (this issue) make a compelling case that such clarification can be particularly important when it comes to interventions. Harmon-Jones and Harmon-Jones (this issue) raise the case of a 30-year-old man who sought treatment for his aggression, specifically because his behavior and motivation was *not* intelligible to himself—saying that he “does things blindly” (p. 134). This is not uncommon, and it is similar to themes observed in the conversations with at-risk youth discussed by Brewster et al. (this issue). As Brewster and colleagues suggest, interventions that clarify the underlying motivations (*why* he becomes angry, *what* his anger might actually be aiming at) and provide alternative (more socially acceptable and responsible) strategies and tactics for achieving those ends can be very effective. Such conversations and interventions are facilitated by acknowledging both the structure of the hierarchy (i.e., recognizing underlying, higher-level motives) and the independence of the levels. Given this, a problematic tactic is not inextricably tied to a higher level goal, and thus interventions can be developed to solve a problem.

Not only does clarification of goals provide potential therapeutic potential, it also provides a way for everyday individuals to assess how well they are doing in achieving their own goals. As Szumowska and Kruglanski (this issue) highlight, it is the system-level goal that provides the standard by which the other goals are judged. Perhaps a vigilant strategy does not serve the ends of a particular goal because that goal is actually a +1 goal instead of the 0 goal that the person envisages it to be (i.e., their expectations of themselves are too high). In another case, perhaps a risky tactic (such as reacting aggressively) is not appropriate for long-term success and a more patient, conservative tactic would be more effective.

In addition, it is important to keep not only the end-state in mind but also the context in which the goal is being pursued (Cheng & Chau, this issue). That is, there are contexts in which different end-states themselves may be more or less appropriate. Consistent with Szumowska and Kruglanski (this issue), the success or failure to achieve the goals associated with these desired or undesired end-states would be the measure of success, but the likelihood that such attempts would be successful would be largely influenced by the context (Cheng & Chau, this issue), because, as previously noted, there would be implications for whether regulatory fit or nonfit is being created by the context. Indeed, as Cheng and Chau show, individuals with avoidance goals actually experience more success in collectivist countries than their counterparts in individualist countries. To further underscore this point, we also note work showing that well-being is influenced by the relation between regulatory focus and the society in which one resides, such that having a regulatory focus that “fits” your context actually results in better overall well-being (Fulmer et al., 2010). All of these factors are important to keep in mind when trying to understand and evaluate which kinds of goals, strategies, and tactics are “better” to adopt than others—a central aim of our target article.

Surviving and Thriving on Multiple Levels

Another comment for which we’re grateful was the formulation of approach and avoidance goals provided by Elliot and Gable (this issue). They argue that approach motivation constitutes *thriving* while avoidance motivation constitutes *surviving*; thus, ultimately approach motivation is better than avoidance motivation. Before addressing this critique head-on, it’s worth considering at the outset that, although in many or most cases this formulation conforms to the human experience, there are situations in which approach might be necessary for *surviving* and avoidance necessary for *thriving*. With respect to survival, an individual definitely needs to avoid threats to survive and maintain a status quo, but individuals also have needs (like food and water) that require approach motivation. With respect to thriving, specific examples are perhaps more difficult to envision, but it is worth noting that success in a variety of contexts requires resistance to temptations, whether those temptations are actively resisted or avoided altogether. Thus, it seems that

both approach *and* avoidance are needed for surviving *and* thriving.

Still, in a certain sense we are in agreement with Elliot and Gable. If “thriving” means the pursuit of “greater” goals and “surviving” means pursuing “lesser” goals, then objectively, if not psychologically, “thriving” would be superior to merely “surviving.” We should all want the best for those we love, and we should not settle for their mere “survival.” Even at the system level, however, we would argue that the distinction between approach/avoidance and regulatory focus suggests that “thriving” does not look the same to all individuals.

We make a distinction between effective avoidance (moving away from the undesired end-state of a -1 loss or the undesired end-state of a 0 nongain) and effective prevention motivation (maintaining a 0 nonloss). In other words, a life lived in pursuit of nonloss or the maintenance of 0 is not necessarily the same as a life lived in avoidance of undesired losses (or nongains). Constantly gazing at the life one does not desire—without attention to the life one does desire—is unlikely to facilitate any sense of thriving (i.e., pure avoidance at the system level only gets one so far). However, what subjectively counts as success (or thriving) can differ across individuals (or the same individual in different situations), even when the end-state is objectively the same (e.g., one person’s $+1$ —a 4.0 grade point average—can be another person’s 0 ; Zou et al., 2014). For some, a life well lived is about the maintenance of nonloss. For others, that is not enough: It also requires the pursuit of ever greater advancement. Yet this does not mean necessarily that the former is a lesser life than the latter. Being able to accept as fulfilling one’s current state without the need to constantly “one-up” it in future pursuit (i.e., next time I will do better than 4.0!) may indeed have benefits.

As another example, consider the following. If someone is promotion focused, then that individual is interested in eagerly moving toward a better end-state ($+1$) and away from the status quo (0). If someone is prevention focused, then that individual is interested in vigilantly moving away from a bad situation (-1) back to the status quo (0). In many cases, it might actually be easier to achieve a status quo 0 end-state than a gain $+1$ end-state. In such cases, we might find that those with strategic avoidance tendencies (i.e., those who are prevention focused) are actually more satisfied and report greater levels of well-being than those with strategic approach tendencies. Thus, at the strategic level the costs of avoidance are not quite as clear.

An instance of such a case may be found in political ideology. Although there are a number of viable explanations of what makes liberals and conservatives different from one another, it does appear that liberals and conservatives (at least in the United States) differ in their motivations, with the former favoring approach motives and the latter avoidance motives at different levels (e.g., Cornwell & Higgins, 2013; Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh, & Baldacci, 2008). Nevertheless, conservatives in this population consistently rate themselves as happier than liberals (for a recent study on this phenomenon, see Newman, Schwarz, Graham, &

Stone, 2019). As just noted, this could be due to a variety of reasons, but one could simply be that maintaining the status quo is more personally satisfying for conservatives than it is for liberals, because liberals are always chasing a better society. Indeed, the entire concept of the “hedonic treadmill” suggests that, although optimism can be helpful for well-being, constantly striving for the next thing can actually be problematic for well-being (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2012). Whatever the explanation for the conservative–liberal difference, there may be some circumstances in terms of individual well-being where individuals benefit personally from engaging in strategic avoidance versus approach, and at the system level, to pursue 0 rather than $+1$.

Still, as Elliot and Gable argue, there are clearly contexts in which successful approach motivation does constitute thriving and successful avoidance motives constitute mere survival (at both system and strategic levels). These are situations in which the commentaries have been particularly helpful in highlighting how the need to be able to shift from one motivation to another (i.e., the synergistic nature of approach and avoidance motivations) is particularly important. Indeed, Elliot and Gable (this issue); Greenaway and Vohs (this issue); McNaughton and Corr (this issue); and Brewster, Wilson, and Strauman (this issue) all highlight the value of being able to shift motivationally from avoidance to approach in particular (i.e., not to get “stuck” in avoidance; see also Jonas et al., 2014).

Broadly speaking, the dynamics of goal pursuit necessitate that there is always a starting point and an ending point. Given this, in some ways *all* goal pursuit involves, at least implicitly, *both* avoidance (moving away from the starting point as reference point) and approach (moving toward the end-state as reference point). It may be the case that as goal pursuit progresses, it is beneficial to have motivational shifts away from avoidance motivation toward approach motivation (Higgins & Liberman, 2018; Koo & Fishbach, 2008). Further, as we discuss next, flexibility in engaging both approach and avoidance—at multiple levels of the hierarchy and not just as a function of goal stage—should support effective self-regulation.

Looking to the Future

Two major factors were highlighted across a number of commentaries adding complexity to the notion of a hierarchical perspective of approach and avoidance: timing and flexibility of goal pursuit. Both the commentary by Jia, Hirt, and Nowak (this issue) and the commentary by Cheng and Chau (this issue) discussed the importance of timing in goal pursuit. This adds an additional layer to the motivational questions posed by our target article: Not only is it true that approach and avoidance act at different levels, and not only is it true that under some circumstances approach is superior to avoidance and in others the reverse, but precisely *when* it is advantageous for an individual to be in an approach or avoidance state can also vary within the same goal pursuit process. This leads to intriguing effects such as those surrounding adaptive indulgence highlighted by Jia,

Hirt, and Nowak (this issue). There are times when long-term strategies or goals are better served by short-term tactics that do not obviously fit the strategy, but this requires the consideration of the timing of such tactics.

We also wholeheartedly concur that another critical aspect of the regulation of approach and avoidance motivation (and goal pursuit more generally) is the flexible adoption of these states. This flexibility question is explicitly discussed by Greenaway and Vohs (this issue); by Cheng and Chau (this issue); and by Brewster, Wilson, and Strauman (this issue). We argue that one of the benefits of the hierarchical framework is in elucidating the trade-offs of these motivational states. When these trade-offs are seriously considered, questions regarding their flexible use become clear. A core question, of course, is whether individuals can recognize that different situations afford qualitatively different motivational states and adjust motivation accordingly. Recent investigations of metamotivation (Nguyen et al., *in press*; Scholer & Miele, 2016; Scholer et al., 2018), building on traditions in metacognition (e.g., Flavell, 1979), suggest that this flexibility in the regulation of motivation is supported by accurate task knowledge (recognizing the affordances of a particular task), strategy knowledge (recognizing the means that can induce or sustain a given motivational state), and self-knowledge (being able to identify one's current state as well as the strategies that are particularly effective for oneself).

We also see the hierarchical framework as supporting the investigation of other interesting questions regarding self-regulatory flexibility. One possibility is that the actual process of motivational activation and inhibition of approach and avoidance is itself a process that requires an independent kind of motivation. That is, individuals may differ not only in their propensities to approach and avoid at different levels in a hierarchy but also in their capacity to switch from one kind of goal pursuit to another, or from one kind of strategy to another. Consider, for example, research on regulatory mode theory (Higgins, 2012; Kruglanski et al., 2000), which includes *assessment* concerns (wanting to make the right choice) and *locomotion* concerns (wanting to make things happen). Assessment would be useful in resolving ambiguity or goal conflict to determine the *right* form of goal pursuit for the situation and timing, at which point the locomotion mode would be useful at getting that form of goal pursuit *going*. If working together well, the two modes would provide for the kinds of flexibility in goal pursuit highlighted so well by several commentaries, and ensure that individuals, whether they are approaching or avoiding at different levels, are nevertheless going in the right direction (Higgins, 2018).

Further, the same objective goal pursuit can be construed in different ways within a hierarchy (Scholer, 2014). Thus, flexibility and effective self-regulation may be not only about recognizing situational cues but also about being able to actively manage one's representations, as Balcetis and Cole (this issue) also argue. For instance, do individual differences in the ability to flexibly represent goal pursuit through both an approach and avoidance lens support performance

and well-being? Is flexibility in representation or pursuit at some levels more important than others?

Combining the aforementioned threads, not only would it be useful for individuals to be motivated to and capable of evaluating the appropriateness of a form of goal pursuit given various factors within a situation, but it could also be useful for that motivation to provide a kind of deliberative stasis while such evaluation is occurring. This appears to be the use of the BIS system in the McNaughton and Corr (this issue) model, allowing for individuals to judge the appropriateness of one or another course of action, particularly in ambiguous situations or situations containing goal conflict (which, as we highlight, may be helpfully resolved by assigning them to different levels of the motivational hierarchy). This could combine nicely with the capacity to end deliberation and execute the prescribed form of goal pursuit that would provide the means for switching from one form of motivation to another. All of this complements very well a hierarchical perspective of approach and avoidance motivation.

More broadly, McNaughton and Corr's (this issue) model highlights the value of considering the nature of goal conflicts in understanding the dynamics of approach and avoidance. Indeed, although early work in motivation science (e.g., Lewin, 1935; Miller, 1963) examined the different dynamics of approach–approach conflicts versus avoidance–avoidance conflicts, it has not received as much attention in recent decades. The hierarchical framework provides a lens for considering multiple combinations of approach–avoidance conflicts. For instance, Miller's (1963) early work focused primarily on different types of conflicts at the system level (e.g., approach–approach conflicts between two desired end-states, avoid–avoid conflicts between two undesired end-states), but there could also be conflicts between approach and avoidance motives at the strategic or tactical levels. Further, there could be vertical conflicts across levels (e.g., conflicts between approach at one level and avoidance at another). Just as Elliot and Gable (this issue) suggest that different types of vertical fit across the hierarchy may have distinct implications, so too may different types of vertical nonfit. Thus, although the hierarchical framework does not directly speak to how such conflicts will be experienced and ultimately resolved, it provides a framework for exploring multiple permutations more deeply.

Similarly, different combinations of approach and avoidance up and down the hierarchy may be experienced as more or less appropriate if the varied combinations facilitate the completion of multiple goals simultaneously (i.e., multifinality; see Szumowska & Kruglanski, this issue). Perhaps the combination of motivations just noted that leads individuals to put their own lives in danger for the sake of others is effective because it serves multiple goals simultaneously (e.g., being brave, saving lives, eliminating threats). Other situations may activate only one of those goals, and the experience of the appropriateness of different hierarchical combinations may depend on the context.

It is also worth noting that motivations of approach and avoidance are at work in other aspects of human psychology

as well. In addressing convergences with the hierarchical model, Balcetis and Cole (this issue) highlight work in which different motivational situations can actually affect psychological perceptions of physical distance to goal-related stimuli. As researchers further consider the utility of a hierarchical perspective on approach and avoidance motivation, it is also worth exploring how these motivations play out in the forms of other psychological phenomena, such as how we perceive and think about our environments in the service of goal pursuit. Researchers should examine how these motives interact and respond to other aspects of psychological experience, such as feelings of control or loss of control (e.g., Greenaway & Vohs, this issue). It is also important to understand neurological constructs whose activation correlates with approach and avoidance motives at different levels (e.g., Strauman et al., 2013)—here neurological models of motivation (e.g., McNaughton & Corr, this issue) can be useful in providing paths forward.

Finally, adaptive combinations may also change over time. Most motivational research generally deals with discrete behaviors within a particular context, or individual characteristics of specific people across contexts. Less often the field has done longitudinal work examining how motivational orientations shift over time because of either explicit training or simple changes across the life span. To what extent are adaptive motivational responses to different situations trainable, and do people differ in their capacity to incorporate such training effectively? On a larger time scale, people may benefit from motivations at one point in the life span that might be problematic for them at other points. For example, having lofty aspirational goals as a young person could be adaptive and motivating, but as one ages, these goals might become more demotivating, as one's perspective on what the future might hold changes (see also Carstensen, 2006).

Final Comment

Motivation science has come a long way since the early days of simple individual differences between approach and avoidance motivation. A hierarchical perspective provides explanatory value for behaviors that would otherwise be puzzling with a simple unidimensional point of view. However, as these scholarly commentaries show, such a perspective, far from representing a mere summary end-point, instead represents a starting point for additional thinking and research on this central issue in motivation. The erudite and engaging nature of the commentaries we received in response to our original article suggest that there are a stunning number of novel and exciting pathways for scholars to pursue and, most important, that the future of motivation science is bright.

ORCID

James F. M. Cornwell  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0865-424X>

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