Chapter 1
On the Mutuality of Human Motivation and Relationships

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Motivation

Motivational processes are responsible for initiating and directing human activity; they energize behavior, generate and increase task engagement, and direct actions toward certain ends or goals. They are also inextricably linked with relational experiences. People bring their goals, values, hopes, and past regulatory experiences to bear on various types of relationships and interactions. The nature of these motivational forces that bring people into contact with each other, and that keep them interacting, plays a critical role in relationships. The chapters collected in this book describe the links between human motivation and the influential interactions and relationships that shape individuals' daily lives and long-term experiences.

The links between human motivation and relational experiences are not simple. As these chapters describe, social interactions and influential relationships shape the qualities and extent of motivation. Support for healthy motivation (or lack thereof) by important relationship figures (e.g., parents) as well as by individuals who have a specific social role (e.g., physicians) influences stable motivational orientations or dispositions over time, and shape one's sense of well-being, psychological growth, and resilience over the long term. Moreover, research conducted in this field shows that relational figures impact motivation through a number of identifiable interpersonal behaviors that communicate and provide support to a greater or lesser extent. For example, interactions may be characterized by the ways that feedback is given, the style by which opinions are expressed, or reactions to desirable and undesirable behaviors and values.

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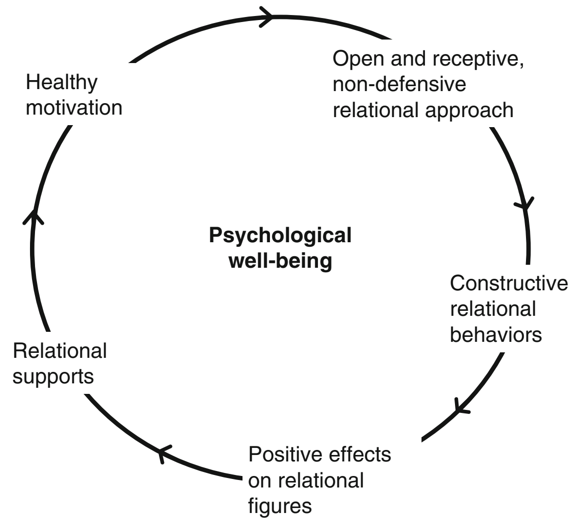

Fig. 1.1 Cyclical model depicting relations between human motivation and relationships

The ways in which relational figures communicate motivationally laden messages affect emotions, energy levels, and the quality of goal-directed behaviors in a given context (e.g., school, workplace, health care). However, these messages also provide input toward learning about interpersonal contexts as a whole, and as a result have impacts outside of any particular context; instead, affecting individuals across all life domains and throughout the lifespan. The psychological processes and interpersonal behaviors that result from past experiences shape adaptive or non-adaptive responding in interpersonal contexts. For example, an unhealthy relationship or series of experiences in an influential domain can give rise to a negative motivational style, leading to unhealthy behaviors in future relationships. It would seem then that these motivationally relevant communications (relational inputs) impact the qualities of interactions (relational outputs) by shaping motivation. The links between motivation and relationships may therefore be modeled by a cyclical series of effects wherein motivational styles are influenced by both early and adult relationships and interactions, and in turn impact individuals' behaviors in their relationships {Fig. 1.1 presents a broad representation of this cyclical model, summarizing the relations described in this book}. For example, behaviors of parents and early caregivers may influence tendencies or dispositions toward certain motivations as children develop into adulthood, carrying the lessons they have learned with early caregivers into new relationships and relational situations. Because of their continuing influence, these dispositions in turn shape childhood, adolescent, and adult interactions with parents, affecting negative tendencies toward conformity and self-suppression, rebelliousness and interpersonal distance, as well as positive trajectories toward closeness and trust in other cases.

In addition to the lifelong impacts that important relational figures have, experiences in particular life contexts often have an impact on future motivational tendencies specific to those contexts, and these tendencies in turn affect context-dependent

relational behaviors in positive or negative ways. In the workplace, for example, the types of supports, feedback, or collaborations individuals have with colleagues shape motivation in the workplace environment; motivation in turn affects the ways in which individuals work alongside their colleagues. Motivationally supportive environments may inspire open and collaborative professional relationships that foster satisfaction and productivity in the workplace. Motivationally thwarting environments, on the other hand, may increase feelings of competitiveness and distrust, or may discourage sharing of ideas and reduce creativity; as a result they may undermine well-being in the workplace.

The chapters in this book employ a number of approaches and perspectives informed by the theoretical framework of self-determination theory (SDT, Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000a), an empirically grounded theory of human motivation, personality, and development in social contexts. SDT is built upon two basic assumptions: first, human beings are naturally active and growth-oriented. In other words, humans have an innate tendency toward growth and improvement unless derailed by thwarting interpersonal experiences. Second, SDT approaches assume that humans have a deep-rooted organismic tendency towards psychological integration, organization, and cohesiveness. Furthermore, through an empirical process, SDT has identified three distinct and universal basic psychological needs: the needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The satisfaction of these needs is assumed to support healthy motivations and psychological well-being, and foster people's inherent activity, growth, and integrative tendency. In this chapter we discuss these concepts, each in turn, and explore their implications for relationships.

Organismic Integration

Central to growth and development is the human tendency toward integration and self-organization (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2002; Ryan, 1993; Weinstein, Przybylski, & Ryan, 2012). As people engage new and diverse experiences, they are challenged to integrate them with existing aspects of themselves. This tendency to integrate experiences is thought to be innate and universal; people naturally organize and make sense of their experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Through engaging their integrative tendencies, individuals can make more sophisticated and sensitive connections between their experiences and existing ideas, values, and desires. This propensity allows individuals to develop self-structures that are increasingly complex and elaborate (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Hodgins & Knee, 2002; Ryan, Deci, Grolnick, & La Guardia, 2006). The inborn tendency to develop ever more elaborated, refined, and coherent internal processes and structures is the means through which values, regulatory processes, and other experiences introduced by the environment are internalized by the individual and effectively synthesized into an integrated sense of self. To the extent that individuals effectively assimilate, synthesize, and organize meaningful experiences, they become increasingly flexible and integrated, and their behaviors reflect their internal values, beliefs, and needs.

The integrative tendency allows people to understand more about themselves and their world and to develop greater clarity of purpose. It increases coherence among people's deeply held values, the goals and purposes that guide their behaviors, the relationships they develop and nurture, the responsibilities they take on, and the activities in which they engage autonomously. This sense of interested engagement and volitional persistence in interacting with individuals and engaging activities that are in accord with people's values and purposes contributes to their psychological health and well-being.

The integrative tendency is a process that occurs within individuals across time; it also takes place between an individual and others in his or her social sphere. Both internal and social integration processes are responsible for individuals continuing to pursue novel experiences and information that facilitates adaptive functioning within themselves and with larger social systems. Organismic integration thus refers to an increasingly elaborated and coherent set of processes and information that exists within people and between individuals and others in their social sphere.

People may be more or less successful in internalizing and integrating personal and social experiences. When the reasons for behaving and relating self-relevant information are well internalized or integrated, they drive *autonomous* self-regulation, which reflects individuals' personally held values, beliefs, and interests (Deci & Ryan, 2012). When motivation or regulations have been more fully internalized or integrated, actions emerge from people's sense of self and are self-consistent and volitional. Autonomous regulation promotes more adaptive and rewarding functioning; in the context of relationships it often drives pro-relatedness behaviors that foster intimacy and closeness. The result of autonomous regulation is a sense of psychological wellness, including deeper engagement with tasks and with the social world (Deci & Ryan, 1985), higher vitality (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), a tendency toward self-actualization (Shostrom, 1964), and positive and consistent self-esteem (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Ryan & Brown, 2003).

As previously mentioned, SDT maintains that individuals are by nature actively engaged in learning about and mastering their emotions and other self-relevant experiences, as well as their environments. White (1959) referred to this in terms of interacting effectively with the environment, and he said that this property might be thought of as effectance motivation; in the SDT literature this style of motivation is referred to as *intrinsic motivation* (Deci, 1975; Harlow, 1950) and is the motivational basis for mastery-oriented activities. Intrinsic motivation is experienced when engaging in activities because the activities—their intrinsic properties—are spontaneously rewarding and provide opportunities for exploration, interest-taking, enjoyment, and basic need satisfaction. Intrinsic motivation is a common and innate reason for children and people to play, explore, and be creative. It exposes individuals to new environments, engages new pursuit of challenges, and underlies the development of skills and knowledge. As such, intrinsic motivation is a basic and innate tool that individuals have that helps them to develop and grow, and to build new skills for responding to later challenges with mastery and the capacity for adaptation. Intrinsic motivation is present from birth and extends across the lifespan, encouraging people to explore, experiment, and master new skills. Studies have found, for

example, that intrinsically motivated activities promote deep learning, creativity, exploration, independent mastery attempts, and psychological well-being (e.g., Amabile, 1983; Benware & Deci, 1984; Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman, & Ryan, 1981; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987). Stated differently, intrinsic motivation encourages meaningful engagement with the world that underlies much well-being and growth. As they engage the world in an interested, creative, and deeply thoughtful way, people find activities and goals that help them establish a sense of purpose and direction in their lives. Intrinsic motivation reflects the very definition of well-internalized motivation, in which behavior is experienced to be emanating from the self.

Intrinsic motivation is one type of highly internalized self-regulation that promotes psychological well-being. To the degree that experiences are not fully internalized, self-regulation may be driven by external or introjected reasons, in that individuals perceive external or poorly internalized contingencies such as rewards or punishments as driving their behavior. Social environments that attempt to shape desired behaviors by obligating, pressuring, or imposing implicitly or explicitly stated contingencies foster these more *controlled* forms of self-regulation. Such external and incompletely internalized contingencies represent unintegrated reasons for behavior engagement even when tasks are not personally compelling.

When people are pressured and controlled they may gradually take in the behavioral regulations but in a superficial way, and they lack a sense of ownership of the values and behaviors (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994). In such cases, individuals undertake behaviors in order to feel a sense of self-approval or self-esteem, feel lovable or socially accepted, or in order to avoid feeling guilty or ashamed. This motivational phenomenon, known as *introjection*, reflects an incomplete internalization of values and regulations that are absent of personal value and not truly self-endorsed. Introjection reflects the presence of contingencies that have been partially internalized and pressure people to select options and behave in particular ways to attain feelings of worth within a system of unstable self-esteem (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Brown, 2003; Ryan & Connell, 1989). When individuals act for reasons that have not been integrated, behavior is executed to *achieve* rather than to *experience*, and well-being is lower following engagement. For example, research in motivation around religious practices shows that churchgoers with less internalized and more introjected motivation for their religious behaviors reported lower well-being, including higher levels of depression, anxiety, and somatization, and less self-esteem and self-actualization (Ryan, Rigby, & King, 1993). Research in psychotherapy shows that depressed clients seeking treatment, who had poorly internalized motivation for doing so, showed poorer therapy outcomes than did clients with more fully internalized motivation (Zuroff et al., 2007). Finally, studies in the school context have shown that students whose reasons for learning were external or introjected displayed poorer understanding of learning materials, performed more poorly on exams, and had lower well-being as a result of school engagement: lower positive affect, less use of proactive coping approaches, and more anxiety about failing than did students with more internalized motivation for school (Black & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989). Thus, in both childhood and adulthood, the extent to which motivation is internalized or integrated is a

critical feature in understanding the performance, functional, and well-being outcomes of engagement in any number of domains.

Social environments can shape the quality of self-regulation and influence the extent that it is characterized by high internalization or autonomy, or conversely by controlled regulation styles such as introjection. Hundreds of empirical studies emerging from the self-determination theory literature have pointed to the importance of perceiving one's social sphere to be supportive and accepting to internalization.

Environmental Supports

Many chapters in this book point to the importance of having *need satisfying* relationships with others. Need satisfactions are the nutriments necessary for psychological growth and integration, which are comprised of the three basic and universal psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. These three needs have been identified from a body of empirical work, across which they emerged as being necessary to understanding human motivation and well-being (see Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2012, for a review). Moreover, these needs have emerged as being important universally, in both Western, individualistic cultures as well as Eastern, traditionalist and collectivist cultures (e.g., Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, & Kaplan, 2003; Ryan, La Guardia, Solky-Butzel, Chirkov, & Kim, 2005).

The need for *competence* refers to the necessity of people feeling effective in acting on the world (White, 1959). This involves the perceptions that actions will bring about desired outcomes, the expectation that one can master important challenges, and the belief that one has necessary or sufficient abilities. The social environment supports individuals' competence by providing positive and constructive feedback and by presenting with optimally challenging tasks that are difficult but not overly so. The need for *autonomy* refers to the experience that one is acting in choiceful ways and is able to endorse his or her behaviors, and the perception that regulation of these behaviors comes from within the self. When experiencing their behaviors as autonomous, individuals feel a sense of personal congruence—they experience their different thoughts, emotions, and behaviors as being in harmony with one another. The social environment supports people's autonomy by encouraging actions that are in accord with their true selves, or 'who they really are,' as opposed to those that merely serve others' desires or expectations. Finally, the need for *relatedness* refers to feeling close and connected to others in one's social sphere, and of caring for and being cared for by others. Relatedness is reflected in having trusting and satisfying relationships with significant others and having a sense of belonging to valued groups or organizations. Social environments provide relatedness need support when one relates to others in an open and authentic fashion.

According to self-determination theory, the integrative process is fostered and sustained by these three universal and basic need satisfactions. When individuals' needs are satisfied, they experience interest, enjoyment, and engagement, and they

can become more psychologically organized, integrated, and cohesive. Empirically, numerous studies have shown that basic need satisfaction promotes both intrinsic motivation and integration (e.g., Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Furthermore, studies have shown that need satisfaction leads individuals to experience a general sense of well-being (e.g., Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004; Brown & Ryan, 2003). When social environments encourage satisfaction of basic psychological needs, individuals experience feelings of energy and aliveness (e.g., Ryan & Frederick, 1997) over the long term, as well as from day to day. For example, studies employing diary designs demonstrate that on days when individuals experience more need satisfaction they also experienced higher well-being, including more positive affect and vitality (Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon, Ryan, & Reis, 1996). Accounting for daily effects of need satisfaction, greater overall need satisfaction also relates to higher well-being at the individual difference level. Over extended periods of time, the satisfaction of basic psychological needs has related to indicators of psychological health indicators including lower anxiety and higher self-esteem in a diversity of life domains, including work and home (Baard et al., 2004; Lynch, Plant, & Ryan, 2005; Niemiec, Lynch, Vansteenkiste, Bernstein, Deci, & Ryan, 2006). In the context of parent-child relationships, autonomy-supportive parenting is associated with a variety of positive outcomes for children, including higher well-being (Chirkov & Ryan, 2001), increased prosocial behavior (Gagné, 2003), and engagement with schoolwork (Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002). As these studies demonstrate, basic psychological needs are essential for psychological health and well-being. When individuals' needs are satisfied over time, they also develop in ways that shape motivational orientations or individuals' tendencies toward certain, more or less adaptive styles of self-regulation and engagement.

Need Satisfaction Versus Need Thwarting

Social environments do not consistently succeed in satisfying basic psychological needs, and in the past, motivational literatures have compared occurrences when these needs are satisfied to relational experiences that are relatively low in need satisfaction. Recently, a different model of psychological need satisfaction has emerged, which argues that social environments can support or derail psychological growth and well-being by either actively satisfying the basic psychological needs, or actively thwarting them. This approach is supported by recent empirical work, and suggests that many social contexts can actively fulfill psychological needs to a lesser or greater extent, and independently, actively undermine psychological needs to a lesser or greater extent. For example, a parent may either actively support the psychological need for relatedness by offering warmth and affection, or he or she may actively undermine relatedness need satisfaction with hurtful language or overt expressions of rejection.

The extent to which social contexts either support or thwart basic psychological needs incurs distinct psychological outcomes. Recent work has shown when basic psychological needs are thwarted, individuals have worsening of health and increased ill-being (Pelletier, Dion, & Lévesque, 2004; Reinboth, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2004), and to the extent psychological needs are supported individuals report higher well-being, vitality, and growth (e.g., Brown & Ryan, 2003). This literature indicates that the relations between actively thwarting psychological needs and indicators of ill-health are more robust than are the relations between need supports and ill-health; the same is true for relations between need supports and well-being. In other words, it appears that need supports actively facilitate growth and wellness, whereas need thwarting actively increases ill-being. For example, findings in sports contexts (e.g., examining relationships between coaches and athletes) show that need thwarting is linked to more exhaustion, depression, disordered eating, and burnout, whereas need satisfaction is linked to more vitality and positive affect (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2011). In Chap. 12 of this book, the authors present an empirical model that supports need satisfaction and thwarting as having differential outcomes in the workplace. In their research (presented in Chap. 12), Dagenais-Desmarais and colleagues show that to the extent that workplace environments actively supported needs, employees reported higher self-esteem, social involvement, mental balance, control of self and events, sociability, and happiness. To the extent to which workplace environments actively thwarted psychological needs, increases in negative well-being indicators such as anxiety/depression, irritability, self-depreciation, and social disengagement were reported. The extent to which psychological supports and thwarts represent two ends of one continuum representing environmental support or two independent qualities of interacting is yet to be determined; for now, it appears that added variance may be explained by considering need thwarting and need supports separately.

Need Satisfaction Across Social Contexts

The work reviewed in this book suggests that satisfaction of basic psychological needs is critical for well-being and psychological growth, and that need supportive environments over time lead to more internalized motivational dispositions, that in turn improve relationships by encouraging responsive and close relational behaviors. This work also highlights the importance of need supports in predicting context-specific behavior and well-being. The dynamic process in which social relationships support basic psychological needs, furthering more internalized forms of motivation, and in turn fostering better social relationships, takes place across a wide number of relationships and contexts. As people develop they are exposed to greater numbers of increasingly varied social contexts; each of these has a role, small or large, in shaping general satisfaction or thwarting of basic psychological needs. In the subsequent chapters of this book, we learn that early relationships,

primarily those with parents and caregivers, but also relationships with teachers and other important childhood figures, play a critical role in personal growth and well-being over time.

In early childhood, support for autonomy need satisfaction is first provided by caregiver-child interactions. Research on mother-child relationships shows that the ways in which mothers talk with their young children reflect their motivational approach and impacts children's behaviors in joint tasks (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987; Soenens, Vansteenkiste, & Niemiec, 2009; reviewed in Chap. 4). In this research, controlling parenting (styles of responding to children that undermines autonomy and self-expression) seems to have detrimental developmental and well-being consequences throughout childhood. In addition, parent-provided need supports predict healthy, adaptive behaviors higher and well-being in adolescence, whereas controlling, need thwarting parenting styles predict maladaptive and rebellious behaviors.

Several of the chapters explore caregiver relationship events in which parents may find it difficult to provide need support. These events are often characterized by a mismatch between parents' expectations and their children's, or between parents' personal values or beliefs and those of their children. In such cases, parents are challenged to provide need satisfaction under more demanding conditions that require openness, perspective taking, and trust in children. For example, children may fail to accept parents' religious views (Chap. 10) or they may hold LGBT identities that represent an unknown or threatening quality to parents living in a stigmatizing society (Chap. 9). In these cases, parents are challenged with communicating understanding and love, while accepting or internalizing their children's diverging paths. In sum, findings reviewed in these chapters indicate that in these difficult situations, it is *especially* important that parents are able to provide autonomy support for their children.

Caregiver relationships are among the most influential in shaping lifelong experiences of need satisfaction and in determining resulting relational behaviors and outcomes across throughout the lifespan. In adulthood, close peer relationships (including friendships and romantic relationships) are important sources of either need thwarting or need satisfying interactions, and in adolescence and early adulthood these relationships appear most influential in determining the quality of day-to-day experience. In adulthood, romantic relationships may be supportive or conflictual and defensive, and these qualities impact on relationship satisfaction and well-being in major ways (Patrick, Knee, Canevello, & Lonsbary, 2007; work reviewed in Chaps. 3, 4, and 7). Close and romantic relationships may be the most important contexts for receiving need supports in adulthood, but research has shown that daily interactions with strangers or acquaintances also influence people's well-being on a daily or context-specific level (Chaps. 2, 3, and 4). So far, research demonstrating the links between motivation, needs, and relationship quality has been conducted largely with laboratory experimental designs, and has demonstrated short-term though robust effects. Presumably, these interactions translate to short-term but frequent daily experiences that together affect our daily well-being.

Relationships with therapists may offer need satisfaction when it is not otherwise available in one's daily life, or may augment existing need supports from important

peer and parent relationships. Optimally, therapist-client relationships provide a safe and encouraging environment for self-exploration and for experiencing relatedness, autonomy, and competence. Therapist relationships may even be reparative when they provide need support to individuals who may have been need thwarted in their other relationships. Chapter 14 reviews evidence in psychotherapy research that indicates healthy and productive therapist interactions take place when the therapeutic relationship satisfies basic psychological needs and when clients are autonomously motivated to engage with their therapists (in contrast to participating in therapy because of a controlling mandate, or as a result of pressure from friends or family).

Other specific social contexts provide opportunities for need support that shape the quality of experiences in those contexts. In important relational environments such as the workplace, employees are benefited from experiencing autonomy, competence, and relatedness support from colleagues and managers. Others in the workplace might satisfy needs, for example, by providing achievable and structured tasks, fostering generally trusting and communicative peer and managerial relationships, and offering opportunities for choice at work. These strategies and others reviewed in Chap. 12 enhance productivity at work, employees' commitment to the organization, and satisfaction at work. Work in health care contexts highlights the importance of physicians and family members supporting basic psychological needs. These figures may be challenged to support patients' autonomy need satisfaction around health care behavior engagement, especially when the patient has diverging intentions for how to respond to his or her health needs (Chaps. 13 and 15). According to this work, need supportive doctor-patient interactions are those in which doctors encourage individuals to engage their own health care choicefully, in a way that allows patients to feel a sense of ownership and volition in their health-care experiences.

In summary, both lifelong close relationships with parents and romantic partners, and context-specific but important relationships with colleagues and physicians, shape experiences of need satisfaction. Together, these types of relationships, as well as daily interactions with acquaintances and strangers that may influence short-term repeated responses, impact on the overall experiences the individual has of being need satisfied or thwarted. Both in-context and across-context (dispositional) levels of autonomous or controlled styles of motivation in turn drive individuals' responding to their social environments.

Dispositional Autonomy

The work we reviewed so far suggests individuals may be control or autonomously motivated for a certain task or class of tasks; over time, they also develop more stable tendencies to adopt one quality of motivation over the other. These individual differences in the propensity to act autonomously or with control over time are

relationally driven and in turn they shape relational responding (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985; Koestner & Losier, 2002). When autonomous, people experience their behavior as self-endorsed and congruent with their values and interests; when controlled, individuals' behaviors are regulated or controlled by influences perceived as alien to the self, for example external contingencies, social pressure, or contingent regard (see Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

Although the relative autonomy of an individual's motivation is often driven by situational and domain specific factors (Deci & Ryan, 2012; La Guardia & Ryan, 2007), over time the many relational experiences, which are described above, shape developmental trajectories that are stabilized into individual tendencies (e.g., Deci & Ryan's, 1985). These individual differences, in turn, can pervasively influence relational and task behaviors, and well-being in a multitude of ways (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryan et al., 2006; Weinstein & Hodgins, 2009; Weinstein et al., 2012).

Autonomously oriented individuals generally experience their actions as self-endorsed and originating from the self. Individuals who are high in this individual difference can therefore generally stand behind their actions, and they select activities and styles of responding that are consistent with their values, beliefs, and needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan, 1995; Weinstein et al., 2012). These individuals are relatively integrated and self-congruent, presumably because they pursue a trajectory of growth and self-coherence as a result of robust and consistent satisfaction of basic psychological needs. The autonomously oriented individual is, as a result, open to self-exploration and is willing to employ his or her own values, feelings, and needs in choosing how to engage and respond to social contexts. Alternatively, controlling influences such as internalized parental messages and other social pressures may regulate an individual through influences perceived as external to the self (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Because this is often a matter of degree, this construct spans from autonomous regulation by the self to increasingly controlled regulation by external influences (Deci & Ryan). In recent research (Weinstein et al.), three elements have emerged as being central for autonomous functioning. The first of these central characteristics of autonomous orientation is that when autonomous one experiences oneself as authoring or endorsing behavior volitionally, and undertakes behavior that is self-congruent and may be integrated with existing values and beliefs. Individuals who function autonomously engage in behaviors that are based on, in line with, and satisfying of their needs, feelings, and values (Ricoeur, 1966). A second facet of an autonomy disposition that was recognized in this work is interest-taking. Interest is the spontaneous and innate reflective capacity for open self-reflection exercised in the service of personality growth, and characterized by intrinsic motivation for self-understanding (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Flavell, 1977; Loevinger, 1976; Ryan & Deci, 2006; White, 1963). Individuals who are high in autonomy orientation tend to take an interest in their own emotions, reactions, and experiences, which informs their behaviors and facilitates down-regulation of negative relational responses particularly in the face of frustration or conflict. A final aspect of autonomy involves resilience in the face of pressuring

influences, or capacity to avoid pressuring motives. This research and other work has noted that autonomous individuals tend to experience events as less pressuring; in addition, pressuring experiences were less powerful in influencing the behaviors of autonomously oriented individuals. In other words, autonomous individuals experience less pressure in situations, and are also more resilient to the pressure they do experience. Perceptions of pressure are notably different from the reality of being pressured by others (Ryan et al., 1997), and presumably autonomous individuals interpret similar situations differently, perceive a greater degree of personal choice and initiative, and avoid responding to coercive or controlling influences (Perls, 1973; Ryan & Connell, 1989).

Elements of Motivational Supports

The work reviewed in this chapter suggests relational figures can shape autonomous motivation for tasks and, over time, affect individuals' motivational dispositions. Such relational partners interact on a daily basis, and the qualities of those interactions influence the level of support for autonomy and facilitate or undermine the integrative process. The qualities of interactions that appear most influential in supporting autonomy include communicating a high level of support for self-expression and a fundamental acceptance and caring for the individual. Such interactions communicate that individuals are free to self-express and explore; whereas interactions that undermine autonomy and foster control communicate that individuals *must* behave, look, feel, or think in particular ways to be acceptable and lovable. In relationships, individuals who are autonomy supportive encourage their partners to actualize their capacity for being choiceful and congruent, and for understanding and endorsing their behaviors, decisions, and values. Recent work has examined the ways that relationship partners convey support for autonomy in particular ways.

Relationships may be most dangerous to one's autonomy when they parry satisfaction of the need for autonomy against that of relatedness—when the individual feels that to act autonomously would threaten his or her relationships. **Non-conditional regard** is one important way that relationships partners convey that one is *lovable and accepted* regardless of one's behavior, beliefs, and emotions. When partners are non-conditionally regarding they express warmth, convey their love, or offer their support independent of one's behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. Doing so does not necessitate partners to accept or approve of every behavior; rather, when partners are non-conditionally regarding they discriminate between the person as a growth-oriented and inherently valued individual, and his or her desirable or undesirable behavior. Non-conditional regard thus means that one's behavior does not determine one's lovability, and it promotes feelings that one's social environment is a safe space to which one can bring his or her authentic self, and which allows for honest self-expression and exploration of desirable and undesirable aspects of self and identity.

Perspective-Taking

Individuals can also support autonomy by taking their partners' perspectives. By taking an interest in partners' point of view rather than imposing their own view, partners express a willingness to see one as he or she *really is,* and they give credibility to one's subjective experiences. When individuals feel their perspectives are taken into account, they feel supported in the validity and relevance of their personally held thoughts and feelings, and they are encouraged to view their internal processes as a worthwhile space for exploration and inquiry. Perspective-taking thus encourages individuals' capacity and willingness to engage in their own exploration and grants legitimacy to personal experiences when undertaking such a journey. Research shows, for example, that teachers who take their students' perspectives encourage an autonomous form of education that increases well-being and an internalized form of sustained learning (Reeve, 2009). Taking the perspective of a relationship partner does not only encourage feelings of being more understood, but also provides the opportunity to truly understand a partner's perspective, fostering knowledge and understanding of the others' experience, perspectives and intentions.

Trust and Acceptance

The relation between trust and autonomy support is best characterized by a snowballing, cyclical effect wherein autonomous interactions foster trust, and additionally in long lasting, close relationships, where expressions of trust support further autonomy. When important partners express trust in one another, they encourage non-defensive open interactions in which individuals can express openly, share mistakes and fears, and explore failures. Like non-conditional regard, expressions of trust do not involve suppressing disagreements or naïve partner views that one can do no wrong. Instead, relationships that are trusting communicate the belief that the individual is inherently in a process of growth, and is attempting (and will continue) to do the best that he or he can, given the circumstances. Work with adolescents indicates that parents who do not trust their children are met with less self-disclosure from their adolescents (Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Kerr, Stattin, & Trost, 1999), undermining further relationship growth.

Relationship partners also support each other by offering **structure.** Structure is created when partners set clear expectations for behavior. Structure does not place judgment on the person who fails to meet expectations, but rather offers informational feedback about the natural outcomes of behaving or not behaving. Although it seems intuitive that communicating such expectations undermines people's autonomy, perhaps by seeming to restrict options in how to behave, research shows that structure can foster autonomy support (e.g., Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010). The key is not in whether structure is present or absent, but rather in the way that structure is

framed. At its best, communicating structure is paired with trust and an expression of confidence in the individual, it employs meaningful rationales for limits on behaving, and it involves no pressure or contingent regard (Sierens, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, Soenens, & Dochy, 2007). Structure-promoting contingencies and expectations, so long as they are not pressuring or conditionally regarding, may be beneficial to certain relationships and can be differentiated from psychological control, which generally undermines autonomous motivation (Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005). If communicated in the right way, structure-promoting relationships may also assist in learning and increase well-being (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004).

Transparency

The importance of transparency, the willingness to honestly and thoughtfully self-disclose to one's partner, has been discussed largely in the context of therapeutic relationships, but may also be important for promoting autonomy in other relationships. When partners are transparent, they model a way of expressing that is trusting and open and they demonstrate willingness to collaborative self-reflection. Transparency further supports the previously mentioned components of autonomy support, making it easier for the other to take a perspective when they understand your experience, and while doing that can also serve to enhance trust and acceptance. Carl Rogers proposed that this quality creates a space where one can openly share thoughts and feelings, and thus engage in a collaborative process of self-exploration resulting in greater awareness (Rogers, 1957).

Use of Reinforcements and Pressure

To the extent that relationships rely on performance-contingent and salient reinforcements of punishments, such as monetary rewards, to shape behavior, they may also undermine autonomy for certain tasks. Partners, teachers, parents, and employers may use reinforcements to motivate individuals toward desired behaviors. While they may be effective in changing behaviors for a short time (Alberto & Troutman, 1999; Bandura & McClelland, 1977), these techniques inhibit internalization of motivation for activities: whereas in the absence of reinforcements individuals may be motivated by their curiosity, interest, or personally held values, the use of reinforcements reorients motivational energy outside of the task to the external reward. The resulting behaviors—those motivated by reinforcement or pressures—are likely short-lived, and require continued or repeated reinforcements and pressure for behavior to be sustained. Indeed, a multitude of research has shown that when these external motivators are no longer present people cease to engage behavior. Monetary rewards are often used to encourage behavior; as well, partners often use

pressuring language and tone of voice to induce behaviors. In the long-term, these strategies may reduce task motivation and engagement; studies testing parent-child interactions in the lab note that when mothers use controlling or pressuring language their children's intrinsic motivation for tasks is undermined (Deci, Driver, Hotchkiss, Robbins, & Wilson, 1993; Kochanska & Aksan, 1995; see Joussemet, Landry, & Koestner, 2008 for a review of other such studies).

Relational Outcomes of Autonomous Motivation

We have discussed a body of work that suggests that when relationships provide need supports, individuals develop more internalized and autonomous motivation over time, and we have argued that autonomous motivation in turn increases well-being. A recent literature has also focused on the *relational* outcomes of being autonomous, and this research has identified a number of interpersonal important outcomes of both state motivation and motivation orientation.

Some of the earliest work in this area explored the impact of autonomy and control on perceptions of personal threat and consequent defensiveness in relational responding. Experimental research using motivational primes and correlational work testing links with dispositional motivation has shown that people acting from a control orientation have higher readiness and propensity to perceive threat in the environment and are therefore more likely to respond defensively to potentially challenging elements in their social spheres. For example, these individuals may respond in more defensive and less honest ways when others disagree about a certain belief, when taking responsibility for errors or mistakes, or when disclosing secrets (Hodgins, 2008; Hodgins & Liebeskind, 2003; Hodgins et al., 2010). Presumably, because control oriented individuals are more defensive, they are also less able to process emotionally challenging materials. In two studies, Weinstein and Hodgins (2009) explored the links between motivation orientation and emotional integration of challenging material—in these studies video clips of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombings were used. Individuals who were high in trait autonomy or primed with autonomy, and were given the opportunity to integrate by expressing their feelings, were less defensive in response to materials and better able to integrate them. Further research by Weinstein, Deci, and Ryan (2011) extended this research to defensiveness in light of negative aspects of one's identity. The authors found that trait autonomy and autonomy priming (vs. control) facilitates integrating regretful negative past events and shameful personal characteristics. Other work in this area has shown that parent-provided non-conditional regard supported higher integration, less defense, and more awareness and ownership of negative emotions in kindergarteners showed higher integration, in terms of awareness and ownership of negative emotions (Roth & Assor, 2010).

Arguably, an autonomous orientation facilitates the integrative process by promoting a sense of openness, ownership to experience, and self-acceptance even in the face of threatening experiences. When material cannot be integrated, perhaps

because the individual does not have the personal resources for the challenge of doing so, defensive processes occur as poorly guided attempts to cope. In operationalizing integrated regulation, researchers contrast awareness of emotions with suppressing, or actively defending against and avoiding them (e.g., Roth & Assor, 2010). Similarly, the mainstream coping literature has broadly classified two types of coping in response to stressful events: avoidant and approach (Roth & Cohen, 1986). Avoidant coping reflects a defensive form of regulation that involves ignoring, distorting, or escaping threatening stimuli (e.g., Stowell, Kiecolt-Glaser, & Glaser, 2001). In this literature, avoiding responding is contrasted with approach coping involving a cognitive, emotional, or behavioral 'turning toward' challenging situations (e.g., Fortune, Richards, Main, & Griffiths, 2002). Approach coping is generally considered adaptive in that effort is directed toward resolving challenging situations or overcoming the stress associated with them. As a result, these strategies are believed to facilitate the assimilation and transcendence of stress in a way that ultimately enhances well-being (Shontz, 1975).

Chapter 4 in this book reviews this literature in light of interpersonal interactions, and discusses a number of relational outcomes of defensive responses that result from autonomous motivation. Chapter 5 further explores defensive processes; in doing so, the author examines the links between defense and need supports (primarily autonomous need support), and focuses on outcomes for integration and coherent self-concepts. One of the mechanisms which has been more recently identified is the us-them divide, the division that is sometimes perceived to exist between 'me' and 'others'. In their Chap. 5, the authors describe the ways defensive processes elicit an artificial perceived divide between 'us' (ingroup/similar, close others) and 'them'. The authors argue that individuals high in control versus autonomous orientation are more likely to perceive an artificial 'us'–'them' divide, which increases defensive responding to others in one's social sphere. Whereas Chap. 5 explores this differentiation between individuals, in Chap. 8 the authors examine early work on ingroup/outgroup tensions at a group level. This chapter specifically reviews evidence that social environments that are need thwarting, namely autonomy thwarting, elicit more defensive and fragmented identification between members of different groups. Presumably, along with increasing aggressive responses, defensiveness also increases prejudiced behaviors by creating a sense of threat around and feelings of competition with others.

In close relationships, defensive processes lead to higher interpersonal conflict, and less responsive and empathic responding that reduces conflict once it starts. A body of work (e.g., Hodgins & Liebeskind, 2003; Knee, Lonsbary, & Canevello, 2005; Patrick et al., 2007; Weinstein, Hodgins, & Ryan, 2010) has demonstrated that in relationships driven by pressure and control, rather than by autonomous interest and valuing, interpersonal conflict between two partners is met with defensive and non-conciliatory behaviors that lengthen and exacerbate fights. This style of responding to conflict, in turn, results in negative affect and lower relationship satisfaction for both partners. Chapter 7 reviews this work in length, and examines the role of control or self-determination in conflict between romantic relationship partners. The authors argue that conflict is exacerbated when self-esteem

is contingent on the relationship, a form of controlling regulation. In this chapter, the authors focus on romantic relationships; in Chap. 10, Assor et al. review processes of interpersonal conflict and consequences for well-being and behavior in parent-child relationships; they review research showing that parental autonomy support and non-conditional regard encourage children to express themselves honestly. Experimental research described across chapters also suggests that motivation carried into new interactions and relationships facilitates interpersonal openness and higher self-disclosure (e.g., Niemiec & Deci, 2012; Weinstein et al., 2010). Across parent, relationship, and acquaintance interactions, these processes of non-defense and openness are responsible for a sense closeness and intimacy. In contrast to higher defense that arises from control, the autonomous self is characterized by better ability for perspective taking and empathy. Chapter 3 makes the argument that this capacity for self-regulation that characterizes autonomy is extended to social integration, or more harmonious relationships with others in the social sphere.

Across this book, there are repeated examples of integrated motivational processes leading to warmth and closeness in relationships. For example, Chaps. 3 and 4 reviews evidence that motivation has an impact on behavioral and subjective/felt closeness across an array of relationships. This link is evident in romantic relationships, parent-child relationships, and initial interactions with strangers. Other chapters point to the relevance of human motivation for interpersonal closeness in professional relationships such as those between therapists and clients and healthcare practitioners. Finally, Chap. 9 reviews implications for interpersonal closeness in the context of lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgendered (LGBT) identities.

Whereas motivational styles have an impact on the quality of relationships in the variety of ways discussed, relationships can in turn shape self-processes that are relevant for motivation, supporting a cyclical model of motivation and relationships. Self-concept, or the set of perceptions and definitions of oneself, is a particularly useful mark of integration and a robust predictor of psychological well-being. Chapter 6 argues that need thwarting social contexts and personal dispositions for control over autonomy both lead to problems relating to self-concept. Exploring these relations from multiple perspectives, the author reviews differences in self-concept consistency across time and contexts, and discrepancies between actual and ideal selves—how one perceives oneself and how one would ideally like to be. Complementary findings in LGBT groups (Chap. 9) indicate that supportive social contexts may have similar effects on specific self-concepts or identities. Recent work reviewed in these chapters has shown that motivationally supportive contexts shape self-concepts in ways that increase well-being and reduce ill-being. This work has implications for future research studying self-concept within the context of relationships. They also have implications for understanding the integrative process. For example, future studies may examine how being closer to one's ideal self in turn feeds into responsive and supportive relationships by promoting integration and non-defensive in relational contexts.

In Chap. 8, Legault et al. explored the relational outcomes of motivation by studying *group-level* motivation and intergroup relationships. In this new and exciting research, the authors aim to understand how people respond to both ingroup

and outgroup members as a function of their motivation for social identity. The research reviewed in this chapter indicates that motivation can shape, either positively or negatively, the quality of relationships with outgroup members in particular. Previous research had tested the extent that the absence (amotivation) or presence of motivation to regulate one's prejudice impacts on discriminatory behaviors. This new work extends the previous model and distinguishes between autonomy and control motivation for prejudice regulation, and it shows external and introjected motivation to regulate prejudice leads to more implicit and behavioral forms of prejudice and poor prejudice regulation (inability to reduce bias, particularly when it is difficult to do so). Follow-up studies conducted by the authors explore potential underlying processes for these effects, and they identify autonomous regulation to be more automated and chronically accessible, whereas controlled motivation requires more energy and cognitive effort.

In Chap. 8, the authors also showed that autonomous motivation leads to more investment and stable self-inclusion in one's ingroup. In other words, when individuals identified autonomously with their ingroup, they were more committed to the group. Similar commitment-related outcomes were in evidence across different types of relationships at the individual level. In Chap. 3, the authors review evidence that need satisfaction promotes close relationships that are satisfying to partners (e.g., Patrick et al., 2007) and that lead to more secure attachment (e.g., La Guardia, Ryan, & Couchman, 2000). Chapter 7 argues that positive aspects of romantic relationships, including lower relationship-relevant defense, less conflict, and more perceived closeness lead to higher romantic relationship commitment. Expanding this to the context of client-therapist relationships in Chap. 14, Lynch reviews evidence that autonomy-support and need satisfaction in therapeutic relationships promotes more commitment to therapy and an alliance between the therapist and the client. This quality of relationship promotes more productive relationships in this professional context that supports client psychological growth.

A final theme evident in these chapters involves *well-being* outcomes of relating to others in an autonomous fashion. This sense of well-being is derived both from individual and contextual contributors: from the motivation that drives relationship engagement and from need supports offered in the relationship. These motivational qualities increase wellness, operationalized in terms of higher positive affect and self-esteem, and lower depression and anxiety, among other indicators. Research that distinguishes between need support and need thwarting indicates need supports promote well-being indicators such as positive affect and self-esteem, and, independently, need thwarting promote ill-being indicators such as depression and anxiety. Furthermore, need supports may be especially important for well-being when individuals feel vulnerable, for example, when self-disclosing stigmatized personally held identities, such as lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender (LGBT) identities. In all cases, central figures—romantic partners, parents, and close friends—seem to be especially likely to influence well-being; these chapters indicate that as relationships are more central, they play an increasingly important role.

Conclusion

This chapter offers a basic model for understanding the nature of motivation in the context of human relationships. In it we have argued that relationships and motivational constructs have a cyclical relation that can over time foster growth and integration and lead to psychological well-being, or alternatively derail growth processes and undermine wellness. We have reviewed a body of work that suggests that both important relationships and daily interactions shape the qualities of human motivation that drive daily behavior and influence the way people understand and interpret their world. We have argued that, in turn, these motivational qualities shape the ways that individuals approach social contexts, for example in ways that are open, receptive, and responsive to social partners, or alternatively in defensive ways that increase interpersonal conflict and foster prejudice and aggression. Through the subsequent chapters in this book, each of these topics is discussed in greater detail and together they offer a diversified and thoughtful empirically based understanding of the role of human motivation in relationships.

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