

IDENTITIES, EVENTS, AND MOODS

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INTRODUCTION

Identity verification is the ongoing process of controlling perceptions of self-relevant meanings in a situation so that they correspond to the meanings held in the identity standard that defines who one is in the situation. Identity control theory posits that when a disturbance to this process occurs leading to a lack of such correspondence, a person's identities are not verified. As a result, they engage in behavior that serves to counteract the disturbance and change meanings and resources in the situation so that one's reflected appraisals or perceived self-relevant meanings once again match the meanings held in one's identity standard (Burke, 1991, 1996; Stets & Burke, 1996, 2003). Accompanying this cognitive-behavioral process, there is an affective response to the discrepancy between perceptions and standard (Burke, 1991, 1996). Prior work has shown that when the discrepancy is large or is increasing, negative emotions result; and, when the discrepancy is small or decreasing, positive affect results (Burke & Stets, 1999; Cast & Burke, 2002; Ellestad & Stets, 1998; Stets, 2003; Stets & Tsushima, 2001).

For example, Burke and Stets (1999) show that when the spousal identity is confirmed by one's partner, there is an increase of feelings of love for the partner (as well as trust and commitment), while the lack of confirmation leads to increased levels of distress. Cast and Burke (2002) show that when the spousal identity of newly married couples is not confirmed there are decreased levels of self-worth and self-efficacy, and that when the lack of confirmation goes on for an extended period of time, there are further decreases in these self-feelings. Stets (2003) examines injustice as a discrepancy between an identity standard that expects a certain level

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1 of payoff and a perception that the level of payoff is less than is set in the standard.
2 She shows the feelings of anger, resentfulness, and disgust that result from this
3 discrepancy. The lack of confirmation does not have to result from an under-
4 evaluation of the self by others. [Burke and Harrod \(2002\)](#) show that the same
5 sorts of distress occur when there is an over-evaluation of the self; people feel best
6 when others evaluate them in the same way that they evaluate themselves. It is
7 clear, therefore, that the lack of identity verification has affective consequences.
8 However, these studies generally are over a longer time-span where the lack of
9 verification is ongoing. In contrast to longer-term, ongoing verification problems,
10 identity-disconfirming events that happen periodically but generally do not persist
11 have not been studied.¹

12 Outside the area of identity research, however, much of the discussion of sources
13 of distress does focus on the impact of daily life-events (e.g. [Brown, 1974](#); [Cochran
14 & Hammen, 1985](#); [Dohrenwend, 1973](#); [Thoits, 1978](#)). Events are things that
15 happen to people, such as being fired from a job or getting married. They are
16 also things that people confront at a point in time such as being told that one's
17 grandmother has been put in intensive care, or that there is a new medication that
18 will help a particular condition. However, the stressful consequences of such life-
19 events have not been uniformly confirmed; sometime negative events increased
20 distress, sometimes positive events increased distress ([Burke, 1996](#)). Which
21 events produce distress, and which events do not produce distress often has been
22 problematic.

23 The link between life-events and distress was clarified by the works of [Thoits](#)
24 ([1991](#)) and [Burke \(1991\)](#) both of whom noted that much of the inconsistency in
25 research examining the stress induced by life-events can be removed by focusing
26 on what have been called "identity-relevant" life-events. Thoits' argument was
27 that events that threaten or disrupt salient or important identities should produce
28 distress. Events that do not do this, or events that enhance important identities
29 should not produce distress ([Brown & McGill, 1989](#); [Burke, 1991, 1996](#); [Hammen,
30 Marks, DeMayo & Mayol, 1985](#); [Hammen, Marks, Mayol & DeMayo, 1985](#)).

31 The key to understanding one major source of distress thus lies in noting how
32 both events and ongoing interactions can disrupt the process of identity verification.
33 With ongoing interactions as the source of the identity disruption, however, the
34 effects generally appear to be persistent and relatively long-term, as interactants
35 take time to work out mutually verifying relationships in a changing environment
36 ([Burke & Stets, 1999](#)). These long-term effects produce not only increases in
37 distress but decreases in feelings of self-worth and self-efficacy ([Cast & Burke,
38 2002](#)). Life-events, on the other hand, tend to be single occurrences rather than
39 on-going processes, and consequently the distressful outcomes are expected to be
40 relatively short-lived.

1 In the present paper, I am concerned with the more immediate disturbance of
2 moods resulting from the disruption of identity processes by events. By examining
3 these abrupt affective consequences, we gain a better understanding of the role of
4 identity processes in the emotional life of individuals. Both shorter- and longer-
5 term consequences are expected within the framework of identity control theory,
6 but the consequences of the shorter term, event driven processes may themselves be
7 a function of the longer-term problems in identity verification. That is, events may
8 have different consequences if they occur to someone who already has ongoing
9 identity verification problems as opposed to occurring to someone who does not
10 have such problems; or if they occur to someone with lower vs. higher feelings of
11 self-worth.
12
13

14 MOODS

15
16 Moods are affective responses that are seen to differ from emotions in three primary
17 ways, though not all researchers agree on all points (Frijda, 1993). Moods are
18 usually seen to be longer in duration than emotions, to have lower intensity, and to
19 be more diffuse and global (Ekman, 1994). Frijda (1993) suggests that the last of
20 these is, perhaps, the most important and the most agreed upon difference between
21 moods and emotions.² Emotions are seen to be about something, being angry *at*
22 *someone* or happy *about something*, whereas moods often have no orientation to
23 a target or object. Having no target, however, is not the same thing as having no
24 particular cause. Moods may be caused by some event, yet the feelings are diffuse
25 and unfocused (Frijda, 1994).

26 Two basic moods have received attention and operate somewhat independently.
27 One of these reflects the positive-negative or tense-calm dimension of feeling
28 (which I will refer to as unease/distress), while the other reflects the tired-energetic
29 dimension of feeling (which I will refer to as activity/arousal) (Thayer, 1996;
30 Watson & Tellegen, 1985).³ The first of these mood dimensions is often taken as
31 providing a cue in a self-regulatory system (Morris, 1992) with good (positive)
32 moods indicating a satisfactory state of affairs and bad (negative) moods indicating
33 some sort of discrepancy in the system. Morris further suggests that the cue is
34 more specific than simply pointing out a problem. He suggests that the problem
35 is one of potentially insufficient resources needed to meet one's goals (Morris,
36 1992). This makes the mood especially relevant to identity processes since the
37 meanings and expectations held in our role or group identity standards are goals
38 that are obtained when identities are verified, that is when situated self-relevant
39 perceptions are brought to match the identity standards. Achieving goals is what
40 identities do (Burke, 1991, 2003).

1 The second mood dimension seems more a function of the natural biological
2 rhythms of the day (as well as sugar intake, exercise, and drugs such as caffeine)
3 (Morris, 1992). While these two dimensions are somewhat independent, they are
4 not unrelated. Thayer (1996) suggests that small amounts of tension (the first
5 dimension of mood) will increase the level of energy, but greater distress will
6 ultimately reduce the level of energy. At the same time, increasing the level of
7 energy often has a tension-reducing consequence.

8 9 10 **IDENTITY DISRUPTING EVENTS**

11
12 In the present paper, I am interested in the changes in mood that occur in re-
13 sponse to identity disrupting events, especially as these may be modified by levels
14 of self-worth and longer-term identity disruption. The model suggests that when
15 an identity-disrupting event occurs, people will have an increased level of une-
16 ease/distress that signals a problem needing attention and provides a motivation to
17 change the situation to reduce the problem. At the same time, it is suggested that
18 when an identity is already under threat from lack of self-verification, the effects
19 of further disruption from events may have an even bigger consequence for the
20 level of unease/distress. At the same time, it is also well known that feelings of
21 self-worth act as a buffer to the effects of distressful events (Baumeister, 1998;
22 Blaine & Crocker, 1993; Campbell et al., 1990; Cast & Burke, 2002). These ideas
23 lead to the following hypotheses:

24 **Hypothesis 1.** Identity disrupting events increase the level of unease/distress.

25
26 This basic hypothesis is modified by the hypothesized moderating effects of the
27 level of verification of other important identities and the level of self-worth of the
28 individual.

29
30 **Hypothesis 1a.** The degree to which other identities are already not confirmed
31 magnifies the effect of identity disrupting events on the level of unease/distress.

32
33 **Hypothesis 1b.** The level of self-worth diminishes the effect of identity dis-
34 rupting events on the level of unease/distress.

35 Additionally, as suggested above, unease/distress, like depression, act to reduce
36 the level of activity/arousal in a person (Koehn, 2001; Stouffer Calderon,
37 2001; Williamson & Shaffer, 2000). This effect, along with the suggested moder-
38 ating effects of self-worth and identity discrepancy, is given in **Hypothesis 2**.
39 In **Hypothesis 3**, I also examine the direct effect of identity-disrupting events
40 on activity/arousal along with the moderating effects of self-worth and
identity discrepancy.

1 **Hypothesis 2.** The level of unease/distress directly decreases the level of activ-
2 ity/arousal.

3
4 As with **Hypothesis 1**, this hypothesis is modified by the expected moderating
5 effects of the level of verification of other identities and the level of self-esteem
6 of the individual.

7 **Hypothesis 2a.** The degree to which other identities are already not confirmed
8 magnifies the effect of unease/distress on the level of activity/arousal.

9
10 **Hypothesis 2b.** The level of self-worth diminishes the effect of unease/distress
11 on the level of activity/arousal.

12 In addition to the effects of unease/distress on activity/arousal, I hypothesize
13 that the identity disconfirming events themselves also influence the level of
14 activity/arousal as they influence the level of unease/distress.

15 **Hypothesis 3.** Identity disrupting events decrease the level of activity/arousal.

16
17 Again, this basic hypothesis is modified by the expected moderating effects of
18 the level of verification of other identities and the level of self-esteem of the
19 individual.

20
21 **Hypothesis 3a.** The degree to which other identities are already not confirmed
22 magnifies the effect of identity disrupting events on the level of activity/arousal.

23 **Hypothesis 3b.** The level of self-worth diminishes the effect of identity dis-
24 rupting events on the level of activity/arousal.

25
26 In addition to these three main hypotheses, I explore the continued effects of
27 identity disrupting events on mood by examining these effects on the day after
28 an event, and two days after the event. To the extent that the affective outcomes
29 of identity disrupting events continue for the next day or two, I hypothesize that
30 the level of self-worth and the extent to which one's identity is already not being
31 confirmed will also moderate these effects.

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33

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METHODS

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Sample

38 I examine the effects of identity disruption on mood using three waves of data from a
39 longitudinal study investigating marital dynamics in the first two years of marriage
40 (Tallman et al., 1998). Each data collection period included a 90-minute face-to-
 face interview, a 15-minute videotaping of a conversation focused on solving an

1 area of disagreement, and four consecutive one-week daily diaries kept by each
2 respondent. The present analyses are based on information from two sources:
3 29,291 daily diary entries over the three time-periods provided information about
4 the events and moods, while the face-to-face interviews provide information about
5 the levels of self-worth and the degree to which the spousal identity was or was
6 not verified in the marriage.

7 The sample was drawn from marriage registration records in 1991 and 1992 in
8 two mid-size communities in Washington State. Of the 1,295 couples registered
9 to marry, 574 met the criteria for involvement (both were over the age of 18, were
10 marrying for the first time, and had no children). These couples were contacted
11 and asked to participate; 286 completed all data collection processes in the first
12 period. There was a 15% attrition rate from the first data collection period to the
13 second period and an additional 4.2% attrition rate from the second to the third
14 period of data collection. Couples who dropped out of the study after the first or
15 second round were more likely to be young ($p < 0.05$), less educated ($p < 0.05$),
16 and of a lower socioeconomic status ($p < 0.05$).⁴

17 18 19 *Measures*

20
21 Not all events are disrupting to the identity process. Some events mark the confir-
22 mation of identities as we achieve goals for which we set our sights, or important
23 relationships are solidified.⁵ To measure *identity-disrupting events* I have used the
24 daily diary data to select a set of events the occurrence of which corresponds to the
25 lack of verification of an identity. In most cases these events are directly relevant
26 to the self, in other cases they are events that occur to someone else but that affect
27 the relationship between the self and the other. These events include receiving
28 bad news regarding health,⁶ having problems and hassles on the job,⁷ having dif-
29 ficulties with friends or neighbors,⁸ having problems with people in business or
30 government,⁹ and other important disruptive events, most of which involve family
31 problems of one sort or another.¹⁰ In each case, these events are disruptions or
32 interruptions of normal identity verification process.

33 Several other variables were created to indicate whether moods were observed
34 on the day of an event (coded 1 if yes and 0 if no), on the day after an event
35 occurred (coded 1 if yes and 0 if no), or two days after an event occurred (1 if yes
36 and 0 if no). Finally, if an event occurred to one's spouse (spouse event) rather
37 than to the self, that was coded as well (1 if yes and 0 if no). This was included on
38 the assumption that in a close relationship, and event to one's partner is likely to
39 influence one's own identity because it's verification is tied up in the verification
40 of the partner.

Table 1. Principle Components Factor Analysis of Unease/Distress Scale Items.

| Item | Loading |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Calm ^a | -0.65 |
| Contented ^a | -0.72 |
| Comfortable ^a | -0.64 |
| Uneasy | 0.80 |
| Worried | 0.78 |
| Uptight | 0.84 |
| Tense | 0.80 |
| Relaxed ^a | -0.69 |
| Bothered | 0.83 |
| Distressed | 0.79 |
| Omega reliability | 0.96 |

^aReverse coded.

Moods were measured daily from self-ratings on a series of 20 self-feelings. Each item was rated to indicate how you feel “right now” on a scale that ranged from not at all (0) to very much (4) on a five-point scale. Factor analysis of the items confirmed the two dimensions that have appeared in the literature: distress and arousal (Thayer, 1996). The measure of *unease/distress* is made up of 10 items measuring background feelings of, on the one hand, being bothered and uptight vs. on the other hand, feelings of calm and contentment. These items are presented in Table 1, along with the loadings from a factor analysis of just these 10 items. The omega reliability for the set of items is 0.96. The items were standardized and summed to make the scale that was used. Certain items, as indicated in Table 1, were reverse coded before summing. A high score on the scale indicates higher levels of *unease/distress*.

The measure of *activity/arousal* is made up of eight items measuring background feelings of being lively and energetic vs. feelings of being tired or drowsy. These items are presented in Table 2, along with the loadings of a factor analysis of just these 8 items. The omega reliability for the set of items is 0.95. The items were standardized and summed to make the scale that was used. Certain items, as indicated in Table 2, were reverse coded before summing. A high score on the scale indicates higher levels of *activity/arousal*.¹¹

Spouse identity discrepancy represents the degree to which a person fails to verify their spousal identity. It is measured following the procedures used by Swann et al. (1994, 1992), who examined the extent to which an individual’s self-view of what it means to be a spouse was congruent with their spouse’s view of who they were as a spouse. Self-verification occurs when self-views are confirmed by the views that their spouse holds for them.

Table 2. Principle Components Factor Analysis of Activity/Arousal Scale Items.

| Item | Loading |
|---------------------|---------|
| Active | 0.85 |
| Vigorous | 0.79 |
| Lively | 0.85 |
| Tired ^a | -0.78 |
| Drowsy ^a | -0.77 |
| Energetic | 0.85 |
| Alert | 0.66 |
| Sleepy ^a | -0.79 |
| Omega reliability | 0.95 |

^aReverse coded.

For this measure, respondents rated ten spousal role activities in terms of the extent to which they felt they themselves *should* engage in the activity (their spouse identity standard), and the degree to which they thought their spouse *should* engage in the activity. Since these data were collected for each spouse in the marriage, it is possible to determine whether there is a correspondence between what persons feel they should do in the spousal role and what their partner's feel they should do in the spousal role.¹² Spousal role activities that I examine include three areas that are important components of the spousal role: instrumental, expressive, and economic. An example item for the instrumental area is "Being responsible for cleaning the house." For the expressive area an example item is "Maintaining contact with parents and in-laws or other members of the family." Finally, an example item for the economic area is "Providing income for the family before the children are born." Response categories for all the items ranged from "not doing that activity in the household" to "doing all of that activity in the household" (coded 0–4). The full set of items is given in Table 3.

Identity discrepancy is operationalized as the amount of disagreement between one's self-rating in each of the spousal activities and the partner's rating of the self in each of these activities. The absolute difference between the two scores is calculated. Given the response categories, a maximum disagreement of four in an area would arise when the respondent reported he or she should perform all of an activity and the partner reported that the respondent should perform none of the activity (or vice versa). The disagreement scores were averaged across the 11 areas with a theoretical range of 0 (perfect agreement) to 4 (maximum disagreement).

Self-worth is one of the two components of self-esteem, the other being self-efficacy (Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983). Cast and Burke (2002) proposed the measure

Table 3. Spouse Identity Items.

Item: To what extent should you (your spouse) be responsible for . . .

... cleaning the house?
 ... preparing and serving meals?
 ... washing, ironing and mending the clothes?
 ... home repair?
 ... yard work?
 ... taking care of the bills and accounts?
 ... shopping for groceries?
 ... maintaining contact with parents and in-laws or other members of the family?
 ... providing the family income before children are born?
 ... providing the family income after children are born?

Table 4. Self-Worth Scale Items.

| Item | Loading |
|--|---------|
| I feel I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others. | 0.68 |
| I feel that I have a number of good qualities. | 0.67 |
| I feel I do not have much to be proud of. ^a | -0.47 |
| I take a positive attitude toward myself. | 0.76 |
| On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. | 0.73 |
| I wish I could have more respect for myself. ^a | -0.55 |
| At times, I think I am not good at all. ^a | -0.59 |
| Omega reliability | 0.88 |

^aReverse coded.

used here. It uses the seven items of the [Rosenberg self-esteem scale \(1979\)](#) that tap into the self-worth (the other three relate more to self-efficacy). The items form a single dimension and have an omega reliability of 0.88. The items were standardized, given a common orientation and summed, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of self-worth. The items are given in [Table 4](#).

Finally, *male* is a binary variable, coded one if the respondent is male and zero otherwise.

Analyses

Because the data included multiple observations of moods collected on individuals over time, a two-level hierarchical regression analysis was conducted ([Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002](#)). The basic idea is that a regression of mood levels on events (present

1 or absent) are run for each individual. This is the lowest level regression. The
 2 regression coefficients in this lowest level are then modeled to be a function of
 3 characteristics of the individual. This is the second level regression and shows
 4 the moderating effects of the individual characteristics of longer-term identity
 5 verification problems (discrepancy) and self-worth on the lowest level effects.
 6 Year and sex were included at the higher-level in order to test whether the results
 7 changed over time or by sex. The two-level model that was estimated is given
 8 in the following equations. The level one model for unease/distress is given in
 9 Eq. (1), while the level two model for this outcome is given in the set of equations
 10 labeled (2).

$$11 \quad \text{Distress} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Event}) + \beta_2(\text{DayAfter}) + \beta_3(\text{TwoAfter}) \\ 12 \quad \quad \quad + \beta_4(\text{SpouseEvent}) + r \quad (1)$$

$$13 \quad \beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{02}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{03}(\text{Sex}) \\ 14 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{04}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{05}(\text{Year3}) + u_0 \\ 15 \quad \beta_1 = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{12}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{13}(\text{Sex}) \\ 16 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{14}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{15}(\text{Year3}) + u_1 \\ 17 \quad \beta_2 = \gamma_{20} + \gamma_{21}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{22}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{23}(\text{Sex}) \\ 18 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{24}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{25}(\text{Year3}) + u_2 \quad (2) \\ 19 \quad \beta_3 = \gamma_{30} + \gamma_{31}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{32}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{33}(\text{Sex}) \\ 20 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{34}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{35}(\text{Year3}) + u_3 \\ 21 \quad \beta_4 = \gamma_{40} + \gamma_{41}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{42}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{43}(\text{Sex}) \\ 22 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{44}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{45}(\text{Year3}) + u_4$$

23 This model indicates in Eq. (1) that the level of unease/distress a person reports
 24 is a function of whether or not an event has occurred on that day, the day before,
 25 two days before, or to the spouse. The beta coefficients indicate the magnitude of
 26 the effects of the events on the mood reported. In addition, the level two model in
 27 Eq. (2) indicates that the magnitude of each of these effects of events on moods
 28 (the beta coefficients in Eq. (1)) may be moderated by characteristics of the person
 29 being modeled. These characteristics are the level of self-worth of the person, and
 30 the level of spousal identity discrepancy of the person, as well as the person's
 31 sex. Finally, dummy variables for the possible changes in the effects over time are
 32 included. All of these effects in the level two model (the gammas) are things that
 33 change the betas in the level one equation.

34 The model for the level of activity/arousal that is reported is slightly different
 35 than the model for unease/distress because I allow for the possibility of a direct
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 37
 38
 39
 40

1 effect of distress on arousal. For this reason the level one model is given in Eq. (3)
 2 with the changed level two equations given in set of equations labeled (4).

$$3 \quad \text{Arousal} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Event}) + \beta_2(\text{DayAfter}) + \beta_3(\text{TwoAfter}) \\ 4 \quad \quad \quad + \beta_4(\text{SpouseEvent}) + \beta_5(\text{Distress}) + r \quad (3)$$

$$5 \quad \beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{02}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{03}(\text{Sex}) \\ 6 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{04}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{05}(\text{Year3}) + u_0$$

$$7 \quad \beta_1 = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{12}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{13}(\text{Sex}) \\ 8 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{14}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{15}(\text{Year3}) + u_1$$

$$9 \quad \beta_2 = \gamma_{20} + \gamma_{21}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{22}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{23}(\text{Sex}) \\ 10 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{24}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{25}(\text{Year3}) + u_2$$

$$11 \quad \beta_3 = \gamma_{30} + \gamma_{31}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{32}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{33}(\text{Sex}) \\ 12 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{34}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{35}(\text{Year3}) + u_3 \quad (4)$$

$$13 \quad \beta_4 = \gamma_{40} + \gamma_{41}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{42}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{43}(\text{Sex}) \\ 14 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{44}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{45}(\text{Year3}) + u_4$$

$$15 \quad \beta_5 = \gamma_{50} + \gamma_{51}(\text{Discrepancy}) + \gamma_{52}(\text{Worth}) + \gamma_{53}(\text{Sex}) \\ 16 \quad \quad \quad + \gamma_{54}(\text{Year2}) + \gamma_{55}(\text{Year3}) + u_5$$

17 **Hypothesis 1** is tested by the magnitude of the beta coefficients in Eq. (1), while
 18 **Hypotheses 1a** and **1b** are tested by the appropriate gamma coefficients in Eq. (2).
 19 **Hypothesis 2** is tested by the magnitude of the β_5 coefficient in Eq. (3), while
 20 **Hypotheses 2a** and **2b** are tested by the γ_{51} and γ_{52} coefficients in Eq. (4). Finally,
 21 **Hypotheses 3, 3a,** and **3b** are tested by the other beta and gamma coefficients in
 22 **Eqs (3) and (4).**

33 RESULTS

34 *Moods Across the Day and Week*

35 Before examining the results showing the effects of interruptions in identity ver-
 36 ification on mood, I begin with an overview of the daily and weekly variations
 37 in mood that were noted by respondents. Because respondents filled out the scale
 38 at varying times of the day and responded as they were feeling at the time, they
 39 present a picture of the ups and downs across the day and across the week. An
 40 initial analysis of the time ordered data by hour over the four weeks shows a strong
 autocorrelation between observations separated by 24 hours, i.e. how one feels at

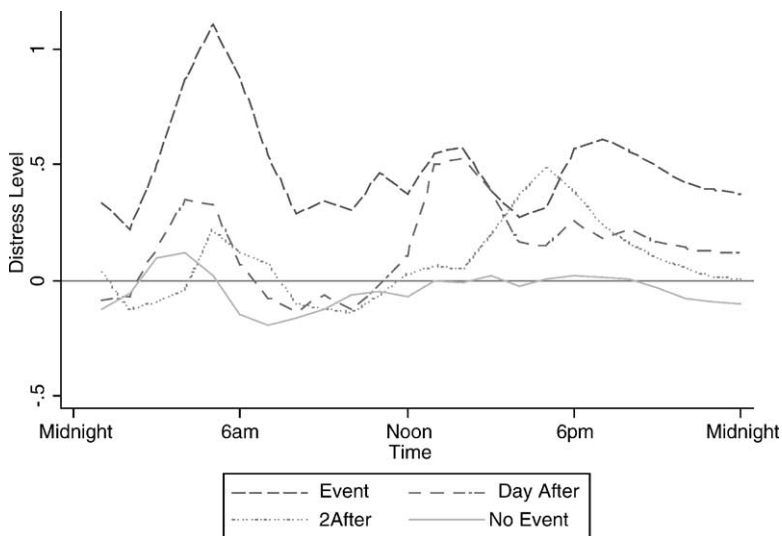


Fig. 1. Distribution of Standardized Unease/Distress Levels across the Day for Day of Event, Day After Event, Two Days After Event and Days with No Events.

any time of the day correlates strongly with how they feel at that time of every day. This is true for both levels of unease/distress as well as levels of activity/arousal.¹³ These results suggest that there are strong daily cycles of both unease/distress and activity/arousal. Figure 1 shows average daily levels of unease/distress for four groups of respondents: those who suffered an “event” within the last day, those who suffered an event the day before, those who suffered an event two days before, and those who did not suffer an event within that time-frame. Figure 2 shows the average level of activity/arousal over the day for the same groups of persons.

We see in Fig. 1 that the level of unease/distress in response to an event is much higher than the level when no event has occurred. Additionally, we see elevated levels of unease/distress one and even two days later, though the two-day later score is often not very different from the level of unease/distress when no event has occurred. In addition, we see a daily rhythm to the level of unease/distress with very high levels occurring early in the morning, between 5 and 6 am. A second though smaller peak occurs early in the afternoon and a third peak occurs in the early evening hours between 6 and 7 pm. We see a similar rhythm to the level of unease/distress a day after the event though the overall levels are diminished. Indeed, even on days when no event has occurred, there is a similar rhythm to the levels of unease/distress with people feeling more unease/distress in the early

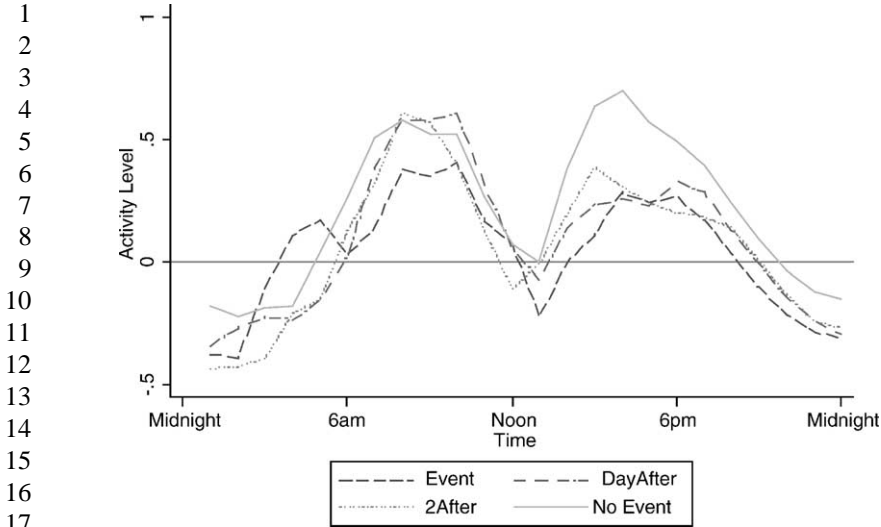


Fig. 2. Distribution of Standardized Activity/Arousal Levels across the Day for Day of Event, Day After Event, Two Days After Event and Days with No Events.

morning hours and then afternoon and early evening, with diminished levels later in the morning and later evening.

In Fig. 2 we see a different cyclic pattern for levels of activity/arousal. Overall, there are two peaks of activity/arousal: in the middle morning and in the middle afternoon. Noon, and Midnight are times of lowered activity. We also see some evidence of lowered activity/arousal for people on days they have suffered an event. This pattern of activity/arousal follows closely that suggested by Thayer (1996) as the cycle of energy.

Turning now to the question of weekly cycles, Figs 3 and 4 show the average levels of unease/distress and activity/arousal respectively for each day of the week. Looking first at unease/distress, we see that in the absence of an event, people have the highest levels of unease/distress on Wednesday, the hump day of the week, and they have the lowest levels of unease/distress on the weekends; results that are not surprising. If an event has occurred, however, the pattern is somewhat different. Mondays and Thursdays appear to be the worst days, while Wednesday and the weekends appear to be the best days.¹⁴

With respect to the level of activity/arousal, we see little change over the week, though Friday and Saturday show somewhat elevated levels of activity/arousal. Again, we see the reduced levels of activity/arousal in response to the occurrence of an event.

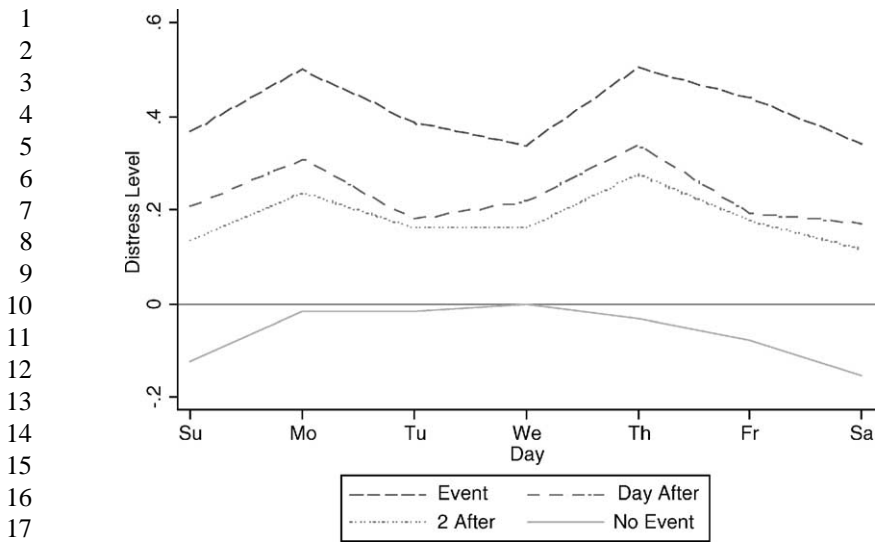


Fig. 3. Distribution of Standardized Unease/Distress Levels across the Week for Day of Event, Day After Event, Two Days After Event and Days with No Events.

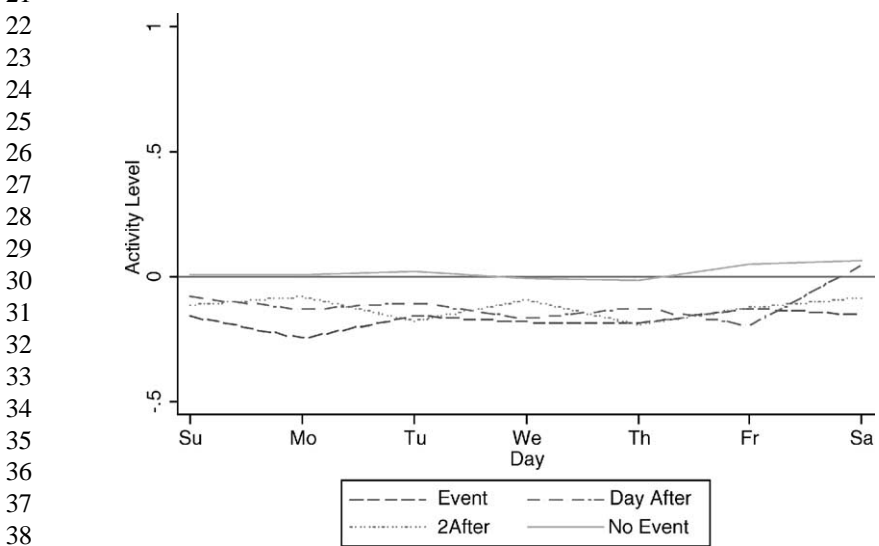


Fig. 4. Distribution of Standardized Activity/Arousal Levels across the Week for Day of Event, Day After Event, Two Days After Event and Days with No Events.

1 In these preliminary results, we see strong evidence of daily and weekly cycles
 2 in both dimensions of mood indicating both biological rhythms as well as social
 3 rhythms, the latter showing up especially with the weekly ups and downs of the
 4 unease/distress levels. We also see some preliminary evidence of the elevation in
 5 distress and depression of activity levels when identity-disconfirming events occur,
 6 even a day or two after the event. I turn now to the analysis of the effects of identity
 7 disrupting events on affective outcomes and tests of the hypotheses.

8
 9
 10 *Identity Disruption and Mood*

11
 12 Before looking at the results for the hierarchical regression, **Tables 5 and 6** present
 13 the means, variances and standard deviations of the measures used in the study.
 14 Among the level two variables, we note in **Table 5** a negative correlation between
 15 identity discrepancy and self-worth indicating that persons who are having trouble
 16 verifying their spouse identity tend to have lower feelings of self-worth. **Table 6**
 17 shows that feelings of unease/distress are associated with events (and continue in
 18 the days after an event), and lowered levels of activity/arousal are also associated
 19 with the occurrence of events (and continue in the days after an event). I also note
 20 the small negative correlation between unease/distress and activity/arousal.

21 The results of the hierarchical regression are reported in **Table 7** for un-
 22 ease/distress, testing the first hypotheses, and in **Table 8** for activity/arousal, testing
 23 the second hypotheses. Looking first at **Table 7** and the effects for the intercept
 24 (level 1), we see that the baseline level of unease/distress (γ_{00}) is significantly
 25 below the overall mean level of zero. Thus, on days when no event occurs (and it is
 26 not the day after or two days after an event), people are feeling less unease/distress
 27 than average. But, to the extent that the spousal identity is not being confirmed,
 28

29 **Table 5.** Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations for Level-Two Variables
 30 ($N = 1443$).

| | Self-Worth | Discrepancy | Male | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|----------------|------------|-------------|------|--------|--------|
| 33 Self-worth | 1.00 | | | | |
| 34 Discrepancy | -0.15* | 1.00 | | | |
| 35 Male | 0.01 | 0.00 | 1.00 | | |
| 36 Year 2 | -0.01 | -0.02 | 0.00 | 1.00 | |
| 37 Year 3 | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.00 | -0.43* | 1.00 |
| 38 Mean | 0.36 | 0.00 | 0.50 | 0.32 | 0.28 |
| 39 Std. Dev. | 0.20 | 0.70 | 0.50 | 0.47 | 0.45 |

40 * $p \leq 0.05$.

Table 6. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations for Level-One Variables
($N = 29,291$).

| | Event | Day After Event | Two Days After | Spouse Event | Unease/ Distress | Activity/ Arousal |
|------------------|--------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Event | 1.00 | | | | | |
| Day after event | 0.11* | 1.00 | | | | |
| Two days after | 0.09* | 0.13* | 1.00 | | | |
| Spouse event | 0.28* | 0.06* | 0.03* | 1.00 | | |
| Unease/distress | 0.18* | 0.05* | 0.02* | 0.09* | 1.00 | |
| Activity/arousal | -0.06* | -0.04* | -0.04* | -0.04* | -0.08* | 1.00 |
| Mean | 0.09 | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.09 | -0.01 | -0.02 |
| Std. Dev. | 0.29 | 0.27 | 0.26 | 0.29 | 0.78 | 0.79 |

* $p \leq 0.05$.

the average level of unease/distress is significantly increased. On the other hand, to the extent that the person has higher self-worth, their level of unease/distress is significantly decreased. These results also show that males have a higher level of unease/distress than females, and there is a slightly higher level of distress in the second year.

Turning now to the effects of an event, we see that the average level of unease/distress is increased significantly on the day an event occurs (γ_{10}) thus confirming our [Hypothesis 1](#). This effect is magnified to the extent that the spousal identity of the person is not being confirmed. Increases in the amount of discrepancy (lack of verification) bring about increases in the level of unease/distress caused by an event. This moderating effect confirms [Hypothesis 1a](#). Finally, we see there is not support for [Hypothesis 1b](#) concerning the moderating effects of self-worth. Apparently persons with high as well as low levels of self-worth equally feel the impact of an event.

Although I did not have hypotheses for the remaining results, these exploratory analyses show that feelings of unease/distress continue into the day after an event has occurred. Two days after an event, the average person is over the mood change unless they have lower feelings of self-worth, in which case they do continue to have feelings of unease/distress.

Looking at the effects of an event that happens to the spouse, [Table 7](#) shows that people do feel heightened levels of unease/distress when their spouse receives an identity-disconfirming event independent of any events that may have happened to themselves. And, this effect is significantly increased if there are already problems with verification of the spousal identity. Interestingly, women feel the effects of a spousal event to a greater extent than do men which may reflect women's greater sensitivity to relationships and greater interdependence compared to men.

Table 7. Hierarchical Linear Model Results for Unease/Distress.

| Level One Effect | Level Two Effect | Coefficient |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Intercept (β_0) | Intercept (γ_{00}) | -0.13 |
| | Discrepancy | 0.14 |
| | Self-worth | -0.22 |
| | Male | 0.12 |
| | Year 2 | 0.08 |
| Event (β_1) | Year 3 | - |
| | Intercept (γ_{10}) | 0.50 |
| | Discrepancy | 0.23 |
| | Self-worth | - |
| | Male | - |
| Day after event (β_2) | Year 2 | - |
| | Year 3 | - |
| | Intercept (γ_{20}) | 0.09 |
| | Discrepancy | - |
| | Self-worth | - |
| Two days after event (β_3) | Male | - |
| | Year 2 | - |
| | Year 3 | - |
| | Intercept (γ_{30}) | - |
| | Discrepancy | - |
| Spouse event (β_4) | Self-worth | 0.07 |
| | Male | - |
| | Year 2 | - |
| | Year 3 | - |
| | Intercept (γ_{40}) | 0.13 |
| | Discrepancy | 0.18 |
| | Self-worth | - |
| | Male | -0.06 |
| | Year 2 | - |
| | Year 3 | - |

∴ $p > 0.05$.

I turn now to the remaining hypothesis concerning the consequences of unease/distress and identity disruption on the activity/arousal mood. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 8. We see that overall persons who are experiencing ongoing problems with spousal identity verification (discrepancy) report significantly lower levels of activity/arousal, and we also note the higher level of activity/arousal reported by men over that reported by women.

With respect to Hypothesis 2, we see that unease/distress reduces the level of activity/arousal (γ_{40}) as hypothesized. Additionally, in support of Hypothesis 2a,

Table 8. Hierarchical Linear Model Results for Activity/Arousal.

| Level One Effect | Level Two Effect | Coefficient |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Intercept (β_0) | Intercept (γ_{00}) | -0.07 |
| | Discrepancy | -0.26 |
| | Self-worth | - |
| | Male | 0.16 |
| | Year 2 | - |
| Event (β_1) | Year 3 | - |
| | Intercept (γ_{10}) | -0.03 |
| | Discrepancy | - |
| | Self-worth | - |
| | Male | - |
| Day after event (β_2) | Year 2 | - |
| | Year 3 | - |
| | Intercept (γ_{20}) | - |
| | Discrepancy | - |
| | Self-worth | - |
| Two days after event (β_3) | Male | - |
| | Year 2 | - |
| | Year 3 | - |
| | Intercept (γ_{30}) | - |
| | Discrepancy | - |
| Spouse event (β_4) | Self-worth | - |
| | Male | - |
| | Year 2 | - |
| | Year 3 | - |
| | Intercept (γ_{40}) | - |
| Unease/distress (β_5) | Discrepancy | - |
| | Self-worth | 0.05 |
| | Male | - |
| | Year 2 | -0.06 |
| | Year 3 | - |

$\therefore p > 0.05.$

37
38
39
40

1 we see that the effect of unease/distress is moderated by level of self-worth. Persons
2 with higher levels of self-worth do not suffer the same effects on activity/ arousal
3 from distress that persons with lower levels of self-worth do. On the other hand,
4 contrary to [Hypothesis 2b](#), there are no moderating effects of identity discrepancy.

5 Finally, with respect to [Hypothesis 3](#), we do see a direct effect of an event in
6 reducing levels of activity/arousal independent of the current level of reported
7 distress. This effect is not moderated by either self-worth or spousal identity veri-
8 fication problems so that [Hypotheses 3a](#) and [3b](#) are not supported.

11 DISCUSSION

12
13 According to identity control theory, the lack of identity verification is distressful
14 ([Burke, 1991, 1996](#)). While a number of studies have tested this for ongoing
15 relationships (e.g. [Burke & Stets, 1999](#); [Stets, 1997](#); [Stets & Burke, 1996](#)), no
16 studies have examined the process as it influences individuals on a day-to-day basis.
17 The study of moods however, affords us the opportunity to examine this process.
18 According to [Morris \(1992\)](#), “moods exist for the sake of signaling states of the
19 self in terms of the physical, psychological, and social resources available to meet
20 perceived environmental demands.” According to identity control theory, identities
21 manipulate signs and symbols that indirectly control active and potential resources
22 in the situation through the process of self-verification ([Burke, 2003](#); [Freese &
23 Burke, 1994](#)). Within identity control theory, therefore, the lack of verification
24 comes about because active or potential resources are not brought to the levels
25 indicated in one’s identity standard as the reference value. Moods thus indicate the
26 lack of identity verification when resources are not available to meet the reference
27 level of the identity standard.

28 In the present paper I examine the impact of identity disconfirming life-events on
29 the moods that people report. The two primary dimensions of mood, unease/distress
30 and activity/arousal, were measured daily for a period of four weeks at three time
31 points, each separated by a year. At the same time it was noted whether an identity-
32 disconfirming event had occurred on each day, the day before or two days before.
33 From identity control theory, it was hypothesized that these identity-disconfirming
34 events would increase unease/distress and decrease the level of activity/arousal.
35 And, because we already know that persons who are having trouble verifying an
36 identity over a period of time are susceptible to more distress, while people who
37 have higher levels of self-worth are less susceptible to distress, it was hypothesized
38 that these conditions would moderate the consequences of the daily events.

39 Overall, the result show that persons with problems in verifying their spousal
40 identity show higher levels of unease/distress and lower levels of activity/arousal.

1 Additionally, persons with higher levels of self-worth experience lower levels of
2 unease/distress, but levels of activity/arousal are not changed.

3 Turning to the specific hypotheses we see that in general they were confirmed.
4 People who experienced an identity-disconfirming life-event on a particular day
5 reported higher levels of unease/distress, and this mood persisted into the next day,
6 though at a somewhat reduced level. And, for persons who had problems verifying
7 their spousal identity, these effects were strengthened. I did not find, however,
8 that these effects were diminished for persons with higher levels of self-worth as
9 had been hypothesized. These same effects were noted when the event occurred
10 not to the self, but to the spouse. Because the spouse is important for verifying
11 one's own spousal identity, an event that disturbed the spouse's identity was
12 apparently felt as threatening to one's own identity, and even more so when
13 the verification of the spousal identity was itself already problematic or when
14 the respondent was female and therefore likely to be more interdependent and
15 relationship oriented.

16 With respect to the second dimension of mood, i.e. activity/arousal, the effects
17 were somewhat weaker, though generally consistent with the hypothesis. However,
18 the effect did not persist until the next day, nor was it moderated by self-worth or
19 problems with verifying the spousal identity. Thus, while the events themselves
20 had only a small depressing effect of activity/arousal, there was a larger indirect
21 effect of the event through its effect on the level of unease/distress. The level of
22 self-worth moderated this latter, indirect effect, with persons feeling the effect less
23 if they had higher levels of self-worth.

24 The overall picture is thus one that confirms the predictions of identity control
25 theory about the consequences of even temporary dislocations of the identity pro-
26 cesses in negatively altering a person's mood for a period of time, usually not more
27 than a day or two. Although in separate analyses not reported, I did not find an
28 added effect for another event that occurs on the day following an event (that is
29 the second event had no more effect than the first event), according to the results
30 presented, successive events are expected to continue the heightened level of the
31 distressed mood. This continued effect of the second or even third event would be
32 on top of the already noted persisting effect on the day after an event.

33 Identity disconfirmation by daily events does alter the moods reported by people.
34 This outcome provides additional evidence for the functional analysis of mood
35 suggested by Morris (1992). Both identity control theory and Morris' functional
36 theory of moods converge on the notion of resources. They may differ, however,
37 in that Morris discusses only the lack of resources to handle needs, while identity
38 control theory suggests that problems also arise when "resources" are at levels
39 that are higher than they should be (Burke & Harrod, 2002). Future research needs
40 to explore this possibility for the effects of events that disconfirm identities by
providing "too much of a good thing."

1 One additional area of future research relating identity verification and moods
2 lies in the already noted apparent correspondence between the two primary
3 dimensions of mood (unease/distress and activity/arousal) and the two common
4 classes of psychiatric disorder (anxiety and depression). Higgins has explored
5 the relationship between self-verification and the anxiety/depression distinction
6 (Higgins, 1987). In doing this, he has distinguished between what he calls the
7 ought-self and the ideal-self. The first of this consists of those aspects of ones self
8 or an identity that are expectations held by others about what one ought to do in
9 a particular role, for example. The second consists of those aspects of an identity
10 that are ideals or wishes about the way we want to be. Higgins has suggested,
11 and shown, that the lack of verification of the ought-self leads to symptoms
12 of distress, while the lack of verification of the ideal-self leads to depressed
13 symptoms (cf. Higgins, 1987, 1989; Higgins et al., 1987, 1994). Marcussen and
14 Large (Marcussen & Large, 2003) have applied this idea to identity control theory.

15 In the present research we have no way of distinguishing between events that
16 disturb identity verification of an “ought” variety from one that disturb identity
17 verification of an “ideal” variety. However, future research could perhaps do this
18 and examine whether these two types of identity disruption each differentially
19 affect the two dimensions of mood (unease/distress and activity/arousal) in the
20 manner that would be expected. Should that be the case, one could then begin to
21 theorize more fruitfully about the nature of the resources that are under the control
22 of each system.

23 24 25 NOTES

26
27 1. There is a third, more micro, level that may be analyzed. This level examines the
28 effects of the more minor disturbances to identity verification that occur in the give-and-
29 take of ongoing interaction. Some of the work of Gottman (1982, 1987, 1993), though not
30 cast in identity terms, may be viewed in this way.

31 2. Concerning the three levels discussed earlier (long-term, ongoing problems of identity
32 verification, short-term, occasional identity disturbing events, and generally minor distur-
33 bances felt in the micro-processes of normal interaction), moods may be appropriate to the
34 middle level and emotions to the more micro-level. However, there is not an unambiguous
35 line between levels, so the effects are likely to blend from one level to another.

36 3. The conceptual similarity between these two dimensions and the two most common
37 classes of psychiatric disorders (anxiety and depression) can be noted (Sapolsky, 2003).

38 4. A fuller description of the data and data collection process is available elsewhere
39 (Tallman et al., 1998).

40 5. Examples of reported events include statements such as, “My girlfriend who has had
a heart transplant went in for her usual yearly check-up. This is her second year. All is good.
Doctors are happy!” “I organized house and boxes all morning, Grandma surprised me with
a visit and brought fruit, cookies, and neat platter to match our dishes, then helped me with
my work,” and “I got three interviews this week for a new job.”

1 6. Examples of reported events include statements such as “My cousin received good
2 and bad news. She found out that there is a medication that will help her, but won’t be
3 good for her six-week-old fetus,” “A friend at work has a daughter who lives in St. Anne’s.
4 Her health is very bad. She is in the hospital now. I don’t know the outcome,” and “(My
5 mother-in-law is having health problems.”

6 7. Examples of reported events include statements such as “I lost my job, we ran out of
7 coupon books to sell. I would have lost my job on the 31st anyway,” “Close friend didn’t
8 get job she was hoping for near where we live,” “Erik feels that he is being harassed on the
9 job. His boss is always picking on him,” and “My manager keeps telling me to do stuff I
10 know will be wrong. And then when it does end up being wrong I get yelled at and insulted
11 and some times physically threatened.”

12 8. Examples of reported events include statements such as, “Two of my friends want to
13 get married and they’ve only known Each other for about two weeks,” “My friend who is
14 19 just discovered she is pregnant for the third time and she is planning to have an abortion,
15 which I feel is very wrong,” and “I found out one of my best friends said some things that
16 weren’t very nice.”

17 9. Examples of reported events include statements such as “Tried to return a shower gift
18 at Victoria’s Secret and we could only exchange or get store credit, even with the sales tag,”
19 “Randy and I went to the mall to buy videotape. We were in a hurry and the store was really
20 busy. The salespeople were slow and ignored us,” and “I tried to figure out our income tax
21 for this year. It looks like we will end up owing. I hate owing taxes to the government. I
22 haven’t itemized yet so it could be better than I think. I still think we will probably owe
23 money.”

24 10. Examples of reported events include statements such as, “My parents aren’t com-
25 municating at all. My mom is angry with my dad for things five years ago and my dad has
26 completely forgotten them,” “My husband and I argued over money he spent that was partly
27 mine and I became angry because we don’t have much spending money,” and “My brother
28 backed out of this tournament and, considering he bowls better than I do, I was concerned
29 about being able to ‘live up’ to his average.”

30 11. Two items, “aroused” and “passive,” that had been included in the daily diaries had
31 uniqueness values greater than 0.7 and were excluded. The item “aroused” may have had
32 sexual connotations for some persons but not others, while the “passive” item may have
33 had connotations of (lack of) control for some but not others.

34 12. Ideally, we would want to measure the individual’s reflected appraisals, i.e. their
35 perceptions of their spouse’s expectations for them, but we do not have this measure. I use
36 the spouse’s actual views as a proxy for the perceptions.

37 13. There is one significant autocorrelation of 0.33 with a lag of 24 hours for un-
38 ease/distress. For activity/arousal, there are significant autocorrelations of about 0.60 center-
39 ing on lags of 1 hour and 24 hours.

40 14. Additional analyses not reported show that this pattern is not the result simply of
events being more likely on days there is higher levels of unease/distress.

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3
4

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