

Prompt: What are the major factors that affect a person's perseverance universally?

Group: Ashley, Grace, Tilghman, Sara, Lia, Lawson

Throughout his life, Louie Zamperini, a former Olympian and World War II veteran, was not only forced to overcome a delinquent childhood--his youth riddled with alcohol and thievery--but, to become a track-and-field star but a month stranded at sea and more than two years at the mercy of the Japanese as a prisoner of war. Although he was eventually liberated and brought home, his return to the United States did not mark the end of his struggle, the physical and psychological torture endured at the hands of his captors leading to long-winded struggle with alcoholism and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Despite being subjected to a plethora of trying situations however, Louie continued to persevere, never truly surrendering or abandoning hope, a constant drive which allowed him to survive the bloodiest war in history. His determination, although remarkable in its own right, has been seen multiple times throughout history in barrage of different circumstances, but for each story of survival, there are thousands of accounts in which others were not able to rise to the occasion.

Imagine two people are subjected to identical circumstances yet only one proves able to endure the challenges presented by the situation. Carefully read the following sources and then synthesize information from at least three of the sources. Incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that both identifies and analyzes the key factors which affect a person's ability to persevere.

Make sure that your argument is central; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. Avoid merely summarizing the sources, Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the sources as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the descriptions in parentheses.

Source A: *Unbroken* (Hillenbrand)

Source B "Does Hope Really Make a Difference?" (Phillips)

Source C "Optimism and Hope in Chronic Disease: A Systematic Review." (Schiavon et al.)

Source D "3 Ways Your Beliefs Can Shape Your Reality." (Breines)

Source E "What for Hope?" (Burton)

Source F "What Is Belief Perseverance? Definition and Examples." (Vinney)

Source G: "The Persevere Comics and Cartoons." (The Persevere Comics)

Source H: "THE Effects of Faith on Personality Characteristics" (Taylor)

Source I: "Don't Give Up" (Hanson)

Source J: "Get Your Daily Dose of Wisdom" (Chambers)

Source K: "Religion Can Provide A Sense of Increased Purpose in Life for People Who are Socially Disconnected" (Eric Dolan)

Source B

Phillips, Suzanne. "Does Hope Really Make a Difference? Scientific Findings." *Psych Central.com*, 1 Aug. 2012, blogs.psychcentral.com/healing-together/2012/07/does-hope-really-make-a-difference-scientific-findings/.

The following excerpt by Psychologist Suzanne Phillips examines both the meaning and impact of hope in any given situation.

In his development of the psychology of hope, Charles Synder operationalized the definition of hope as "The sum of the mental willpower and waypower that you have for your goals." According to Synder, willpower is the mental energy, the emotional drive put toward a goal and waypower represents the conceptualization of mental plans toward the goal. What is important in this formulation of hope is the consideration of hope as an active and determined choice, not a passive or static position. It resonates with Yael Danieli's definition of hope when working with those who have faced trauma and loss as "the possibility of future options." It may be reflected in a person's decision to put their hope in God and, as such, to believe in the power of prayer in the face of pain. It is the reason someone will tolerate pain and suffering if it offers the hope of a better life for their children.

Drawing upon this formulation, a recent study found hope to be a change mechanism in a group of 146 veterans diagnosed with PTSD who were enrolled in a 6 week residential cognitive processing treatment program. The findings indicate that having a higher level of hope coming into and during treatment was associated with PTSD-depression symptom reduction. An important reflection of the need to learn more about the power of hope is that although hope itself did not change until mid to post-treatment, it was positively associated with reduction of PTSD and depression symptoms from the beginning of the study.

In his book, *The Anatomy of Hope*, Jerome Groopman asks and answers the question of whether there is a biological mechanism whereby the feeling of hope can contribute to clinical recovery. Drawing upon his experience as an oncologist, Groopman describes his journey from giving a terminal patient false hope by not telling them the truth, to bluntly taking away all hope, to

finding that a cancer patient (anyone) needs choice and understanding to truly have hope. “To hope under the most extreme circumstances is an act of defiance that...permits a person to live his life on his own terms.” It is after years of his own physical suffering and a recovery based on the hope that a rehabilitation program might give him back his life, that Groopman begins his pursuit of the biology of hope.

Citing research findings from placebo studies in varying medical areas, he illuminates the way in which belief and expectation, cardinal components of hope can block pain by releasing the brain’s endorphins and enkephalins – the body’s own version of morphine. He notes that given how the brain affects the body, many have experienced the reverse, i.e. when the body is experiencing pain, that pain amplifies our feelings of fear, anxiety and despair – the opposite of hope. In response, Groopman reminds us that it often takes only a small stirring of possibility to confront despair and elicit the power of hope – a person with chronic illness is offered a way to lessen fatigue; a wounded veteran is able to drive again.

Source C

Schiavon, Cecilia C, et al. “Optimism and Hope in Chronic Disease: A Systematic Review.”
Frontiers in Psychology, Frontiers Media S.A., 4 Jan. 2017,
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5209342/.

The following excerpt was taken from a study analyzing the impact of optimism and hope on survival with chronic disease.

The impacts that the constructs optimism and hope can have on physical health have been discussed for some time and it is suggested that they can bring relevant results for health in general and for physical well-being. In this context, Snyder defined hope as a state of positive motivation based on three components: objectives (goals to be achieved), routes (planning to achieve these goals), and agency (motivation directed toward these objectives). More recently, Korte added that hope represents a patient's sense of determination to achieve his/her objectives.

In regards to optimism, Scheier and Carver defined it as an overall tendency to believe that vivid experiences will lead to good results rather than bad ones. Carver explained that to be optimistic is to maintain a generally favorable expectation about the future. Hart added that overall positive expectations are considered one of the main determinants for knowing whether people will continue to pursue their life objectives in a condition of chronic disease.

There is evidence that optimism motivates individuals to take proactive measures to protect his/her health, while pessimism is associated with behaviors that are adverse to health. On the other hand, studies such as those by Cohen and Segerstrom have shown that when stressors are

short-lived (i.e., less than a week) optimism appears to be protective against the effects of stress. However, this effect is reversed when the stressors are prolonged, as optimists are more immunologically vulnerable under such circumstances.

Evidence from the meta-analysis performed by Rasmussen suggests that optimism is a significant predictor of positive results for physical health. Furthermore, a review by DuBois reports that there is significant evidence of positive psychological attributes (especially optimism) being associated with better cardiac outcomes.

The results of the numerous studies suggest that there is a close relationship between the constructs of optimism and hope and a reduction in the effects of chronic disease. However, it is important to highlight that the association between optimism or hope and physical health differs depending on the context of the disease and the subjects.

Through a general analysis of these studies, one can observe that cardiac patients with higher levels of optimism attained better results in terms of their physical health. Results were more difficult to observe in cancer patients. However, it was reported that optimistic people suffered fewer negative changes in their condition. As for hope, the results were more subjective. People with higher levels of hope reported having higher life quality and satisfaction, but the only relevant physical results were positive physical outcomes reported by patients with cardiovascular disease.

Source D

Breines, Juliana. "3 Ways Your Beliefs Can Shape Your Reality." *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, 7 Sept. 2016, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-love-and-war/201508/3-ways-your-beliefs-can-shape-your-reality.

The following source is written by a psychologist and details the impact one's beliefs can have on their ability to succeed.

Books like *The Secret* and *The Power* have contributed to the increasing popularity of the idea that wishes can be granted through visualization and positive thinking.

1. Your beliefs influence your behavior.

One of the most basic ways that beliefs can shape reality is through their influence on behavior. For example, if you believe that you're capable, competent, and deserving of your dream job, you're probably more likely to notice and seek out opportunities that could help you get there.

You're also more likely to perform well in an interview. Contrary to the common assumption that overconfidence can backfire, research suggests that it may actually be beneficial: Overconfident people tend to appear more socially skilled and higher in social status, even when those evaluating them have access to objective information about their actual ability.

Beliefs can also influence health behaviors. Research suggests that people are more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviors like eating well and exercising if they have a greater sense of self-efficacy—that is, if they believe that they are capable of effectively performing these behaviors.

2. Your beliefs may impact your health.

Health and disease are influenced by multiple interacting factors, many of which are not fully under your control, including genetics, exposure to environmental toxins, history of trauma, and socioeconomic circumstances. But research suggests that beliefs matter too. In one study, middle-aged adults who held more positive beliefs about aging lived an average of 7.6 years longer than those who held more negative beliefs, even when controlling for current health and other risk factors. In a number of other studies, optimistic people were found to be less likely to develop heart disease, again controlling for other risk factors.

Research on the placebo effect also supports the link between beliefs and health. Remarkably, the mere expectation that a treatment will be effective can sometimes make it so, even if that treatment is just a sugar pill. Although the placebo effect tends to be strongest for subjective reports of symptoms, sometimes in the absence of corresponding physical changes, there is evidence for some objective, measurable effects: For example, placebos can alter patterns of brain activation associated with processing pain, and in Parkinson's disease, placebos have been shown to elevate dopamine levels, which can temporarily improve symptoms.

How can you harness the power of belief to improve your life? For one, you can engage in practices that change your habitual way of thinking, such as keeping a gratitude journal or learning mindfulness meditation. These practices can help you notice and appreciate the good in life and keep you from getting caught up in unconstructive, negative thoughts. Second, you can set clear intentions for how you want to approach each day and make an effort to align your behavior with those intentions. Even when things don't go your way, you'll know that you're moving in the right direction and using the leverage that you have.

article continues after advertisement

And finally, you can recognize that while beliefs may be powerful, they are certainly not all-powerful, and life is full of suffering that we neither invite nor deserve. Recognizing the limitations of belief can make us more compassionate towards those who find themselves in unfortunate circumstances, including ourselves.

Source E

Burton, Neel. "What to Hope For?" *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers,
www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hide-and-peek/201411/what-hope.

The following excerpt was taken from an article about what hope is.

HOPE can be defined as the desire for something combined with an anticipation of it happening. In short, hope is the anticipation of something desired.

To hope for something is to desire that thing, and to believe, rightly or wrongly, that the probability of it happening, though less than one, is greater than nought. If the probability of it happening is one or very close to one, it is not a hope but an expectation; if it is nought it is a fantasy; and if it is very close to nought it is a wish. The borderline between a hope and a wish is moot, and more a question of emphasis than anything else.

In Plato's *Protagoras*, Socrates says that the statesman Pericles gave his sons excellent instruction in everything that could be learnt from teachers, but when it came to virtue he simply left them to 'wander at their own free will in a sort of hope that they would light upon virtue of their own accord'. This usage of 'hope' suggests that hoped for things are partly or even largely outside our personal control.

Even though hope involves an estimation of probabilities, this rational, calculative aspect is often imprecise—indeed, it is often unconscious. When we hope, we do not know what the odds, or at least our odds, might be, but still, choose to 'hope against hope'. This combination of ignorance and defiance, this 'hoping against hope', is integral to hope.

One opposite of hope is fear, which is the desire for something not to happen combined with an anticipation of it happening. Inherent in every hope is a fear, and in every fear a hope. Other opposites of hope are hopelessness and despair, which is an agitated form of hopelessness.

With any hope, the desire can be more or less strong, and, independently, so can the anticipation. For example, it is possible to desire something very strongly, and yet believe that it is very unlikely to happen. In general, something that is strongly desired seems more likely to happen; conversely, something that is very likely to happen, by virtue of being attainable, seems more desirable. In other words, desire is somewhat correlated with anticipation. These same patterns and principles also apply to fear.

It can be instructive to compare hope with optimism and faith. Optimism is a general attitude of hopefulness that everything will turn out for the better or best. In contrast, hope is more particular and more specific (even a pessimist can be hopeful), and also less passive, more engaged, and more vested. To hope for something is to make a claim about something's significance to us, and so to make a claim about ourselves.

The 13th century philosopher and theologian St Thomas Aquinas said that faith has to do with things that are not seen, while hope has to do with things that are not at hand. If hope is more active than optimism, faith is more active still. Faith is deeply committed.

Hope features prominently in myth and religion. In Aesop's fables, hope is symbolized by the swallow, which is among the first birds to appear at the end of winter. The famous moral, 'One swallow does not make a summer' belongs to the fable of the Spendthrift and the Swallow (or the Young Man and the Swallow).

Source F

Vinney, Cynthia. "What Is Belief Perseverance? Definition and Examples." *ThoughtCo*, ThoughtCo, 31 Oct. 2019, www.thoughtco.com/belief-perseverance-4774628.

The following article by Cynthia Vinney, was created in order to explain what belief perseverance is and some examples of how people face this in their day to day life.

Belief Perseverance Definition

If you've ever gotten into a conversation where you've attempted to change someone's belief based on your knowledge of facts, only to have them refuse to consider the validity of the information you've presented, you've encountered belief perseverance in action. People have a natural tendency to cling to their pre-existing beliefs, even when new information is provided that proves those beliefs wrong. In other words, beliefs persevere. This is something we see

regularly today in debates about climate change, criminal justice, and immigration. Once someone has adopted a belief, even if the evidence for it is weak, it's very difficult to change it.

Moreover, these beliefs don't have to be based on first-hand experience. Beliefs can be learned indirectly as well. For example, a little girl believes all math teachers are mean, because before she started going to school, her older brother told her so. Once she started school, she encountered a math teacher who was nice. However, rather than letting go of her belief that math teachers are mean, she dismissed the nice teacher as either an exception to the rule or simply having a good day.

Social theories involve beliefs about the way the world works. Social theories can include beliefs about the ways groups of people think, behave, and interact, and encompasses stereotypes about racial and ethnic groups, religious groups, gender roles, sexual orientations, economic classes, and even various professions. This type of belief perseverance is also responsible for beliefs about political and social issues, including national security, abortion, and health care.

Numerous studies have been conducted on belief perseverance. In one of the earliest studies, researchers asked female high school and college students to categorize suicide notes as real or fake. Each participant was told their categorizations were either mostly accurate or mostly inaccurate. Despite being told during the study's debriefing that the feedback they received about the accuracy of their categorizations had been made up, the participants continued to believe what they were told. So, those that were told they'd categorized the notes accurately continued to believe they were good at judging real suicide notes from fake ones, while those who were told they categorized the notes inaccurately believed the opposite.

Causes of Belief Perseverance

In general, people are motivated to maintain their beliefs. This is especially true if people's beliefs are more intricate and thought out. For example, in the second study mentioned above, the researchers found that when they had participants write out an explanation for the supposed relationship between risk taking and firefighting, the perseverance of their belief in this relationship was stronger when their explanations were more detailed.

So the simple act of providing an explanation for one's beliefs may lead it to become more ingrained, regardless of any evidence to the contrary. This is because even if an individual has been told there is evidence that discredits a belief, every reason they've come up with to explain that belief hasn't been discredited.

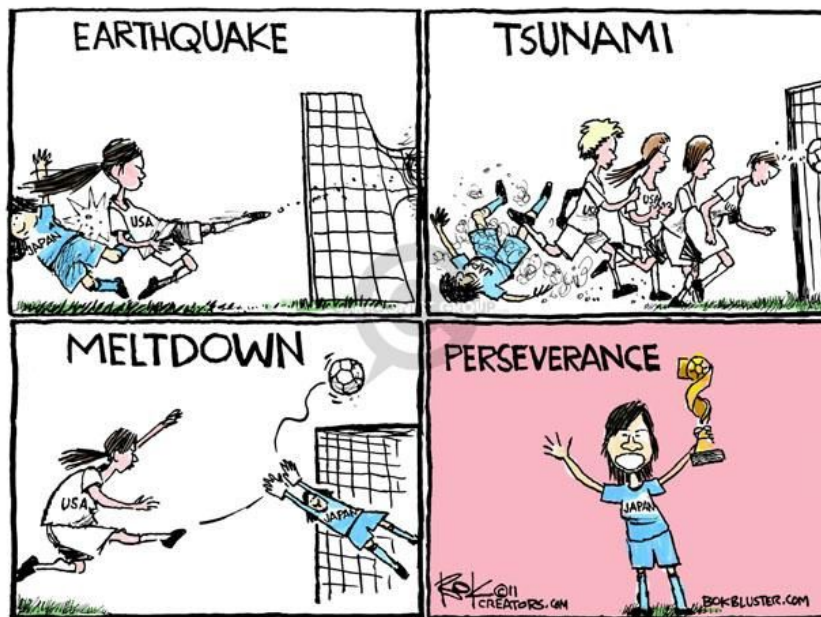
There are several psychological factors that help explain belief perseverance as well.

One process that leads to belief perseverance is the availability heuristic, which people use to determine how likely an event or behavior might be based on how easily they can think of past examples. So if someone negatively judges their ability to give a successful presentation at work, it may be because they can only think of the unsuccessful presentations they gave in the past. Yet, it's important to keep in mind that the individual's assessment via the availability heuristic is subjective and based on how memorable their past presentations were to them.

Source G

“The Persevere Comics and Cartoons.” Image. *CartoonistGroup*,
www.cartoonistgroup.com/subject/The-Persevere-Comics-and-Cartoons.php.

The following image depicts a struggle which was overcome through perseverance.



Source H

Taylor, Julie. "The Effects of Faith on Personality Characteristics." *The Effects of Faith on Personality Characteristics*,
www.mckendree.edu/academics/scholars/issue1/taylor.htm.

This article was created by Julie Taylor to educate people on the effects of faith on people's personality traits.

The effects of faith on the personality characteristics of locus of control, optimism, and self-esteem was researched through the use of a survey administered to 54 students and faculty from a small, private Illinois college and 35 students from a small community college in Illinois. Each participant completed a survey indicating demographic data, a shortened version of Rotter's Locus of Control, Alport's Life Orientation Scale, Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, and a faith based scale. The hypothesis that people who rate a high personal relationship with God will be happier was supported with a .001 level of significance. These findings are important because they give insight into a person's faith and how that relates to their personality characteristics.

Each of these variables have been researched. However, there is not a huge source of information including all three of these topics and their correlation to faith and each other. In order to understand more of the psychological benefits of religion this study is very important to those with a religious orientation. The researcher feels that these three variables have a positive correlation to faith. The researcher hypothesizes that people with a strong sense of faith will have higher optimism, external control, and self-esteem.

Operationally, there are nine hypotheses to be tested. People who have a higher faith will have a higher optimism total (encompassing all optimistic responses on the survey). Self-esteem totals (encompassing all self-esteem responses on the survey) will be higher for people who respond with a strong belief in God. Locus of control will be more external if a person has a very high score on question 28, "I see myself as a part of God's world, rather than God a part of mine." Optimistic people will also have high self esteem. A person with a high sense of faith will rank items of importance in question 37 with faith in one of the top three spots. A person will have more of a commitment to church if they score higher on the total faith based section of the survey. How a person currently views their relationship with God will be positively correlated to how happy that person is. Students will have a higher sense of faith than faculty. Students from the Methodist college will have stronger faith overall than those at the community college.

Source I

Hanson, Rick. "Don't Give Up." *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/your-wise-brain/201808/don-t-give.

The following excerpt was on an article about why people should not give up and what drives us to not give up.

Know your purpose in life. Write it down in one word, phrase, or sentence. Really. The first time someone suggested I do this, I thought they were a little nuts. But then I opened up to a kind of knowing of what matters most to me, and wrote it down. It's OK if it changes, or if you don't get the words just right at first. You can revise it later. Put it in positive terms and in the present tense; for example, "I am loving" is better than "I will stop getting so angry with people." Say it out loud and see how it feels. Find words you connect with.

Keep your purpose close to your heart; it may feel sacred. If you speak of it, do so with self-respect, not self-doubt. And then every day, as soon as you remember, recommit to your life's purpose: rename it to yourself and give yourself over to it again.

Clarify your priorities. Identify the key aims of your life these days in a word or phrase, such as: Health. Friendship. Finances. Learning new things. Career. Marriage. Spirituality. Having fun. Parenting. Creative expression. Exploring life. Service. Maybe break up one aim into two or three; for example, "finances" could become "breaking even," "saving for retirement," and "becoming affluent, even wealthy."

Then do a little exercise as an experiment: rank these aims in order of importance, with no ties allowed. If you could attain only one aim, which would it be? That's your highest priority. Then take that one off the list, look at the aims that are left, and ask the question again: *If I could attain only one of these remaining aims, which one would it be?* Then repeat the process until you're finished. Remember your purpose in life. As you go along, you may want to revise the wording of the aims, or divide one aim into two or three. When you're done, write a clean list of aims in priority order; if it feels right, keep it where you can see it each day, maybe your eyes alone. Routinely reflect on your true priorities; feel their weight; let your top priorities draw you in their direction.

It's normal to be committed to big chunks of time doing things that are necessary but not high priorities per se, such as commuting or doing housework. Consider how you could weave one or more top priorities into these relatively low priority periods. For example, listen to an inspiring talk while you're on the bus, or pay mindful attention to the breath while doing dishes.

Stay focused on your priorities in important interactions. Lots of interactions kind of bounce around, and that's OK. But sometimes there's an important stake on the table, like identifying a key deliverable at work, or saying what you really feel to your partner, or pinning down a homework plan for your child. In these cases, it's common for the conversation to go off on tangents, get hijacked emotionally, or fall into a kitchen sink full of related issues - but then the main point doesn't get resolved. Instead, keep reminding yourself of the result you'd like out of the interaction. It doesn't have to be the whole magilla: sometimes it's best to focus on something concrete and manageable that's attainable. Don't take the "bait" of inflammatory or distracting statements by others; keep coming back to the main point; you can deal with those other issues later - if ever. Obviously, be open to discovering that there is something even more important to talk about than what you first thought. But always be clear what your priorities are, even if they change.

Source J

“Get Your Daily Dose of Wisdom.” *My Utmost For His Highest The Faith to Persevere Comments*, utmost.org/the-faith-to-persevere/.

Faith is something that helps one persevere and get through almost difficult situations, remembering that God is always watching and there for them through the struggles.

Perseverance means more than endurance— more than simply holding on until the end. A saint’s life is in the hands of God like a bow and arrow in the hands of an archer. God is aiming at something the saint cannot see, but our Lord continues to stretch and strain, and every once in a while the saint says, “I can’t take any more.” Yet God pays no attention; He goes on stretching until His purpose is in sight, and then He lets the arrow fly. Entrust yourself to God’s hands. Is there something in your life for which you need perseverance right now? Maintain your intimate relationship with Jesus Christ through the perseverance of faith. Proclaim as Job did, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15).

Faith is not some weak and pitiful emotion, but is strong and vigorous confidence built on the fact that God is holy love. And even though you cannot see Him right now and cannot understand what He is doing, you know *Him*. Disaster occurs in your life when you lack the

mental composure that comes from establishing yourself on the eternal truth that God is holy love. Faith is the supreme effort of your life— throwing yourself with abandon and total confidence upon God.

God ventured His all in Jesus Christ to save us, and now He wants us to venture our all with total abandoned confidence in Him. There are areas in our lives where that faith has not worked in us as yet— places still untouched by the life of God. There were none of those places in Jesus Christ’s life, and there are to be none in ours. Jesus prayed, “This is eternal life, that they may know You...” (John 17:3). The real meaning of eternal life is a life that can face anything it has to face without wavering. If we will take this view, life will become one great romance— a glorious opportunity of seeing wonderful things all the time. God is disciplining us to get us into this central place of power.

Source K

Dolan, Eric W. “Religion Can Provide a Sense of Increased Purpose in Life for People Who Are Socially Disconnected.” *PsyPost*, PsyPost, 31 Aug. 2018, www.psypost.org/2018/08/people-who-are-socially-disconnected-turn-to-religion-to-restore-a-sense-of-purpose-to-their-lives-52082.

This source is by Eric Dolan, and it explains how religion can be very helpful and beneficial to everyone’s life and well-being.

New research suggests that having a firmly held religious belief can provide a sense of increased purpose in life among those who are socially disconnected.

The findings, which were published in the *Journal of Personality*, indicate that religion can be one way that individuals cope with the reduced sense purpose in life that is associated with loneliness.

“This paradox of feeling socially disconnected has always interested me: To feel less disconnected, people would ideally increase or improve their social contacts and sense of belonging, but this is not always a feasible solution given that an inherent part of social disconnection is that people have poor relationships or feel rejected.

“People provide purpose. People who feel like they belong and well supported by their friendships consistently have a higher sense of purpose and direction in life, and people lose purpose when they feel socially disconnected,” Chan told PsyPost.

“However, our research here shows that having a belief system that ‘substitutes’ for some of the functions of human relationships, like feeling valued and supported by God, may allow people who feel disconnected to restore some of this purpose that social relationships would normally provide. This compensation may benefit people who are disconnected over time.”

“Interestingly, being religious when you are already socially connected confers minimal additional benefit for people’s sense of purpose in life. The main benefit appears to be when people feel disconnected and need to leverage the reassuring tenets of religion and their relationship with God.”

Religion can provide a sense of increased purpose, but it’s not an entirely adequate substitute for social interaction.

“Leveraging God and religion may be a way of coping with disconnection in the interim that is better than nothing, but these results certainly do not suggest that people should rely upon religion or God for purpose over people. Quality human connections are still a primary and enduring source of purpose in life.”

“It may seem striking to some people that a sense of purpose is driven so centrally by social relationships, compared to things like one’s career. Purpose is future-oriented and motivational, where people feel that future goals and directions are significant and worth pursuing. However, these strivings are invariably intertwined with other people. We pursue goals with other people, with the help of other people, or in favor of other people.”