**G. Michael Leffel, Ph.D.**
*Professor of Psychology*
*Point Loma Nazarene University,*
*San Diego, CA.*

## Address

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## Education

Ph.D.    University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (1986)
            Major: Personality and Social Ecology (Gerald Clore, Ph.D. *Chair*)
            Minor: Clinical Psychology
M.A.    California State University, Long Beach (1979)
            Major: Personality-Social ("Graduation with Honors")
            Minor: Clinical
B.A.    Point Loma College (1977)
            Valedictorian
            NAIA Academic All-American (Baseball)

## Professional Memberships

Western Psychological Association (WPA)
Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (RMPA)
APA Division 36, Psychology of Religion and Spirituality
Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology (SSPWT)

## Summary of Employment History

(August '92 - ) *Professor of Psychology, Point Loma Nazarene University* (Tenured)
Primary responsibilities include full-time teaching (four courses each semester), supervision of 2-3 students each year on undergraduate research projects, and service on faculty committees. Served as Department Chair for three years.

(August '82 - August '92) *Psychotherapy Private Practice, Denver, CO.*
After completing course work at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana in August 1982, I moved to Denver and joined a group private practice. During this time I obtained special training in psychoanalytic theory and in psychodynamic, emotion-focused psychotherapy. I specialized in individual adult psychotherapy and selected issues in marriage and family therapy.

**Current Scholarly Activities Related to Moral Psychology and Psychology of Religion**

(2010 -)  Consultant to the *Project on the Good Physician* (Science of Virtues, John Templeton Foundation Award, University of Chicago)
The "Project on the Good Physician" was one of twenty projects selected for *The New Science of Virtues* initiative (March 2010-2012), administered by the *Arete Initiative* at the University of Chicago and funded by the John Templeton Foundation. This project developed the first national longitudinal study of the moral and professional formation of American physicians over the course of their medical training (http://scienceofvirtues.org/Arete/ResearchGransts.aspx). Primary responsibilities included selection and development of instruments and data analysis.

(2006 -) *Institute for Research in Psychology and Spirituality* (IRPS), Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University.  Invited participant at yearly research symposium for research on integration of psychology and Christian spirituality.

(2005 -) Peer reviews for articles submitted to *Journal of Positive Psychology* (JPP), *Journal of Psychology and Theology* (JPT), and *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* (JPC).

(1997 - ) *Society for Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology* (SSPWT)
Charter and organizing member of SSPWT, an organization that sponsors annual conferences and promotes presentations and writing devoted to the integration of Wesleyan spirituality and psychology.

(1995 - 2010) *Wesleyan Center for 21$^{st}$ Century Studies*, Point Loma Nazarene University
Charter and organizing member.  Have been awarded multiple grants as Center Scholar and Fellow.

**Research Interests**

Scholarly interests, both theoretical and empirical, focus on adult development (generativity theory), the psychology of virtue (especially a moral intuitionist virtue ethics of caring), the psychology of spiritual transformation, and the integration of moral psychology and practical Christian ethics (Christian Spirituality).  Published articles, symposium presentations, and most recent student poster presentations (only) are described in the following pages.  **Research Projects described below (beginning on p. 10).**

**Current Teaching Areas**

Personality and Adult Development
Abnormal Psychology
Pursuing Goodness: The Psychology of Moral Change (Senior Capstone) *
Psychology of Religion (Psychology of Spiritual Transformation) *
History and Contemporary Issues in Psychology

*Designed and teach an applied moral psychology course entitled *Pursuing Goodness: The Science of Moral Change* that serves as the Senior capstone course for psychology majors at PLNU.  Designed and teach a course in the psychology of spiritual transformation entitled *Dante's Quest: A "Therapy of Desire" for the Psychology of Spiritual Transformation* that focuses on the integration of contemporary moral psychology and the virtue-vice tradition in Christian spirituality. **Featured Courses described below (beginning on p. 8).**

**Psychology Courses Taught**

Personality and Adult Development (20 semesters)
Abnormal Psychology (8 semesters)
Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy (6 semesters)
Group Counseling (Didactic and Experiential; 7 semesters)
Group Dynamics (Experiential only; 12 semesters)
Psychology of Personal Development (18 semesters)
Developmental Psychology: Adulthood and Aging (6 semesters)
Moral Development and Psychology of Religion (30 semesters)
Social Psychology (9 semesters)
Psychology of Emotion and Motivation (10 semesters)
Psychology of Learning and Cognition (3 semesters)
History of Psychology (16 semesters)
Introduction to Methods and Measurement (2 semesters)
The Human Challenge (Existential Psychology-Literature Integration; 7 semesters)

**Major Contributions to Department and University**

•Chair of Department of Psychology (2005-2007).

•Designed *Therapeutic and Community Psychology* (TCP) and *Character, Morality, and Culture* (CMC) concentrations for Psychology majors.

•Developed *Psychology of Personal Development* curriculum for first-year experience course required of all first-year students at PLNU.

•Research design and assessment consultant to *The Project on the Good Physician*, one of twenty projects selected for The New Science of Virtues (March 2010-2012), administered by the *Arete Initiative* at the University of Chicago and funded by the John Templeton Foundation.

•Organizing member of *Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology* (SSPWT).

•Organizing member of *Wesleyan Center for 21st Century Studies*, Point Loma Nazarene University.

•Elected by faculty to serve as *Representative to the Board of Trustees*, Point Loma Nazarene University (2005).

•Yearly service on various faculty governance committees, most recently Faculty Resources Committee.

**Published Articles and Chapters**
**Moral Psychology and Psychology of Religion and Spirituality**

**2013**

Leffel, G. M., & Oakes-Mueller, R. A. (2013). Project on the good physician: Evidence for the construct validity of a moral intuitionist model of virtuous caring.  To be submitted to the *Journal of Moral Education*, Summer 2013.

Leffel, G. M. (2013). Beyond meaning: Three levels and cognitive systems of spiritual transformation, Catalyzing a new science of spiritual practices. To be submitted to *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Fall 2013.

**2011**

Leffel, G. M. (2011a). Beyond meaning: Spiritual transformation in the paradigm of moral intuitionism, Introduction: Catalyzing a new science of spiritual transformation**.** In R. L. Piedmont & A. Village (Eds.), *Research in the social scientific study of religion*, Vol. 22 (pp. 23-28). http://www.brill.nl/rssr

Leffel, G. M. (2011b).  Beyond meaning: Spiritual transformation in the paradigm of moral intuitionism, Part 1: Beyond meaning-system analyses.  In R. L. Piedmont & A. Village   (Eds.), *Research in the social scientific study of religion*, Vol. 22 (pp. 29-76). http://www.brill.nl/rssr

Leffel, G. M. (2011c). Beyond meaning: Spiritual transformation in the paradigm of moral intuitionism, Part 2.: A moral intuitionist approach to spiritual transformation.  In R. L. Piedmont & A. Village (Eds.), *Research in the social scientific study of religion*, Vol. 22. (pp. 77-125). http://www.brill.nl/rssr

**2010**

Leffel, G. M. (2010). "Putting on Virtue": A motivation-based virtue ethics of caring for practical theology.  In M. K. Armistead, B. D. Strawn, & R. W. Wright (Eds.), *Wesleyan theology and social science: The dance of practical divinity and discovery* (pp. 143-158). Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

**2008**

Leffel, G. M. (2008a). Who cares?  Generativity and the moral emotions, Part 1: Advancing the "psychology of ultimate concerns." *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 36,* 161-181.

Leffel, G. M. (2008b). Who cares? Generativity and the moral emotions. Part 2: A "social intuitionist model" of moral motivation. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 36,* 182-201.

Leffel, G. M., Fritz, M. E., & Stephens, M. R. (2008). Who cares?  Generativity and the moral emotions, Part 3: A social intuitionist "ecology of virtue." *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 36,* 202-221.

**2007**

Leffel, G. M. (2007a). Emotion and transformation in the relational spirituality paradigm, Part 1: Prospects and prescriptions for reconstructive dialogue. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 35,* 263-280.

Leffel, G. M. (2007b). Emotion and transformation in the relational spirituality paradigm, Part 2: Implicit morality and "minimal prosociality." *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 35,* 281-297.

Leffel, G. M. (2007c). Emotion and transformation in the relational spirituality paradigm, Part 3: A moral motive analysis. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 35,* 298-316.

**2006**
Leffel, G. M. (2006). Relational generativity: A proposed new domain of generative adult development.  Archived at PsycEXTRA, www.apa.org/psycextra.

**2004**
Leffel, G. M. (2004). Prevenient Grace and the re-enchantment of nature: Toward a Wesleyan theology of psychotherapy and spiritual formation. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, *23*, 130-139.

**2001**
Strawn, B. D., & **Leffel, G. M.** (2001).  John Wesley's "Orthokardia" and Harry Guntrip's "Heart of the Personal": Convergent aims and complementary practices in psychotherapy and spiritual formation. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, *20*, 351-359.

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**Symposium Presentations**
**Psychology of Religion and WPA Conferences**

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**2009 Mid-Year Loyola Conference**
Leffel, G. M. (April, 2009).  Generativity and virtues of the quiet ego: A new direction for the psychology of spiritual transformation. Symposium presentation at the Loyola Mid-Year Conference of Division 36 Psychology of Religion, Loyola College, MA, April 2009.

**2008 Mid-Year Loyola Conference**
Leffel, G. M. (2008). Becoming a good character: The shift in moral psychology (and, why it matters for spiritual transformation).  Symposium presentation at the Loyola Mid-Year Conference of Division 36 Psychology of Religion, Loyola College, MA, April 2008.

**2007 Rocky Mountain Psychological Association**
Leffel, G. M., (2007). Relational generativity: Discovering and expanding Erikson's investment model of caring. Paper presentation at the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association, April 2007.

Leffel, G. M., & Fritz, M. (2007).  Moral emotions of caring character: A conceptual model and empirical review for programmatic research. Paper presentation at the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association, April 2007.

Leffel , G. M., & Stephens, M.  (2007). The relationship of positive and moral emotions (empathy and gratitude) to generative concern and action: A preliminary construct validity study of the MACA model.  Paper presentation at the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association, April 2007.

**Recent Symposium Presentations**
**Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology (SSPWT)**

**2010**
Leffel, G. M. (2010). Putting on virtue: Catalyzing a new science of Christian virtue formation. Symposium paper presentation at the *Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology*, Azusa Pacific University, March 2010.

(with student) Leffel, G. M., & Karras, J. (2010). Putting on virtue: Catalyzing a new science of Christian virtue formation, Part 2: Contagious compassion: How could you "catch" it*?* Symposium paper presentation at the *Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology*, Azusa Pacific University, March 2010.

(with student) Leffel, G. M., & Gebhart, N. (2010). Putting on virtue: Catalyzing a new science of Christian virtue formation, Part 3: A new model and measure of caring. Symposium paper presentation at the Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology, Azusa Pacific University, March 2010.

(with student) Leffel, G. M., Erikson, T., & Shook, B. (2010). Putting on virtue: Catalyzing a new science of Christian virtue formation, Part 5: Wired to be inspired. Symposium paper presentation at the *Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology*, Azusa Pacific University, March 2010.

**2008**
Leffel, G. M., (2008). Becoming a good character: The shift in moral psychology (and, why it matters for spiritual transformation. Symposium paper presentation at the Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology, Duke University, March 2008.

Leffel, G. M., (2008). Embodying the capacity to care: A Wesleyan "social intuitionist model" of spiritual transformation. Symposium paper presentation at the *Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology*, Duke University, March 2008.

**2006**
Leffel, G. M. (2006). Renewed minds and transformed hearts: Models of moral development in Christian spirituality. Paper presentation at the *Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology*, Kansas City, March 2006.

Leffel, G. M. (2006). Emerging love and the capable character: Murphy's MacIntyrean project for Wesleyan theology. Paper presentation at the *Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology*, Kansas City, March 2006.

**Recent Student Poster Presentations at WPA Conferences**

**2016 (Western Psychological Association, Long Beach)**

Carlson, K.J., Russell, K.N., **Leffel, G.M.**, & Oakes Mueller, R.A. (2016, April). *Good Physician (3 of 3): Contamination Narratives Predict Physician Generosity, Mindfulness, and Life Meaning.* Poster session presented at the 96th Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Long Beach, CA.

Flint, D.D., Ahmand, M., **Leffel, G.M.**, & Oakes Mueller, R.A. (2016, April). *Good Physician 1 of 3): Redemptive Life Narratives Predict Growth In Generosity.* Poster session presented at the 96th Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Long Beach, CA.

Russell, K.N., Carlson, K.J., **Leffel, G.M.**, & Oakes Mueller, R.A. (2016, April). *Good Physician (2 of 3): Contamination Narratives Predict Medical Student Neuroticism and Change in Burnout.* Poster session presented at the 96th Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Long Beach, CA.

**2015 (Western Psychological Association, Las Vegas)**

Carlson, K.J., Russell, K.N., Oakes Mueller, R.A., & **Leffel, G.M.** (2015, April).*Good Physician (1): Neuroticism and Supervisory Interactions Predict Physician Burnout.*Poster session presented at the 95th Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Las Vegas, NV.

Russell, K.N., Carlson, K.J., **Leffel, G.M.**, & Oakes Mueller, R.A. (2015, April).*Good Physician (2): Positive/Negative Supervisor Feedback Predicts Physician Virtue Growth.*Poster session presented at the 95th Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Las Vegas, NV.

**2014 (Western Psychological Association, Portland)**

Oakes Mueller, R., **Leffel, G.M.,** Roth, V., Messier, M., Farinelli, A., & Galli Young, M. (2014, April).*Good Physician (2 of 2): Neuroticism/Burnout Inhibit Growth in Generosity.*Poster session presented at the 94th Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Portland, OR.

Roth, V., Messier, M., Farinelli, A., Galli Young, M., Oakes Mueller, R., **& Leffel, G.M.** (2014, April).*Good Physician (1 of 2): Moral Elevation Predicts Virtue Development.* Poster session presented at the 94th Annual Convention of the Western Psychological Association, Portland, OR.

**2013 (Western Psychological Association, Reno)**

Ayres, K., Neher, A., Erbacci, G., Oakes Mueller, R. A., & **Leffel, G. M**. (2013, May). "Project on the good physician" (Part 1 of 3): Evidence for the construct validity of a moral intuitionist model of virtuous caring. Poster presented at the Western Psychological Association Conference, Reno, NV.

Shepherd, A., Dahill, J., Oakes Mueller, R. A., & **Leffel, G. M**. (2013, April). "Project on the good physician" (Part 2 of 3): Caring virtues and the moral matrix of clinical decisions. Poster presented at the Western Psychological Association Conference, Reno, NV.

Young, M., Drown, K., Oakes Mueller, R. A., & **Leffel, G. M.** (2013, April). "Project on the good physician" (Part 3 of 3): Neuroticism and burnout may inhibit expression of the intuition to care and of caring virtues. Poster presented at the Western Psychological Association Conference, Reno, NV.

**2011 (Western Psychological Association, Los Angeles)**

Cardiel, D., Sparks, C., Games, J., Oakes Mueller, R. A., & **Leffel, G. M.** (2011). Gratitude and its specialized role in relational generativity. Poster presentation at the Western Psychological Association, April 24, Los Angeles, CA.

**2010 (Western Psychological Association, Cancun)**

Nickolas, G., **Leffel, G. M.,** & Oakes-Mueller, R. A. (2010). Caring as a psychological construct: Development and construct validation of the Care 4 Questionnaire, Poster presentation at the Western Psychological Association, April 24, Cancun, Mexico.

**2009 (Western Psychological Association, Portland)**

Oakes Mueller, R. A., Tankersley, L., & **Leffel, G. M**. (2009, April). Grateful giving: Does gratitude, induced through a guided self-reflection practice, facilitate upward spirals of generative care in young adults? Poster presentation at Western Psychological Association, April, 2009.

Featured Course #1

**Pursuing Goodness**
*The Science of Moral Change*
(Senior Capstone Course at PLNU)

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"If anything is going to answer to the name moral psychology, it ought to be an inquiry into how the formations (and transformations) of the psyche help one to lead a good life in a world with others."
     -J. Lear, moral philosopher, *Radical Hope,* p. 104

*A "Course" for the Rest of Your Life . . .*

The recent collection of books and articles in the social sciences reflecting on the question of "evil" might make one forget that the question of what constitutes *goodness* is no less cogent or perplexing.  Nearly everyone aspires to be a "good" person and to live a Good Life in a world with others.  But, what does a good life look like?  And, what makes a good relationship good? Further, how do persons change for good?  Are there multiple, competing possibilities for what

counts as a good life?  Is there a transcendent conception of "the good" that should guide and order the various goods that make up a good life?  Does psychological science have anything to say about goodness?  These questions are the focus of *Pursuing Goodness*.

In this second decade of the 21st century we are witnessing a revolution in the scientific understanding of human nature and moral change.  In the last twenty years, the psychological sciences have joined other disciplines – moral philosophy, religious ethics, and even cognitive neuroscience – in the pursuit of what constitutes a good life in a world with others.  Where once science and (some) religious traditions have depicted human beings as mostly selfish and violent, today thinkers of many disciplines are uncovering the deep neurobiological roots of human goodness and the capacity for altruistic prosociality (e.g., compassion and generosity).  While this new science certainly does not deny the existence of the selfishness we sometimes see in ourselves and in the world around us, it does offer new evidence that another kind of human being is possible.  This course introduces you to three new sciences that purport to offer important insights about human nature and change: the science of a meaningful life; the science of moral change; the science of love and virtue. These emerging sciences promise to offer valuable insights about how persons *live, change,* and *love.*

In light of these sciences, our course endeavors to explore these questions from an interdisciplinary perspective – primarily psychological, but also with the aid of philosophic, literary, and religious sources.  Each lecture and follow-up class conversation attempts to emphasize the relevance of these questions by offering illustrations from everyday life, literature, and film.  From Plato's *The Apology* to Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* and Camus's *The Plague*, and to the films *The Bourne Identity*, *Schindler's List* and *The Matrix* (and more), this course offers a wealth of thought-provoking insights to help us address these fundamental and complex questions about how we pursue goodness.

<u>Featured Course #2</u>

**Dante's Quest**
***A "Therapy of Desire" for the Psychology of Spiritual Transformation***

***Background:*** Does the psychology of spiritual transformation have a "therapy of desire" adequate to conceptualize how persons *heal* (transform) internal obstacles to and *develop* the capacities necessary for mature love?  In particular, does it possess a conceptual model of the nature and processes of spiritual transformation that incorporates contemporary theory and research on brain-based principles of personality change?  In her book *The Therapy of Desire* (1994), moral philosopher Martha Nussbaum describes what she believes to be one of the central dilemmas in contemporary moral-spiritual theory, namely *the absence of a coherent account of psychological suffering, and a process model of change that tells us what to do about it.*  The objective of her book is to argue that post-Aristotelian Greek and Roman philosophers (Hellenistic ethics) point the way to such a model, and paint a more demanding picture of what it takes to transform and develop a good heart and character than many contemporary models of moral-spiritual change.  She suggests that the need to give greater direct attention to the nature of suffering is due to the fact that many simplistic accounts of moral-spiritual change are insufficiently attentive to how certain destructive (and often unconscious) "states of mind" (vices)

– like pride – cause emotional suffering and perpetuate self-and relationship-defeating patterns. According to the post-Aristotelian "therapists of desire" – especially the Hellenistic schools of the Epicureans and the Stoics – more than good socialization and cognitive change (like attending lectures or sermons on how to apply moral principles) was needed to diminish the power of destructive states of mind and to acquire virtues like compassion. This "ancient" approach believed that some kind of direct therapy on the "desires" (passions) of mind was necessary in order to quell or eliminate the deep roots of vice and psychological suffering – something akin to mindfulness practices. Additionally, they believed that the expansion of one's motivation and capacity for "universal compassion" required its own active, intentional work to enhance whatever tendencies of fellow-feeling might be rooted in human nature, but that are insufficiently developed simply by appeals to moral reasoning and willpower.

*Objective:* The purpose of this project, both theoretical and empirical in nature, is to model contemporary approach to spiritual transformation based on the logic of Dante's spiritual journey described in *The Divine Commedia*. One of the unique contributions of Dante's method is that it combines an emphasis on the virtue-vice tradition of early Christianity, while incorporating a *process* model of psychological change that draws upon the ancient Christian "Doctrine of Three Ways" (Illumination, Purgation, Union). Dante's journey provides a model of spiritual transformation that describes how the soul moves toward "union with God in love" in struggle against the obstacles to this goal (vices that obstruct mature love). Dante's Aristotelian model of Christian formation is a "moral likeness" model of relationship with God which emphasizes that the goal of spiritual maturity is not necessarily to feel subjectively *closer* to God, rather to become more like God by enlarging one's motivation and capacity to *love more like God*. The way to this union (*theosis* or Divinization) is through the dark *Inferno* and up the mountain of *Purgatorio* – metaphors understood primarily as encounter with the contents of one's own unconscious "attachments" to inner desires that are contrary to mature love. A first goal of this project is to offer a psychodynamically-informed re-conceptualization of the seven *principia vitia* of the Christian vice tradition, focusing especially on pride as the central root cause of all other vices. A second objective is to describe the *purgative process* of spiritual transformation in terms of the emerging neurodynamic model of memory reconsolidation, as exemplified in D. Siegel's interpersonal neurobiology (ITNB) and other brain-based approaches to therapeutic change.

<div align="center">Research Project #1</div>

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**"Project on the Good Physician"**[1]
***Advancing the New Science of Virtues***

A Collaborative Project between
*Point Loma Nazarene University, Department of Psychology* and
*The University of Chicago, Program on Medicine and Religion,*
*MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics*

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[1]The "Project on the Good Physician" was one of twenty projects selected for *The New Science of Virtues* initiative (March 2010-2012), administered by the *Arete Initiative* at the University of Chicago and funded by the John Templeton Foundation. Dr. Leffel served as the research consultant to this project.

*Background:* Recent data suggest that although medical science now offers more power to cure than ever before, the public increasingly believes today's physicians may be motivated more by self-aggrandizement and entitlement than by a desire to express their compassion, generosity, and wisdom through the practice of medicine. In response to these trends, prominent medical

organizations have launched major initiatives to teach "physician professionalism" as a core competency while requiring medical educators to measure the outcomes of their efforts. In this project, we seek to advance a *moral intuitioinst model of virtuous caring* that derives from theory and research in the "positive psychology of morality" that may be applicable to medical character education.

The long-term goal of The Project on the Good Physician is to develop the first national longitudinal study of the moral and professional formation of American physicians over the course of medical training – from matriculation in medical school to the first years of practice after residency training. As a first step in this larger project, we created a theoretical framework and an empirical strategy for tracking the course and consequences of three physician care-related virtues across time and training experiences (mindfulness, empathic compassion, generosity), as well as other individual and contextual factors that might obstruct the expression of these virtues (neuroticism and burnout).

***Description:*** The project was divided into three parts. In Part 1, we constructed a first questionnaire that assessed the following variables: *mindfulness, empathic compassion, generosity, burnout, entitlement, vocational satisfaction, clinical specialty, likelihood of service in a medically underserved setting, medical experiences and beliefs about medicine,* and *other demographic information*. Using a combination of postal mailings and email links to online versions of the questionnaire, we obtained a response rate of 63% (602/960). In Part 2, a second follow-up questionnaire repeated many of the measures from the first instrument and gathered new data on the following variables: *perceived generosity of a resident-nominated physician mentor or role model, the experience of moral elevation in relation to the generous role model, moral foundations used in clinical decisions, five factor personality traits, satisfaction in life, meaning in life, vocational calling, vocational satisfaction,* and *religious preferences*. In Part 3, based on the survey data, we constructed a qualitative interview protocol and conducted telephone interviews with 25 resident physicians who exhibited characteristics of theoretical interest in the study. This interview format drew upon the "life story" approach to the study of generative adult development, and was constructed to elicit information about vocationally formative life experiences, as well as perceptions of what it means to be a virtuous physician. (Project progress on next page.)

**"Project on the Good Physician" (Part 1): Evidence for the Construct Validity of a Moral Intuitionist Model of Virtuous Caring**

(In April, 2013 we presented results of Part 1 of this project in three poster presentations at WPA (Reno). We anticipate results of Part 1 will result in a published paper. Additional analyses are in progress.)

**Hypothesis 1: Virtues and Eudaimonic Well-Being: Convergent and Predictive Validity of a Model of Virtuous Caring**
A first major hypothesis predicts that systematic inter-relationships may exist between the care-related virtues of Mindfulness, Empathic Compassion, and Generosity (convergent validity), and that these virtues will predict real-world altruistic action and eudaimonic well-being (predictive validity). Hypothesis 1A explores the strength of relationship between virtues and predicts virtues will be positively associated with each other (convergent validity). Hypothesis 1B predicts that physicians characterized by these virtues will be nominated by their peers for the Gold Humanism Award, an award given each year to students recognized to exhibit qualities believed essential to good doctoring: integrity, excellence, compassion, altruism, respect, empathy and service (predictive validity). Hypothesis 1C predicts that virtuous physicians will experience greater *eudaimonic well-being* as measured by various life- and vocation-related

indices: *life meaning*, *life satisfaction*, *vocational satisfaction*, and *vocational calling* (predictive validity). Hypothesis 1D explores the strength of relationship between caring virtues and "Big Five" personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism), and predicts that while Mindfulness and Empathic Compassion may be associated with certain personality traits, they will explain variance in Generosity beyond that predicted by personality traits alone (predictive validity).

**Hypothesis 2: Caring Virtues and the "Moral Matrix" of Clinical Decision Making**
Consistent with recent social intuitionist virtue theory, a second major hypothesis predicts that the intuition to Care/harm may be highly salient for (utilized by) physicians, and will be positively associated with three care-related virtues (the attention-related virtue of Mindfulness, emotion-related virtue of Empathic Compassion, action-related virtue of Generosity). Hypothesis 2A predicts that physicians will favor the moral intuition to Care/harm over other intuitions in clinical decision making. Hypothesis 2B predicts there will be strong, positive associations between Care/harm and each virtue. Hypothesis 2C predicts that Mindfulness and Empathic Compassion (independently considered) may act to moderate (strengthen) the relationship between Care/harm and Generosity, such that the Care/Harm–Generosity link is stronger when these virtues are stronger.

**Hypothesis 3: Neuroticism and Burnout May Inhibit Expression of the Intuition to Care/harm and Caring Virtues**
A third major hypothesis predicts that Neuroticism and Burnout will be associated with each other, and that these factors may negatively moderate (weaken) the expression of the intuition to Care/harm and of the caring virtues. Hypothesis 3A predicts that Neuroticism and Burnout are strongly associated with each other. Hypothesis 3B predicts that Mindfulness is inversely related to both Neuroticism and Burnout (independently considered), such that those high in Mindfulness will be low in Neuroticism and Burnout. Hypothesis 3C predicts that Neuroticism and Burnout (independently considered) may attenuate the association between Care/harm and Generosity, such that the Care/harm–Generosity link is stronger when these inhibiting factors are weaker. Similarly, Hypothesis 3D predicts that Neuroticism and Burnout (independently considered) may weaken the association between Empathic Compassion and Generosity, such that the Empathic Compassion–Generosity link is stronger when these inhibiting factors are weaker.

<u>Research Project #2</u>

**Virtues and the Michelangelo Phenomenon**
*Do Virtue-specific, Mindfulness Practices Facilitate Caring in Communal Relationships?*

***Background and Rationale:*** In her book *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices*, religious ethicist Jennifer Herdt poses a question of equal urgency for the humanities and for the sciences that are concerned with moral formation: *Does either secular or religious ethical theory have a sufficient understanding of virtue formation to be capable of transmitting the virtues to future generations?* In an effort to better understand the mechanisms of virtue formation, this project draws on some of the most promising theoretical and empirical trends in the contemporary psychology of virtue (Haidt & Joseph), together with recent philosophical trends in virtue ethics (Churchland; Flanagan; MacIntyre; Slote) to delineate a new direction for theory and research in the emerging science of virtues: *a moral intuitionist model of virtuous caring.* At the heart of this approach is the "Social Intuitionist Model" (SIM) first offered by moral psychologist Jonathan Haidt (2001). In its most recent formulation, the SIM advances a "connectionist" (Churchland) account of virtue, defining it as a "moral associative network" in the brain-mind that integrates three inter-related functions: moral *intuitions*, moral *emotions*, and procedural *strivings/skills*. Further, intuitionist theory predicts specific virtues may develop 'on top of' each of these

intuitions.  For example, the virtue of compassion is likely related to the intuition to Care/harm, one of the five moral foundations in Haidt's model of "intuitive ethics" (Haidt & Joseph, 2004; 2007).  However, to date, social intuitionism has not yet provided a nuanced account of how the innately given intuition to care gets revised and greatly extended within a cultural context that uses narrative to shape and guide the development of specific virtues, nor has it documented how mindfulness meditation may act as a mechanism for virtue development.  While existing research on various "emotions/virtues" (e.g., compassion; Fredrickson et al., 2008) has convincingly demonstrated that systematic activation of the emotion component of a virtue through mindfulness practice (e.g., compassion with LKM meditation) can reliably enhance positive emotions and other indices of well-being (Fredrickson's "build" hypothesis), what is not yet well documented is whether systematic activation of specific virtues through mindfulness practices, over time, also facilitates caring in close (communal) relationships.   The objective of this research, simply stated, is this: While previous research has demonstrated that virtues can make us happier and healthier, we want to know whether they also make us more *caring*, and if so*, how*?

***Plan for Programmatic Research:***  To test this connectionist model of virtue formation and the role of virtue-specific mindfulness practices, we propose field experiments with young adult friendship dyads to investigate how caring is enhanced in close relationships.

In separate studies, various virtues in our *moral intuitionist model of virtuous caring* (Leffel) will be investigated, especially *trust* (Mikulincer & Shaver) *gratitude* (Emmons), *compassion* (Fredrickson), and *forgiveness* (McCullough).   These particular prosocial virtues are proposed because of their status as "other-praising" virtues believed to facilitate prosocial functioning.  Moreover, existing research demonstrates reliable ways to induce them through guided mindfulness-based practices.  Following a 2-week non-intervention period (to determine naturally occurring changes in model variables prior to the intervention), participants will be assigned to one of three mindfulness meditation conditions (virtue-related, positive emotion not related to the virtue, or emotion-neutral).  During this 6-week intervention, participants will complete a variety of mindfulness practices (modeled after existing research).  Two predictions are made.  First, relative to the other conditions, the virtue-specific mindfulness practices will produce greater increases over time in the daily experience of the emotion component of the virtue (e.g., feeling grateful), which in turn will produce increases in virtue-related strivings to express the emotion (e.g., enhanced strivings to express gratitude).  In effect, this method would extend Fredrickson's "build" hypothesis to the dynamics of communal relationships, thus providing a more specific and critical test of the build hypothesis.  Second, these increments in skills will predict growth in the partner's movement toward their ideal self, as well as enhanced relational satisfaction ("enhance" hypothesis).  In previous research, the "Michelangelo Phenomenon" (Drigotas) has provided a reliable method for measuring one partner's assessment of the contribution of the other partner to his/her growth toward one's self ideal.  Proposed analytic strategies include latent growth curve analyses (to test changes over time, with time points nested within participants) and path analyses (for mediation tests).

Result of this research will move us to a deeper psychological understanding of: 1) how virtue-specific mindfulness practices are related to the expression of virtue-specific strivings/skills, and 2) how specific virtues facilitate enhanced caring in close relationships.  These results, in turn, have implications for character development theory and praxis, and to practical theologies centrally concerned with virtue formation.

**Publications Related to the Project**

**2008**
Leffel, G. M. (2008a). Who cares?  Generativity and the moral emotions, Part 1: Advancing the "psychology of ultimate concerns." *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 36,*161-181.

Leffel, G. M. (2008b). Who cares? Generativity and the moral emotions. Part 2: A "social intuitionist model" of moral motivation. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 36,* 182-201.

Leffel, G. M., Fritz, M. E., & Stephens, M. R. (2008). Who cares?  Generativity and the moral emotions, Part 3: A social intuitionist "ecology of virtue." *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 36,* 202-221.

**2006**
Leffel, G. M. (2006). Relational generativity: A proposed new domain of generative adult development. Paper presentation at the Western Psychological Association, Palm Springs, CA, April, 2006. Archived at PsycEXTRA, www.apa.org/psycextra.

**Posters with Students**

**2016**
Russell, K., Carlson, K., Oakes Mueller, R.A. & **Leffel, G. M.** (2016). Good Physician (Part 1 of 2): Positive/Negative Supervisor Feedback Predicts Physician Virtue Growth. Paper presented at the 2016 Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology Conference held at Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, CA

**2011**
Cardiel, D., Sparks, C., Games, J., Oakes Mueller, R. A., & **Leffel, G. M.** (2011). Gratitude and its specialized role in relational generativity. Poster presentation at the Western Psychological Association, April 24, Los Angeles, CA.

**2010**
Nickolas, G., **Leffel, G. M.,** & Oakes-Mueller, R. A. (2010). Caring as a psychological construct: Development and construct validation of the Care 4 Questionnaire, Poster presentation at the Western Psychological Association, April 24, Cancun, Mexico.

**2009**
Oakes Mueller, R. A., Tankersley, L., & **Leffel, G. M**. (2009). Grateful giving: Does gratitude, induced through a guided self-reflection practice, facilitate upward spirals of generative caring in young adults? Poster presentation at the Western Psychological Association, April 24, Portland, OR.

Research Project #3

**Beyond Meaning:**

**Spiritual Transformation in the Paradigm of Moral Intuitionism**

*A New Direction for the Psychology of Spiritual Transformation*

*Description:* Our understanding of the nature and processes of spiritual transformation can be enriched by incorporating the theories and empirical findings of contemporary moral psychology and cognitive neuroscience, particularly the cognitive neuroscience of intuitive moral cognition.

Moral Intuitionist Spiritual Transformation Theory (MISTT: Leffel, 2011a; 2011b; 2011c) is a new psychological theory of spiritual transformation derived from these literatures that was developed to provide such a framework.  Specifically, it was constructed to meet four goals.

First, as an alternative to the presently dominant "meaning-system" approach in the psychology of spiritual transformation (Paloutizian & Park, 2005), this theory offers a moral-functionalist definition of spiritual transformation that places the *motivation and capacity* for altruistic prosociality (more than epistemic meaning-making or value-formation) at the heart of the process.  Second, MISTT offers a *multilevel interdisciplinary framework* like that commended by Emmons & Paloutizian (2003) that synthesizes three socio-moral "levels" of moral personality that are relevant to the process of spiritual transformation: *moral direction* ("what" to do), *existential* or *cosmological meaning* ("why" to do it), and *moral motivation and capacity* ("how" to do it).  Third, MISTT endeavors to integrate recent theory and research in social cognitive neuroscience that delineates three neurocognitive systems (Valuation, Narrative, Intuition) that correspond to and subserve these dimensions of spiritual transformation.  Fourth, in contrast to the meaning-system approach that focuses on top-down narrative meaning, deliberative reasoning, and conscious willpower as primary determinants of moral action, this theory offers a bottom-up approach that highlights the primacy of three critical sources of moral motivation and action: *ethical intuitions, moral emotions,* and *moral virtues* (and *moral vices*).  The eventual goal of the project is a practical model of intentional spiritual transformation that could inform character education theory and praxis, spiritually oriented, emotion-focused psychotherapy, and practical theologies centrally concerned with virtue formation.  Methodological implications for a new science of system-specific spiritual practices are offered throughout these chapters.  (Project progress on next page.)

**Publications Related to the Project**

Leffel, G. M. (2011a).  Beyond meaning: Spiritual transformation in the paradigm of moral intuitionism, Introduction: Catalyzing a new science of spiritual transformation.  In R. L. Piedmont & A. Village (Eds.), *Research in the social scientific study of religion*, Vol. 22 (pp. 23-28). http://www.brill.nl/rssr

Leffel, G. M. (2011b).  Beyond meaning: Spiritual transformation in the paradigm of moral intuitionism, Part 1: Beyond meaning-system analyses.  In R. L. Piedmont & A. Village (Eds.), *Research in the social scientific study of religion*, Vol. 22 (pp. 29-76). http://www.brill.nl/rssr

Leffel, G. M. (2011c). Beyond meaning: Spiritual transformation in the paradigm of moral intuitionism, Part 2.: A moral intuitionist approach to spiritual transformation. In R. L. Piedmont & A. Village (Eds.), *Research in the social scientific study of religion*, Vol. 22. (pp. 77-125). http://www.brill.nl/rssr

Leffel, G. M (2010). "Putting on virtue": A motivation-based virtue ethics of caring for practical theology. In M. K. Armistead, B. D. Strawn, & R. W. Wright (Eds.), *Wesleyan theology and social science: The dance of practical divinity and discovery* (pp. 143-158). Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

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**CHAPTERS FOR PROPOSED BOOK**

Preface
Catalyzing a New Science of Spiritual Transformation

Introduction
Spiritual Transformation in the Paradigm of Moral Intuitionism

Chapter 1
Beyond Meaning: Why Meaning Is Not Enough

Chapter 2
Three Levels and Systems of Spiritual Transformation: The Basic Model

Chapter 3
Capacities of "Mature Moral Functioning" for Spiritual Transformation

Chapter 4
What "Good" is a Virtue? A Connectionist Model for Mindfulness Research

Chapter 5
A Moral Intuitionist Model of Virtuous Caring: A Model for Programmatic Research

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# ABOUT MICHAEL LEFFEL

Michael Leffel, Ph.D., is Professor of Psychology at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, California. Before assuming this position, he was a full-time psychotherapist in private practice for 10 years, where he specialized in emotion-focused, psychodynamic therapy with individuals and couples. His therapeutic education also includes training in Martin Buber's

"dialogical" existential approach. For the last twenty-one years, Dr. Leffel's writing and research has focused on generativity theory, a moral intuitionist virtue ethics of caring, the psychology of spiritual transformation, and the integration of moral psychology and practical Christian ethics. He has designed and presently teaches an applied moral psychology course entitled *Pursuing Goodness: The Science of Moral Change* that serves as the Senior capstone course for psychology majors at Pt. Loma. Additionally, he constructed and teaches a course in the psychology of religion entitled *Dante's Quest: A "Therapy of Desire" for the Psychology of Spiritual Transformation* that focuses on the integration of contemporary moral psychology and the virtue-vice tradition of Christian spirituality. Dr. Leffel has authored/co-authored a dozen articles in peer-reviewed professional journals, and most recently a new theory of spiritual transformation referred to as *moral intuitionist spiritual transformation theory*. He is a member of the Greater Good Science Center, an interdisciplinary research center at the University of California, Berkeley that disseminates the sciences of human flourishing and well-being to educators, parents, and various mental health workers. He is also a research member of the Institute for Research on Psychology and Spirituality at Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology. In addition, Dr. Leffel serves as a consultant to *The Project on the Good Physician*, a John Templeton funded initiative administered by The University of Chicago's *New Science of Virtue Project*. He serves as a peer reviewer for three scholarly journals in psychology and psychology-theology integration. Dr. Leffel is an active member of the American Psychological Association's Division of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (Division 36), and is a co-founder of the Society for the Study of Psychology and Wesleyan Theology. Dr. Leffel earned his doctorate in Personality and Social Ecology (minor in Clinical Psychology) at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana in 1986.