Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Murphy, G., & Kovach, J. K. (1972). *Historical introduction to modern psychology* (6th ed.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Rosenthal, G. (1990). *The structure and "Gestalt" of autobiographies and its methodological consequences.* Paper presented at the World Congress of Sociology, Madrid.

Rosenthal, G. (1993). Reconstruction of life stories: Principles of selection in generating stories for narrative biographical interviews. In R. Josselson & A. Lieblich (Eds.), *The narrative study of lives, 1,* (pp. 59–91). Newbury Park: Sage.

Rosenthal, G., & Bar-On, D. (1992). A biographical case study of a victimizer's daughter. *Journal of Narrative and Life History, 2,* 105–127.

Schütze, F. (1992). Pressure and guilt: The experience of a young German soldier in world war two and its biographical implications. *International Sociology, 7* (2&3), 187–208 and 347–367.

Wilson, E. A. (1997). *Neural Geographies.* London: Routledge.

CONTINUITY AMID DISCONTINUITY: BRIDGING ONE'S PAST AND PRESENT IN STORIES OF CONJUGAL BEREAVEMENT

Jack J. Bauer
Northwestern University

George A. Bonanno
*Teachers College,
Columbia University*

This article explores how people construct a sense of personal continuity before and after a major life change. An apt context for such a study is conjugal bereavement, since the death of a spouse introduces great discontinuities in one's life. We adopt a mediated-action approach (Wertsch, 1991, 1995) to address the construction of continuity within McAdams's (1985, 1993) life-story model of identity. In doing so, we propose that people can transform discontinuity into continuity by coming to understand how the personal meanings of activities before the loss can continue to be manifested in new activities after the loss. We review excerpts of narrative interviews that showcase variations of continuity and discontinuity in identity, with an emphasis on how life transitions can provide opportunities for identity development. In addition, we propose that this narrative model of continuity can help clarify central, complex issues in contemporary bereavement research.

Life stories enable people to create a sense of personal continuity amid the changing episodes in a life's course (McAdams, 1985, 1993). The death of a spouse, more than most other changes, can pose a significant threat to that sense of continuity (Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Parkes, 1993; Weiss, 1993). This threat is even more pronounced in mid-life, a time both when the death is not socially expected and when many life-defining plans, such as raising a family

or developing a career, are in progress but not yet completed (Bonanno & Keltner, 1997; Wortman & Silver, 1990). The death of a spouse in mid-life often marks a sharp discontinuity in such plans and in life generally. Consider how Maria,[1] age 50, described her experience after her husband died:

> I think first of all the most overwhelming thing that I felt was a loss of identity. Right at the time both my kids are leaving home, um, twenty-three and twenty-four. I had just gotten licensed but I wasn't with anything. I didn't have anything built up. I had no job. I had no husband. I had no income. Mm, his salary was taken away. I had nothing. I mean I felt bare, just stripped bare. I had no medical insurance. Um, and I was scared. I mean I would wake up in an absolute panic. Plus I was starting to go through menopause. So not only that but, you know, that's a loss too … And um, the identity thing, I really didn't know who I was. I really didn't. I felt this is so weird, no, I mean it's like so much you don't realize how much identity you put into being a Mrs. and especially from my age group where you leave home and then you get married. And that's what happened to me, you know, I went from my home to my marriage … But luckily I had been working and I had, um, job skills and things like that, but just to be thinking on my own, I mean, I could think on my own but like (sigh) it was, I don't know it was. It was just pretty scary, you know, I remember being really scared.

To explore the process of identity construction in the midst of great discontinuity, we asked middle-aged adults to describe how their sense of self and identity changed or stayed the same since the recent death of their spouse (see methods section). All participants had the same discontinuity in their lives—the death of a spouse—yet some participants were able to construct a story of personal continuity despite that discontinuity. The central concern of this investigation is how such a continuity can emerge in the first place: How is it possible for a sense of personal continuity to emerge amid events like a spouse's death (or other major life changes) that impose a fundamental breech in one's life? To address this issue we use a mediated-action approach (Wertsch, 1991, 1995; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995) to study the construction of a sense of continuity over time in life stories (McAdams, 1985, 1993, 1996). In short, we claim that people transform discontinuity into continuity by understanding the personal meanings of activities before the loss and how these meanings can foster a sense of unity and purpose for various activities after the loss. First we present our analytical framework. Then we provide

---

[1] Maria is one of several participants in the present study that will be described later. Her name, like all other names appearing in this article, is fabricated to protect anonymity.

excerpts of personal narratives to illustrate the qualities of continuity and discontinuity, with an emphasis on the relationship between continuity and identity development. Throughout the paper, we suggest how our narrative approach to the construction of continuity provides an alternative model for current notions of cognitive reconstruction and "grief work" during bereavement. Thus, our primary proposal in this paper is a model for understanding how people can transform discontinuity into continuity, and our secondary proposal is that this transformation process does not require the prolonged and painful processes typically associated with grief work.

MEDIATED ACTION, CONTINUITY, AND NARRATIVE IDENTITY DURING BEREAVEMENT

Mediated Action and Identity

Wertsch has championed the notion of studying actions and the tools that guide them as a means for studying the mind and identity (1991, 1995; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). This mediated-action approach represents a basic unit of analysis that bridges two opposing perspectives. On the one side are scholars who focus on the sociocultural determinants of meaning-making and identity, while placing secondary emphasis on the role of the individual (e.g., Tappan, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995). On the other side are those who view the individual as the primary source of meaning-making and identity, while pointing secondarily to the roles of others and society (e.g., Erikson, 1968; Freud, 1917; McAdams, 1993; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Theorists studying identity from each perspective have often acknowledged that the other perspective is also needed to understand fully the construction of meaning and identity, but one side or the other is typically emphasized and elaborated upon. In practice, integration of these divergent views is rarely attempted. The mediated-action approach focuses on actions and on that which mediates or shapes them (e.g., language), both of which are common to both the individual and society. Thus mediated action is suggested as a common ground for studying identity from the perspective of either the individual or society, or both (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

While studies of mediated action and identity have typically focused on the role of society (e.g., Tappan, 2000), in this article we place analytic primacy on the individual's mental processes. Thus we focus on activities and the in-

dividual's interpretations of what they mean to the individual. However, we do place a distinct emphasis on the social context in which meanings are first constructed and later reconstructed. We are primarily concerned with the individual's ability to think about activities before and after the spouse's death: first to extract what's *personally* meaningful about pre-loss activities from the *social-contextual* meanings of those activities, and then to apply those personal meanings to new contexts in one's life after the spouse's death (more on this below). In emphasizing the individual in mediated action, we feel it is important to note that the narratives we examined made very few overt references to structures on the societal level (as opposed to life stories that are primarily about the individual's relation to social structures and ideologies; e.g., Tappan, 2000). The task for the participants in our study was to talk about their sense of self before and after the death of a spouse. Indeed, an observer so inclined could interpret the influence of cultural ideologies on many of the ways in which our participants viewed their marital roles and expectations of what to do after the death of a spouse. However, our inquiry focuses on participants' overt statements concerning the personally held meanings of actions.

An essential process to the construction of continuity involves two steps by which activities take on meanings to the individual: the interpersonal and the intrapersonal (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). Vygotsky describes these two steps (in addition to a primary, sensorimotor step) as essential to the acquisition of speech in childhood, though this meaning-making process continues throughout the life span. Activities first gain representational meanings in an interpersonal form; the activity holds particular meanings to the individual only in the social context in which the activity was first or is typically encountered. By the meanings of an activity, we mean all that the activity represents to the individual, e.g., what the activity is for, how to do the activity, what the activity says about the self and others. Thus it might be helpful to think about activities as activity contexts or as constellations of meanings concerning the activity. At the interpersonal level of understanding, the meaning of the activity or activity context has not been fully *internalized* (Wertsch, 1985). Each facet or component of the activity context—individual persons, particular skills, etc.—gains its meaning only in relation to other facets of the original, interpersonal context. As such, when a person sees somebody from that activity context in another activity context (e.g., when Bill sees a coworker by chance at the movies), the person might not recognize the coworker or recall even basic information about the coworker's individuality (e.g., the coworker's name). From Bill's perspective, the coworker was part of the work context; the coworker only had meaning for Bill in association with the activity context of work. Yet such chance encounters may serve as developmental opportunities. Bill may now reflect on the coworker's individuality, which may even lead to further examination of other component meanings in the work context. Such reflection helps differentiate the context's components; the component meanings can then become intrapersonal. In other words, the component meanings of the activity (e.g., another person in the context) come to have meaning not only in the original activity context but also in relation to other activity contexts in the individual's life. For example, after a conversation at the movies with his coworker, Bill might now associate the coworker with Bill's activity contexts of leisure-time friends. In this way, meanings that first arise in a unique (interpersonal) context may be differentiated and integrated with other contexts of meaning in the individual's life, thereby taking on internalized or intrapersonal meanings. What once had meaning in a single context now can be applied to a variety of other contexts in the individual's life. We propose that this internalization process—examined here via mediated action—is the means by which bereaved individuals transform the discontinuities of their spouses' death into a sense of continuity between past and present.[2]

Continuity and Narrative Identity

Before describing the internalization process during bereavement specifically, we now turn to the concept of continuity and its role in narrative identity. Continuities in narrative identity refer simply to similarities in representations of the self over time, while discontinuities refer to differences over time (Erikson, 1968; McAdams, 1993). The sense of personal continuity is

---

[2] The example of Bill illustrates the epistemological and developmental significance of dialogical processes in the construction of meaning and continuity—even as the meaning becomes internalized (Hermans, Kempen, & van Loon, 1992; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2000; Wortham, 2000). However, in the present study, we can only point to this dialogical process in the theory of identity and continuity construction, since our data came from interviews in which the interviewer was instructed to have only minimal interactions with the interviewee. This format produced an essentially monologue-type personal narrative, which precluded analyses from the standpoint of dialogue or interactional positioning.

a key facet of narrative identity. Narrative identity, or life stories, can create the sense that one's life has meaning by portraying one's life as having *unity* and *purpose* (McAdams, 1990, 1993, 1996). Unity in identity has two main components (Bauer, 1999; Erikson, 1959): Unity as personal continuity over time, and unity as solidarity with other people. Purpose in identity has to do with goals and endpoints; people feel a sense of purpose when they perceive their activities to be directed toward a desired future outcome (Baumeister & Newman, 1994). These three facets of identity (personal continuity, interpersonal relationships, and purpose) overlap, such that we can talk about continuity in relationships over time and continuity in purpose over time. In this study we examine how personal narratives during bereavement convey (1) continuity of purpose before and after the spouse's death and (2) continuity in the spousal relationship before and after the spouse's death.

Continuity in purpose. "Identity is about realizing and transforming one's purposes" (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, p. 91). We will attempt to show how people transform past purposes into useful purposes in their post-loss lives. Newly bereaved spouses often claim that they "don't know what to do," reflecting the loss not only of the spouse but of one's own goals and sense of purpose (Parkes & Weiss, 1983). How to raise children in the spouse's absence, how to provide for the self or family financially, what changes to make in one's daily routine, what is important to oneself, and how to put one's own interests into action now that the spouse is gone are just a handful of the questions typically raised during conjugal bereavement that have a broad impact on one's sense of purpose in life.

Continuity in relationship. Bereaved spouses also make many changes in relating to others. First among these is the relationship with the spouse, which continues to persist in many ways despite the death, e.g., via internal conversations with the deceased and a sense that the spouse is present in various activities and decision-making processes (Parkes, 1993). The bereaved spouse also typically reconsiders his or her relationships with a variety of others: how to interact with one's children, how to interact with an assortment of peers, with whom one wants to continue or start relationships, and even one's relationship to society in general. These considerations alter the social landscape of the individual, an alteration that is inextricably tied to changes in how one thinks, feels, and acts as an individual (and thus tied to changes in identity).

Continuity during Bereavement via the Internalization of Mediated Action

The central concern of this paper is how the individual might turn the obvious discontinuities in a sense of purpose and in the marital relationship into continuities before and after the death. Our proposal is that people accomplish this by (1) internalizing the meanings of goals and the relationship that the individual shared with the spouse before the death and (2) constructing new contexts in which those internalized meanings can be acted upon after the spouse's death. By "internalizing the meanings of goals and the relationship," we mean that the individual must first come to understand something about the goal or relationship as meaningful not only in the social context of acting with the spouse but also in contexts that can be lived out in the present (requiring the transformation of an interpersonal meaning into an intrapersonal one). For example, a person might have shared with her spouse the goal of visiting the ocean once a year. Before the death, the person might have viewed going to the ocean as meaningful only as something done with the spouse. The spouse's death makes going to the ocean with the spouse impossible—a discontinuity. The only way to turn that discontinuity into a continuity, we argue, is by internalizing the meaning of going to the ocean, i.e., by coming to view the goal of going to the ocean as meaningful in another social context, e.g., sharing the experience with other people or enjoying the ocean alone.[3] In other words, conditions and appearances may change, but something meaningful about past contexts can continue into different contexts in the present.

Such is the case with continuity in identity generally. People's lives change considerably from childhood to adulthood, yet continuities are constructed. What links the past and present, notably in cases of the vast differences in life's apparent conditions, are the underlying values or meanings of those apparent conditions (Nozick, 1981). People become aware of these underlying values via internalization; before that time, the values and meanings of activities and individuals are properties primarily of the social context of those activities (i.e., the meanings are interpersonal). When an individual realizes that he or she can act on the same values in very different contexts and times

---

[3] There are other options for maintaining continuity in life, of course. One could simply put "going to the ocean" out of one's mind and focus on other areas of life that have maintained continuity. However, this would not be an exercise in transforming discontinuity into continuity but rather accepting or ignoring a discontinuity.

of life (i.e., when the meanings become intrapersonal), the person establishes a sense of continuity over time. Until this point, the person views certain past contexts as not having a connection to life presently—a discontinuity. The transformation of discontinuity into continuity represents a qualitatively new level of understanding one's identity. Thus the transformation of discontinuity into continuity represents a form of *identity development*. This kind of development, as will be explained more fully later, involves an increase in the capacity or the ability to understand one's life over time. Several participants who conveyed a sense of personal continuity in their narratives also emphasized an increase in the ability to understand the enduring and self-defining values of their lives, values that the participants viewed as underlying the activity contexts both before and after the loss. Other participants were not so lucky.

Previous Research on Continuity, Identity, and Bereavement

The successful navigation of bereavement largely depends on the individual's ability to construct continuity as both a continued sense of purpose and a continued relationship after the loss (Baumeister, 1991; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Erikson, 1959; McAdams, 1993; Parkes & Weiss, 1983). Continuity of identity in the bereavement literature focuses mostly on relationships. The topic is perhaps most elaborated in the "continued bonds" hypothesis, which is the notion that adaptation to bereavement often involves the continuation and reorganization of one's perceived relationship with the spouse after the death (Bowlby, 1980; Klass, Silverman, & Nickman, 1996). This hypothesis has often been linked, largely within Bowlby's (1980) attachment theory, to the "grief work" hypothesis, which is the notion that successful adaptation to bereavement involves a painful and prolonged process of reviewing, expressing, talking about, and otherwise focusing on the thoughts and emotions associated with the loss. However, these two hypotheses need not be so closely linked (Bonanno & Kaltman, 1999), especially considering the empirical findings relating to grief work.

Recent reviews of the available empirical evidence suggest that the grief work process is neither prevalent nor necessary for adjustment (Bonanno & Kaltman, 1999; Wortman & Silver, 1989, 1990). It is now well established, for instance, that large numbers of conjugally bereaved individuals show little or no overt signs of cognitive or emotional turmoil at any point after the spouse's death (Bonanno & Kaltman, 2001; Wortman & Silver, 2001). In other words, many bereaved individuals do not appear to engage in elaborate processing of the loss but still manage to continue functioning at a relatively normal level, even when accessed many years after the loss (Bonanno & Field, 2001). Further, there is some evidence to suggest that prolonged, painful "grief work" may not be helpful even for those who do experience pronounced grief. Research suggests that such work during bereavement actually correlates with poorer adjustment: "In each case, contrary to expectation, those who showed early evidence of working through the loss were those who ultimately had the most difficulty adjusting to it" (Wortman & Silver, 1990, p. 237). More recent research supports this observation: People who tended more to ruminate about the meaning of the loss also had higher levels of depression over time than did those who ruminated less extensively (Nolen-Hoeksema, McBride, & Larson, 1997). Also, bereaved individuals who outwardly expressed the pain of the loss when interviewed in the early months of bereavement fared worse over time (Bonanno & Keltner, 1997), whereas those who "repressed" their affective arousal about the deceased (i.e., those who responded with heightened cardiovascular activity to the topic of the deceased but reported low levels of negative affect) exhibited lower levels of grief over a two-year course than did those exhibiting other combinations of verbal-autonomic arousal (Bonanno, Keltner, Holen, & Horowitz, 1995). Further, these individuals showed little to no evidence of experiencing what has been called "delayed grief," i.e., low levels of grief early in bereavement and high levels later (Bonanno & Field, 2001).

The notion of "working through" may at first appear consonant with our claim that continuity in identity emerges by addressing one's discontinuities and transforming them. However, as we discuss in greater detail below, the continuity-transformation process does not necessarily encompass all aspects of identity and need not be a painful and prolonged process (though it may be). The transformation of discontinuity into continuity, as formulated here, has to do with extracting meanings from old activity contexts and transforming those meanings to fit new situations. While this process does require the individual to look more deeply than the mere appearance of past activities and to interpret them in terms of what they mean personally, the process does not require that the individual undergo an extensive or painful psychological mining of relationship patterns and other complex dynamics that may be associated with the loss.

The idea that the transformation of personal meaning in the wake of negative events need not be a painful, draining process is consistent with recent research involving personal narratives. For instance, it is now well established that writing about negative events tends to produce short-term distress but long-term psychological and health benefits. However, a meta-analyses of these studies showed that the intensity of the short-term distress produced by writing was unrelated to its positive consequences (Smyth, 1998). In a related vein, salubrious effects similar to those produced from writing about painful traumas were evidenced when participants wrote about the perceived benefits of a trauma (King & Miner, 2000) or when they wrote about future positive life goals with no reference to trauma (King, in press). Other studies have also highlighted the importance of positive emotional experience and self-evaluation in adapting to life stressors (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000), including bereavement (Bauer & Bonanno, 2001; Bonanno & Keltner, 1997).

As for continuity of purpose during bereavement, little research exists. There is evidence, however, that bereaved persons who made positive appraisals of their goals before and after the death had higher levels of well-being one year after the death than did those who made negative appraisals (Stein, Folkman, Trabasso, & Richards, 1997). Further, individuals who evaluated themselves as able or capable to effect a positive future—in the form of self-efficacy—had lower levels of grief across the two years after the death (Bauer & Bonanno, in press). In this article we address not so much the affective or ability-based evaluation of people's goals but the narrative processes by which people transform the meanings of goals before and after the death.

METHOD

We examined narrative interviews of the 36 people who participated in the second wave of a longitudinal study of mid-life conjugal bereavement (Bonanno, Keltner, Holen, & Horowitz, 1995). Participants were recruited in the San Francisco Bay area via newspaper advertisements, posted notices, and referrals from medical and religious organizations to take part in a longitudinal study of conjugal bereavement. Respondents were invited to participate in the study if they were between 21 and 55 years of age, had been married and living with the deceased for a minimum of three years preceding the death,

and had not experienced any serious mental or physical disorders, alcohol or other substance abuse, or binge eating during that time. A total of 76 participants were selected and were paid $10 per hour. Their ages ranged from 24 to 55 years ($M = 47.4$, $SD = 8.1$), 67% were female, 80% were European-American, 11% were African-American, and 9% were of other ethnicities. The sample on average was married to the deceased 15.8 years ($SD = 11.2$), had 15.5 years of education ($SD = 2.0$), and had a median family income of $52,000/year. Participants were interviewed in two ways at 6, 14, and 25 months post-loss. One interview allowed for clinical assessment, and another asked questions about the participants' lives over time. For this study we examined the narratives of the 36 participants who were interviewed at 14 months post-loss. (For conceptual ease, we henceforth refer to these interviews as occurring one year post-loss.) To limit the breadth and number of the interviews, we focused on a single question in the interview protocol that we felt was most germane to the topic of continuity: "Please talk about yourself, your sense of identity, the kind of person you have been or are or might become. We are especially interested in how you see yourself as changing, having changed, or remaining unchanged for the better or for the worse since your (husband/wife) died or became ill." In this article we focus on excerpts from 10 participants who most clearly expressed ideas or themes that were common to other participants' responses regarding continuity and discontinuity within a mediated-action model of identity. Limiting the presentation (mostly) to these 10 participants should aid the reader in conceptualizing the narrative trajectories of individual participants while grasping the varieties of narratives in the entire sample.

STORIES OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY DURING CONJUGAL BEREAVEMENT

Participants described their lives before and after the loss with considerable variability regarding continuity and discontinuity. Most participants seemed to agree that the death changed their lives considerably, but participants differed in terms of the degree to which the death affected their identities and in terms of the ways the changes were construed. Some focused on what was missing after the loss, some focused on what was better after the loss, and some

focused on what remained the same (for the better or worse). Their stories are presented in terms of continuity of purpose and continuity of relationship.

Continuity of Purpose

To have a sense of purpose in life is to have goals; goals give life a sense of purpose (Baumeister, 1991; Emmons, 1999). Life stories that convey a sense of purpose also describe the individual's goals and intentions for action.[4] The death of a spouse in mid-life often comes at an especially problematic time in terms of life goals. The long-term activities of raising a family and developing a career are two among many sources of purpose in a marital relationship. The plans of both family and work typically involve both spouses in some significant capacity, such that the death of one spouse often changes these plans radically for the other spouse. The goals and roles that provided a sense of purpose in the past are not easily relinquished, as the desire is strong both to actualize major life goals and to continue valued roles (Gaines, 1997; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Parkes, 1972, 1993; Weiss, 1993). The loss of goals and roles in life amounts to a sense of *not knowing what to do*. Maria, the woman who earlier described the burden of bereavement on her sense of identity, depicts the sense of confusion associated with not knowing what to do a year into bereavement:

> I don't really know what I want still. Um, it's so weird because (inhale) we were just at this point in our lives where we were thinking about retirement and what are we going to do and are we going to raise (dogs) and are we going to move (out of state). You know, where are we going to go, you know. And that's where I am now. I could go anyplace that I want to go. I could do anything I want to do virtually, which is a wonderful feeling and it's very freeing and it's sort of neat. But I don't know what I want to do. I mean, I'm like eighteen or nineteen, like, "What'll I do now?" I mean, I do want to stay around here. Do I want to go where my relatives are? I don't have too many relatives around here. Do I even want to be near relatives or you know, so I'm like I don't really know. And like with (her relative), I mean I tell him I'm confused and I am. I don't know. I don't know when I'll know. I do know I should sell the house. It's too much and I can't handle

---

[4] For consistency's sake, we will use the term "goals" to connote the more *active* sense of striving toward something valuable and the term "purpose" in conjunction with the *felt* sense of being directed toward a valued endpoint. The two terms are, however, conceptually very similar.

that. But, oh, people ask me, "Well, what are you going to do?" and I say, "I don't know." (sigh) I don't know.

Before her husband's death, Maria identified herself predominantly in terms of her roles as wife and mother. Then, within a few years, her husband's death and children's moving out of the house radically changed the meanings of wife and mother in her life. The goal of being a good wife from that point on had no prescribed course of action, while the goal of being a good mother would take on very different and diminished daily activities. As she said earlier, she experienced a profound loss of identity—both as a loss of purpose and a loss of relationships. At one year after the death, she was searching for valued goals and wondering which relationships to pursue. As for the topic of searching, a parallel can be drawn between Maria's self-description and the "Guardian" classification of identity in Josselson's (1996) framework (based on the identity dimensions of Marcia, 1980). Guardians are characterized as people who have made clear commitments but who have not engaged in much self-exploration or searching. (In contrast, Searchers are those who have not made clear commitments but engage in considerable self-exploration, Pathmakers have made commitments after exploring many options, and Drifters have made few commitments while not exploring many options.) While Josselson found that Guardians tend to adapt relatively well to life changes, Maria appeared to be having more difficulty than most participants adjusting to the loss at one year post-loss, perhaps due both to the many other, coincidental losses occurring at the time of her husband's death and to the apparently minimal experience she had in searching and exploring her own values. Regarding continuity, Maria exhibited little sense of it in terms of goals, focusing instead on the prominent role of discontinuity of purpose in her life.

A bereaved spouse is often forced to take on many of the roles that the deceased spouse had performed, from caring for children to earning a desired income to providing certain perspectives and interpretations on various situations (the latter of which will be discussed with continuities in relationships; Weiss, 1993). Another participant, Sam, talked about his struggles with the changing roles in his life:

> For thirty-four years it's been us. All our plans revolved around us. Now that "us" is gone. It's just me. A whole new scenario. Different plans. Uh, she had her duties, I had my duties. She did the cleaning and the laundry and the cooking. I did the vehicles and the painting and construction and repairs and that kind of stuff. Yard

work, all mine. Now I have yard work, the vehicles, and the repairs and upkeep and then I have to cook and clean and wash. I sort of resent that you know. It's just a double duty and you can't do either one of them well.

Changes in roles are closely tied to changes in goals. Roles and goals are sets of meanings that guide actions. Both social roles and goals provide a course of action in daily life and give those actions meaning (Baumeister, 1991). From their daily activities people construct continuities and other forms of meaning in their life stories (McAdams, 1993; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). Whereas Maria did not know her new roles and felt lost, Sam was aware of his new roles and felt overwhelmed. Sam liked his old roles and disliked his new roles. Activities in the past and present for Sam were clearly outlined and immutable; he gave no indication of how he might take anything of value from his past roles into his new roles. The result was a story lacking in continuity of purpose. However, despite these struggles, Sam indicated that many of the external conditions (e.g., financial situation, social network) in his life were comfortable. For Renee, another participant, the role adjustments were compounded by financial and social hardship:

> Well, I have changed since he died . . . I was very much identified as (his) wife. You know, it was me and (my husband) very much, and, um, that was overwhelming. That's why I was so much at a loss when he died . . . The worst things that I feared have happened to me . . . well, (breath) god, um, I can't even say I'm less sympathetic because I am sympathetic . . . but you know there's, uh, like a certain jadedness about some of it and then my experience and the aftermath of when he died you know, I ended up homeless, which you know is all of that, you know, standing in the food line to eat with these people and staying out at night and all of that. And there's just, you know, I don't know how to describe that but it just, uh, there's certain assumptions I guess you make, I know that (my husband) made too, um, we both made, that you work hard—you know he was a veteran and all that—and you know and you get certain benefits from it which I never got, you know. That you might just be able to buy yourself a little piece of property or at least for god's sake keep your one-room apartment in the ghetto you know but just hang on to what you got you know, don't take this . . . You just assume that, you know, these kind of things can't happen. But they do, you know, and yes you can end up you know with absolutely no place to go . . . I'm not really quite sure where to go with my life you know. Here I am in some place I completely don't expect to be. It's just a real absence from my life. He was such a part of my life and he's just not there.

Renee found herself in entirely unexpected life conditions, leaving her at a loss for what to do or assume. She eventually moved in with a relative who

helped her get on her own feet, but her story is a litany of the unexpected, peppered with small glimmers of hope for better days. Renee's story stood apart from most others. She scarcely hinted at the possibility of finding meaningful continuities in life in terms of goals; her explicit goals had more to do with maintaining and securing shelter and food than with creating broader meanings in life. Most others, who for the most part enjoyed more comfortable living conditions, made at least some explicit reference to reconstructing meaning in life. Renee's story showed how the mere search for meaning is a relative luxury, much as Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs would indicate. However, Renee's basic theme also echoed those of most other participants: What do I do now?

Sam, who earlier described his changes in household roles, also described changes in his goals:

> We had ambitions and goals that were couple-orientated. We were going to do things. I was getting ready to retire. She was going to sell the business. We were going to take the money. We're going to do this and that, okay . . . We were going to start a second life after retirement, because she was fifty-four and I was fifty-five when she died . . . Those specific goals don't interest me anymore. Uh, I'm a little confused for the first time in my life. I don't really know what my goals are, where I want to do from here. And that surprises me because I've never been without goals for my entire life, okay. Always knew where I was going and what I was going to do, who I was going to do it with. And that's changing. And right now I'm not absolutely sure where I'm going so I'm just sitting back waiting for a, uh, redefinition of my goals. I've got vague goals but nothing's locked in stone right now . . . It's just like I'm bouncing around, you know. I'm not really attracted to one particular thing. It's not like, "Yeah, that's what I want." Uh, I'm going, "I could do this, I could do that. That would be fun for a while." But I haven't latched on to anything that really excited me, turned me on, like, "This is what I want to do."

Sam's account articulates a common theme of those participants lacking a sense of purpose: Without a desired future outcome in mind, he felt like he was "bouncing around," without direction or a plan. However, Sam was somewhat of an anomaly. His clinical assessments revealed that he was adapting well a year after the loss. In almost all the cases presented here, there is a clear relationship between the individual's ability to create continuities of purpose and relationships and the individual's successful adjustment to the loss. In this case, Sam didn't like his new roles and had put aside past goals without forming new ones, yet according to trained clinicians he was

adjusting well. If continuity has something to do with adjustment, perhaps Sam's perceived continuity of personal characteristics and social support was serving him well. He mentioned this continuity—of being "the same guy"—throughout his description of how his life had changed since the death. Sam described how his strong self-image was something that was given to him just as it was to others in his family lineage, from his ancestors to his son. He appeared thankful to have such a capacity, pointing out its adaptive qualities. Yet his only continuities dealt with qualities of his life that were not defined in marital contexts; no transformation was necessary, as his wife's death did not cause a discontinuity. However, Sam's descriptions of contexts defined in terms of his wife translated only into stories of discontinuity.

In each of the cases presented so far (and in similar cases), the person conveyed little sense that he or she had differentiated what was important about a goal from the social context of the goal. In each case the person described goals that were created with the spouse in discontinuous terms: "We had goals, now I don't." In some cases participants talked about taking on new, different goals as a kind of replacement. But they gave little indication that what was meaningful to them personally about their past goals—i.e., the underlying values or intrapersonal meanings of the goal-based activities—was in any way distinct from the goal itself. In other words, the goals were not internalized. As a result, continuity was hard to come by. In contrast, other participants gave evidence of being able to identify what they themselves liked about a particular goal or role—apart from the original context of the activity—and then of being able to transform that valued quality into another (or modified) goal or role after the loss. Julia, for instance, described how her activities changed after her husband's death yet exhibited enduring values:

> I think the major change I've noticed in myself over the past year is, um, more accepting of just things that happen in life and not getting upset and not forcing things—uh, realizing that I have no control over my life. I may have influence. Um, there are also different things that are important to me now than there were then. I mean, friends were important then but they're important now for different reasons, uh, on a deeper level. I'm more selective about those people I spend time with. I'd rather be alone than be with people I really don't enjoy or, uh, who don't understand me or who I have an affinity for. I'm really amazed at the strength that I've exhibited over the past year and the just sort of tenacity to get on with life. I also feel strangely in a certain sense at peace with myself. ... I think that the peace comes from just sort of understanding who I am more now.

Here Julia made a prototypical value-transformation statement when talking about how her pre-existing values of friends have taken on a new and more significant meanings. Later Julia said that "even in my business I'm much less willing to put up with things," reflecting a theme in her story of a newfound alignment of actions with personal values. In their leisure time, she and her husband spent a lot of time on the golf course, a pastime she had previously attributed solely to her husband's pleasure. After his death, she told a friend she was going to sell her golf clubs. Then, Julia said:

> At one point (my friend) said, "We're going to go play golf," and she said, "If you run off the golf course screaming that's fine and if you cry that's fine and if you play, whatever." And we went and played golf and I had a great time. I didn't cry, you know, I just felt very comfortable. Um, I laughed a lot thinking that if (my husband) had only seen me doing this, uh, he would be very amused and very proud and, uh, almost gloating at the fact that I really do like it. And I continue to play golf now and have a wonderful time playing and am glad that, um, I learned to play with him and remember some of the pointers he would give me when I'm out playing. Uh, but it made me realize that, um, even though I primarily played with him before, it's something that I enjoy that I can do on my own that I'm capable of, that I can do things that we did together, and I can do them well and enjoy them and have a good time, and kind of keep his spirit alive with that experience.

Here Julia distinguished her own enjoyment and capacity to play golf from the act of playing golf itself (and perhaps more importantly, from playing golf with her husband). Julia's continuity of purpose came by altering the purpose for which she did the (ostensibly) same activity. She seemed to have successfully transformed a past goal (playing golf with her husband) into a personally owned goal, by virtue of the fact that she discovered that she herself valued the game. In addition to this continuity, she found a way to continue the relationship (which relates to the next section of this article): Through her enjoyment of the game, her husband continued to exist—not his physical person, but his "spirit," or what he valued about the game. In other words, Julia found satisfaction by constructing continuity between past and present values.

Another participant, Kevin, made a clear distinction between his goals and values in the past and present:

> I have a different perspective on people nowadays, on life itself. Um, the objectives that I had before, when we just got married, are totally different. I tend to be more idealistic in terms of, uh, benefiting disadvantaged groups with my talents and experience. I've sort of refocused my talents in a more constructive way and a

more socially beneficial way. Uh, rather than accumulating wealth I've sort of been liquidating my wealth and using it toward those goals ... My impression of life is to be lived to its fullest, um, in the sense of, I mean, a very responsible, socially responsible way. Um, material things don't really mean much to me anymore. Um, I tend to be more interested in the metaphysics more, um, more religiously in tune. A lot of my interests now have been elevated to more religious aspects of life.

Kevin stated his change decisively: Earlier he was interested in material goods, recently he has been interested in religious values and helping other people. His statement, "I've sort of refocused my talents," captures the key dimension of the notion of continuity—the use of previously existing, valued capacities in new contexts of action. "Refocusing" here refers to the process of internalizing past goals and using the intrapersonal meanings of those goals to form new goals after his spouse's death. Kevin then extended the meaningfulness of this continuity by tying his actions to two powerful sources of meaning: generativity and religious beliefs. The activities that give his life meaning more recently involved contributing to the welfare of others and to future generations, indicating a sense of purpose rooted in generativity (Erikson, 1950, 1968; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1998). Further, goals that carry religious or spiritual significance provide personal meaning over and beyond other types of goals, particularly during bereavement (Emmons, 1999). By applying long-held talents to new activities that are linked to generative and religious values, Kevin constructed a particularly strong form of continuity.

People one year into bereavement run the gamut of levels of adjustment (Parkes & Weiss, 1983). With this in mind and to close this section on the continuity of purpose, Rhonda's excerpt depicts a sense of identity with basic continuities that are marked with a sense of remaining in transition:

I don't know yet what I'm becoming or what I am. I have less of a sense of identity than I did before. I wouldn't go so far as to say as it does with some of the questionnaires, "Have you lost your sense of identity?" I mean I still feel like me, whoever that is. And of course my other roles are all still there but I'm more than just my role. I mean I'm not just a mother and a wife and I'm not the wife anymore—I'm still the mother—but the rest of what I am feels all very ill defined right now. ... I have less sense of self. Not that myself is less just that it's—I don't quite know what it is anymore. I use to have things that I really wanted to do still and wanted to maybe be still. Now that seems unimportant and so I don't really know. And whereas before I might have characterized myself as being a fairly strong together person who functions as somebody who holds things together for a lot of other people too. That's different now and I'm not so sure that I want to stay in that role and be that so much anymore. But I don't quite know what to

be instead. ... I still want to do those things but I also feel the need to do some other things. There were some other things for instance I was really interested in. I'm interested in ancient history and um particularly in pre-Columbian American history and it's something that I wanted to really study, really get into, and I did do some of that. And I still want to but not as much as I did and it's really weird because now you might say I'm really free to do that, I mean you know I have no kids at home and I can come and go pretty much as I please kind of thing. I mean I could really get into it now. But suddenly I don't want to as much as I did. It's very strange. ... So I feel sort of in limbo still. And I realize that I am changing but it's difficult for me to differentiate whether it is my role in life that's changing versus my person that's changing. I think it's both but it's difficult for me to distinguish them and figure it out. I guess I'm basically the same person. I have this overall sense of being me the way I've always been me, whatever that is.

Here Rhonda expressed both a basic continuity and a sense for looking into her own interests and values to determine her new set of goals and roles. With her history of self-exploration and long-term commitments, she seemed to fit into Josselson's (1996) Pathmaker category (high in exploration, high in commitment). Like many of the Pathmakers, Rhonda seemed to be adjusting well to her life change as evidenced by longitudinal, clinical assessments, despite the anxieties she may have felt in choosing a course of action. While Rhonda had not yet committed to a specific goal or role, she appeared to be searching in a way that would eventually lead to such a commitment: She was trying to distinguish which among the values she lived out in the past could be transformed into the present. We will return to Rhonda's story in the next section, in which she described how she did transform certain meanings from the past relationship into meanings that fit present circumstances.

We end this section with Rhonda, since her words express a sort of middle ground with respect to the continuity of purpose. Most participants did not claim to experience a complete disintegration of identity but did portray, at least at some point, a sense that they did not know exactly how to formulate new goals and roles in their daily lives. The death of a spouse renders obsolete many goals and roles. A valid sense of continuity of purpose cannot be established by simply trying to do the same things that one did in the past. A valid sense of continuity of purpose can be established by internalizing certain valued qualities of one's past goals and applying them to the present circumstances of one's life. What continues, then, is not the apparent form of the activity or goal, but the underlying values or intrapersonal meanings of the goal.

Continuity of Relationship

A person's identity incorporates other people. From a developmental and epistemological standpoint, knowledge of self emerges in terms of others, both interpersonally and culturally (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Erikson, 1950; McAdams, 1993; Torren, 1995). From a narrative standpoint, people invariably talk about others in some capacity when talking about what is most important in their lives. Erikson (1959) designated relationships to people and solidarity with one's culture at a particular time in social history as essential components of identity. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of self depicted family and friends close to the core of "who one is." James (1890) included individual people and interpersonal relationships as key constituents of the material self and social self, respectively. Thus the loss of these constituents, James said, is a loss of one's very self, or at least a part of it. Validating James's observation, conjugally bereaved people continually refer to the loss of the spouse as a loss of the self, or at least a significant part of it (Parkes & Weiss, 1983). People often invest enormous effort and dedication in their spousal relationships. In turn, these relationships to some degree mold how one thinks, feels, and acts—thereby shaping one's own identity. As Rhonda said about her life as a wife, "To a certain extent I changed in order to fit into the marriage." Many of these changes become more or less permanent characteristics of the self, i.e., "what one is." When a spouse dies, the bereaved spouse loses not only the physical person, but also the *source* of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in terms of which one had shaped one's own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The bereaved person must not only adjust to new goals and roles, but also to new ways of relating to the world—of both feeling part of the world and interacting with others (cognitively, emotionally, behaviorally) as well. Much of this adjustment depends on the ability to create a sense of continuity between one's relationship with the spouse before the death and a new form of that relationship in the present (Gaines, 1997; Parkes, 1972; Parkes & Weiss, 1983).

These distinctions are perhaps most clearly illustrated by the continuing bond hypothesis, mentioned earlier. Traditional bereavement theory has emphasized the importance of severing the attachment bond with the deceased and moving on to new relationships (Freud, 1917; Raphael, 1983; Rando, 1993). More recently, however, it has become apparent that most healthy bereaved individuals manage to maintain a sense of continued relationship

(Klass, Silverman, & Nickman, 1996) and that this process tends to be a source of comfort rather than pain. As Bowlby has noted, "for many widows and widowers it is precisely because they are willing for their feelings of attachment to the dead spouse to persist that their sense of identity is preserved and they become able to reorganize their lives along lines they find meaningful" (p. 98). In a similar manner, Shuchter and Zisook (1993) have argued that bereaved individuals experience "a transformation from what had been a relationship operating on several levels of actual, symbolic, internalized, and imagined relatedness to one in which the actual ('living and breathing') relationship has been lost, but the other forms remain or may even develop in more elaborate forms" (p. 34). As each of these statements make clear, the continued attachment allows for some measure of continuity even in the face of loss, and provides a stable foundation that permits further reorganization and further continuity pertaining to other aspects of identity.

This continuity can be achieved in numerous ways, but not all ways are equally adaptive (Bonanno & Field, 2001). Many participants described how they still view the spouse as existing in some form, e.g., "I was so involved with him, you know, and I mean he was dead to (other people) but he certainly wasn't dead to me. Probably in many ways he still isn't. He's still very very much a part of my life." While those who adjust well to bereavement often claim that the deceased spouse continues to play a significant role in their lives (Bowlby, 1980), they also have transformed certain qualities of the spouse or of the relationship itself to current conditions. Others, however, seem to cling to aspects of the relationship that could not possibly persist, such as physical contact and emotional support (Field & Bonanno & Field, 2001).

As clinicians have noted, some bereaved spouses have difficulty even acknowledging and accepting the finality of the loss (Bowlby, 1980; Gaines, 1997; Parkes & Weiss, 1983). One participant, Barbara, describes her struggle to accept her husband's death:

> Now I can say that (my husband) died. I've not ever said that before. I would always say that there'd been an accident or that he'd been killed. But never that he died. And now I can say that ... I don't know if that means that I accept it. I don't know what the accepting means. (sniff) I don't know if that means that I don't miss him in bed. That I don't sleep on the side I used to. (sniff) I still haven't done all the paperwork. But you know what? I really don't care. (sniff) I just don't care about the paperwork. I don't think that doing the paperwork will make it more

final. I don't think the paperwork will make it more real. It just seems it's one more task that has to be done. So I put it aside with all the other one more tasks that have to be done.

The resistance to accepting a loss may be one way of maintaining continuity to a desired aspect of the past (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Longing for the support of the deceased spouse was a common wish, but some focused on the lost support more than others, indicating a wish for "the way things were." One participant, Bill, portrayed an idyllic setting, at least for himself, prior to his wife's death:

> I think I've changed. The kids tell me that I've changed. I'm probably a little more bitter. . . . Before, uh I don't know how to say this, life was kind of—not a game, certainly not a game—but life was real enjoyable. I mean I had the best of both worlds. I had a real loving wife and I had an understanding wife—I had someone who truly loved me. I mean she absolutely totally loved me and I knew that, you know. And there was times that I would probably take advantage of that. Uh we'd have a barbecue at her brother's place and she's really looking forward to seeing her brothers and sisters and I'd say, "Well geez, I told these guys I'd play with them Satur—why don't we do this. Why don't I get up early and go play golf and you and the kids just drive on over and then I'll just meet you there. I'll come after the golf." "Oh that'll be fine. That'll be wonderful. Yeah, if you want to do that." She's just all for it. And then I'd think you know I'd feel kind of guilty, like you know I could have told the guys, "Hey I'm not playing golf today." So my—I had the best of both worlds. And now of course . . . we had a two-income family and now it's a one-income. So my—a lot of things have changed. A lot of things are different. My attitude is changed . . . my fuse is shorter.

Throughout the interview, Bill was pining for his wife, talking about how wonderful she was, how everything has changed, and that he is now bitter and more selfish. While he repeatedly acknowledged considerable change in his life, he offered little evidence of accepting those changes. In fact, his reaction to the changes was consistently negative. He described his wife as selfless and extremely considerate—a stabilizing force for him in a world that was becoming increasingly more selfish and inconsiderate. Without her around to elicit his patience, he claimed, he has grown more curt. He gave no indication that he has tried to adopt her patient capabilities into his own life; he merely claimed that whatever patience he might have had in her presence simply disappeared with her death.

Bill's story is one of discontinuity. It exemplifies the flipside of the argument that continuity in conjugal bereavement demands the ability to transform particular meanings of the past relationship into new meanings for one's life in the present. Bill gave no evidence that any valued quality from the past relationship continued in the present. For him, the valued qualities of the relationship (and of his wife) vanished with her physical presence.

Erikson (1959) claimed that the affective sense of continuity was essential to identity. Memories of the deceased play an important role in the recognition of a felt sense of continuity or discontinuity. The following two excerpts—one from Renee, who earlier described her struggles with homelessness in addition to bereavement, and one from Julia, who learned to enjoy golf on her own—serve as contrasting examples of dealing with spousal memories. From Renee's interview:

> I think about sometimes they built the uh new (government building) downtown you know, and he was working on that. When it first they laid the groundwork for it he was excited about that because you know you get a job on that you know you're working for a while in construction. . . . I remember going down there sometimes, I would take his lunch to him on the job site . . . I think about that. . . . (after he died) I was walking back downtown and I thought there was a (shelter) downtown that could serve food. I had no money. So I was walking down (the street and) I passed that building. It was deserted. Everything was deserted, it may have been a holiday. Uh and you know I was walking around for maybe some food left out. I mean it was pathetic. You know I was walking in front of this building! You know I was thinking I used to come down here and bring my husband lunch and you know it was a real happy time. And here I am prowling around here you know I mean it was the physical discomforts of being homeless was bad but you know hell we might have been through that together you know if things went the way they were going.

Renee's hardships after her husband's death made the conditions around her memory of the building so radically different than her present conditions that there was probably little to transform into a positive force. For her, the memory remained an entity of its own, forever in the past, comparable to the future only as a whole and not in terms of any enduring quality of her husband or their relationship. Renee's inability to separate her spousal relationship from its underlying qualities left her with a predominant sense of discontinuity in the relationship. At the other end of the spectrum, Julia overtly described a shift in perspective on the memories of her husband that was so gradual and seamless that she was struck by the awareness that she had actually changed.

About six weeks ago I was talking to um a really dear friend ... he was (my husband's) business advisor and has become a real good friend of mine over the past year and became my business advisor. And he would come down about once a month and we would spend time, we would talk on the phone a lot and I hadn't talked to him for about a month so I called him and we chatted and caught up on things. And after I got off the phone I went in to get dressed—I was going out—and I had this flash in my mind that (my husband) was really a memory. Eh I mean it's extremely difficult to explain because it's a it's an awareness shift, and it was just like, I guess part of the grieving process—a certain realization that in fact he really is a memory. I guess up until that point I wasn't comfortable holding him as a memory only. ... And I continued to get dressed. I mean it's like I didn't miss a beat as I had that thought. Got dressed and kind of went out to my appointment. And it was just—certain feeling of clarity that I had not felt before when I would think of (my husband)—a certain I guess acceptance or resignation about where he fits kind of in my life and in my mind. And I mean I still periodically think about it and it seems like this I don't know like this comet that went through my brain that left a message. And when I think of him now ... the thought process and the feeling process is different than before that. ... His not being here feels mm definitely real as before it didn't feel quite as real. And I think there's a it's a certain sense of freedom about—the truth of the matter—I think I'm more in the here and now.

At this point Julia went on to tell her golf episode in which she discovered she herself enjoyed golf, and not just because her husband did—thereby transforming her husband's values into her own and forming a personally meaningful continuity. By recognizing her husband as "a memory" yet as sharing in the enjoyment of her playing golf, Julia was able to create a sense that her relationship with her husband continues, despite his physical absence, in ways that are both meaningful and valid within her everyday experience. Similarly, Kevin, who earlier described his transformation of goals from the material to the religious and "socially responsible," attributed some of that change to his relationship with his wife. While she was ill, he realized the immense difficulty with which people with severe illnesses have to contend, in terms of both the illness itself and the medical-business bureaucracies. By helping others now as he had helped her, he kept something of her spirit alive, with her serving as a kind of spark to his present actions. Further, he said that religious beliefs helped him accept her death in a way that continued her existence:

> You know I always thought of the religions as, um, a mockery. I've just felt that it was a business and, um, it just wasn't going to be a very significant part of my life. But I think the religious aspects of life have become more important to me. I guess

it really had to become more important because without that increased religious belief, I would have to concede that (my wife's) existence, that (my wife) did not exist anymore. But that's just the opposite.

In addition to continuing his wife's role in his life through his generative activities, Kevin's religious beliefs provided an ideological system that confirmed her existence. He internalized what was once a quality of his wife (helping others), such that he could now identify himself with that quality. In this way, his wife continues her existence in his everyday activities.

Finally, to close out the section on the continuity of the spousal relationship, we return to Rhonda, whose earlier excerpt portrayed an identity on the verge of transformation. In this segment, Rhonda described a specific time when she became aware of her own individuality within the relationship:

> A funny thing. The only car I've ever owned that I've had now for thirty, no twenty-five years, something like twenty-six years is ... very typical of who I was back then, right. Had this van, went everywhere with the kids in it. Went camping, lived out of it, practically speaking. Anyway that was my car, right, and I still have it and I've had it all these years. And (my husband) used to get sort of, you know, "Really you know we can afford something better." I mean this car's really old. It looks okay. It's not you know falling down or anything but he really thought that I could really have something better, but I was attached to it. It stood for a lot of things. It was in a way a symbol and besides it came in very handy ... we'd had several cars over the years, but he had (another car) with all the modern gizmos, you know ... well anyway after he died (his) car was still there and I would drive it occasionally. In the beginning I had a great deal of trouble with it. I mean I was so used to my bus. I mean I can drive it with my eyes closed. I mean I can drive into the tiniest little parking spots because you know if you've been driving a car that long it's part of you, kind of thing. But with (his) car, I had all kinds of problems. I didn't see traffic over here and so on and so forth. But I did drive it for reasons that have nothing to do with it. Anyway I suddenly find myself now sort of liking (his) car. I've gotten used to it. Now that I can drive it well and I'm no longer a danger on the road I sort of realized I like the soft seats and I like the air conditioning in the summer and I've gotten cushy about this darn thing. And I've realized I can give up the van now. I don't mean to for practical reasons, but I think that all the time I was married I needed partly to hand on to the van not just because it was practical and I liked it and because I was good with it and the visibility's good and all these practical reasons. I think I was also holding onto a symbol. And now I don't think I need the symbol anymore ... Why could I not have done that before? I think, I don't know, it's no longer necessary to remind myself of the other self. I can mesh maybe my several selves, so to speak. I don't need the symbol anymore.

In this episode, Rhonda talked about a car she kept for years because it symbolized a value or set of values she held dear. Just as the values people cherish make up "who they are," the objects associated with those values also become part of the self (James, 1890). So her van was intimately tied into her identity. Despite her husband's wishes, for the most part she drove only her van, using her husband's more modern car for pragmatic, less personally meaningful reasons. Recently, however, she discovered that she was *able* to give up the van. Our interpretation of this is that, previously, her comfortable socioeconomic circumstances in mid-life were at odds with the values she lived out in her youth and young adulthood—perhaps adventure, love, and raising her children. When she finally became comfortable driving her husband's more luxurious car, she realized that she was able to integrate the outward symbols of socioeconomic comfort with her deeply held values. She realized that the values she previously believed to be tied to the van were actually within her, and that she could continue to possess them while simultaneously enjoying the car associated with her husband. This newfound ability enabled her to establish a continuous thread through her youth, married life, and life after her husband's death. This case exemplifies the process of internalization and transformation: the separation of valued qualities from a physical object in the past and transforming those qualities as meaningful in a different context, thereby creating a meaningful continuity in life. Rhonda did this twofold. First she separated certain values associated with her van from the van itself. Then she separated her negative feelings about her husband's car from the car itself. This combined separation (and subsequent integration) simultaneously allowed her to experience cherished connections to longtime personal values as well as to her deceased husband—all through a physical object that *previously contrasted with* her own identity. Rhonda's story not only shows how continuities are formed by separating valued qualities from their physical objects and transforming them, but also highlights the flexibility of those valued qualities to adapt to new forms.

CONTINUITY AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN CONJUGAL BEREAVEMENT

Most of the people in this study addressed changes in identity, but not all gave an indication of identity development. Development is not mere change. For

example, a change in mood or in roles does not constitute development. The fact that Sam changed roles from yard work and construction to a wider range of household tasks did not necessarily mean he developed. Development involves, among other things, an increase in the *capacity* to perform a variety of tasks (Werner, 1957). Learning something new may facilitate development, but not because the *amount* known has increased. Learning something new facilitates development only in so far as it increases one's *ability to know*. Following this logic, identity development in McAdams's (1989, 1993) model would involve an increase in the capacity to construct a sense of continuity in one's life story.

Stories that described significant change but in which identity development appeared to be lacking tended to focus either on bereavement's pronounced discontinuities or on changes in emotion. For instance, Maria, who earlier talked about her difficulty in carving a new identity and forming new goals, here talked about overcoming her bereavement, but not in terms of cultivating certain desired qualities from her past:

> I used the anger that I felt at (my husband). I was so mad, so mad, that I just said, "I am going to make it." Oh, I was so angry at him. So I just think it was more to show him and show I don't know that I could just do it. Even though it was scary and everything. You feel so vulnerable. I mean I have never felt, I mean I felt like everything was raw and open like (makes strangled noise).

Here Maria cited spite as her motivation for overcoming her loss. Later she said that she was now able to see light at the end of "this long dark tunnel." However, she makes no reference to a heightened or newfound ability to understand or act upon herself or her world. Rather, the most she seemed to hope for was to "get better," to relieve the pain of the loss. In effect she *wants a discontinuity* from bad to good, rather than a transformation from bad to good—a hallmark of deficit-oriented rather than growth-oriented thinking (Maslow, 1968).

Identity development depends on and is reflected in the ability to tell a story of continuity and growth (McAdams, 1989). Such stories in this study involved not just a transformation of change into continuity but also a sense that, through the course of bereavement, the individual arrived at a better understanding of who he or she was. This heightened capacity for self-understanding is a central feature of identity development. The specific mechanisms for identity development in this model operate much as do Piaget's mechanisms of assimilation and accommodation for cognitive devel-

opment more generally. Cognitive development ensues as a person becomes better able to assimilate and accommodate information in an ever-widening array of situations. Similarly, identity development ensues as one becomes able to perceive new perspectives on one's life in the past *and* to integrate those perspectives with new perspectives on life in the present. The dual mechanisms of narrative identity development (perceiving new perspectives on one's life and integrating them), respectively, are akin to the general mechanisms for cognitive development (assimilation and accommodation; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) as well as for narrative complexity (differentiation and integration, Woike, Gershkovich, Piorkowski, & Polo, 1999). Recent research on identity during life transitions has shown that people whose personal narratives exhibit qualities like integration and accommodation score highly on Loevinger's (1976) measure of ego development (Bauer, Sakaeda, & McAdams, 2001; King, Scollon, Ramsey, & May, 2001). Like other life transitions, conjugal bereavement can serve as a developmental opportunity. The individual is forced into new situations that require new goals and new interactions with other people, all of which brings new perspectives on how to think, feel, and act in everyday life.

Several participants claimed to have a greater "awareness" of themselves and other people, which corresponds to the mechanism of assimilation in identity development, i.e., perceiving or differentiating new perspectives on one's life. One participant described this well:

> I feel like I sort of have this knowledge that I didn't have before. And I can sit back and I can really try not to be judgmental, but it's sometimes a nice place to be. I can listen to other people and I can see how foolish they are, or I perceive them to be ... And I think from me being the teacher to my children and knowing that they will grow and be as how I behave and how I lead my life. I don't know, I'm just a lot more aware.

This awareness, however, can cause as much trouble as good. A heightened sense of awareness can easily lead to heightened confusion and anxiety, since more perspectives on one's life amounts to more options on how to live one's life (Antonovsky, 1979). Several participants said they felt both a newfound freedom and a mass of confusion. As Maria said earlier (echoing others), "I could go anyplace that I want to go. I could do anything I want to do virtually ... but I don't know what I want to do ... I'm confused." Options often breed anxiety.

Yet new perspectives on how to live one's life also present an opportunity for growth (Antonovsky, 1979; Stewart et al., 1986; Wortman & Silver, 1990). To the degree that the individual can both perceive new perspectives of self (i.e., heightened awareness) and reconstruct or integrate those perspectives within present life contexts, identity develops. In contrast to Maria's new awareness but lack of integration, Julia earlier described that she recently felt at peace with herself "from just sort of understanding who I am more now." As an example of this, she cited her ability to understand what is important to her in her relationships. As a result, she claimed to be more selective in terms of the people with whom she spent time, which further resulted in more meaningful experiences. Another participant, Olivia, provided evidence of both being able to apply and not being able to apply her new perspectives on life:

> As (my husband) became ill the balance of things shifted because he became more needy in a sense of needing somebody to physically do things for him. So I became more involved on that front and I think that I became more assertive that I would have been under other circumstances. And I'm not just talking him but I'm talking greater assertive because I was more the kind of a person who would stay in the background and who would be quiet, shy, and retiring. Not that I'm saying that now I've gone a hundred percent of the circle. I haven't. But I think that I'm a stronger person now than I was and I am able to stand on my own two feet better than I had been and that I can weather emotional storms better than I did. And in the overall I think that I do have a better sense of self because I didn't have to be or I wasn't in anybody else's shadow. And when there's no other shadow, you're in a sink or swim situation and therefore you make the extra effort and stand up and do things that you might not necessarily have done. And I'm not talking big things. I'm talking small things. For example, if somebody wanted to do something and I may not have necessarily wanted to do that thing in the past but I might have gone along with the program, whereas this time I might say, "Gosh I would really enjoy getting together with you but I would much prefer to do this rather than what you suggested. Would you be open to this?" So from that standpoint I've been a little more cognizant of my desires and I've also been a little more willing to express them to other people ... So I've grown in that respect ... I think that I have been more tolerant of other people and their problems. I have become more cognizant of their problems and I've realized that what to one person may be a very small problem to another person can be a very big problem. So I think I've become just more aware of people and their needs but also more aware of me and my needs ... It's a matter of awareness. Maybe it's a case of I've tuned in. And it's a feeling that I hope I can continue to have because it contributes to a sense of well-being ... Uh, I still do not open up to people tremendously ... but quite frankly I would far

rather listen than talk. So I guess in that respect I haven't changed but I've been available to listening more to more people.

Olivia described not only a greater understanding of self but also some of the key ingredients for human development: effort, challenge, awareness of the perspectives of self and others, and well-being. The greatest strides in development tend to occur when the individual is thrust upon a situation (whether by will or circumstance) that is challenging yet just within his or her own level of abilities or skills (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Olivia makes clear that development was not easy, that the challenges were great, but that her skills were up to the task. She then realized in herself an ability to swim and not sink in such difficult situations—an apparently new realization for her and a hallmark of personal development. The vast literature on social-cognitive development rests on the notion that development emerges from everyday social interactions. By talking and otherwise communicating with others, people gain new perspectives on what to do and how to be in myriad situations. These new perspectives help the individual better understand others as well as the self. Indeed, for the social-cognitive developmentalist, knowledge of society and knowledge of self are two sides of the same developmental coin—two aspects of the single process of generating new perspectives with others and applying them in everyday life (Torren, 1995). In Olivia's case, she stated explicitly that she knew other people and herself better than she did previously, that this increased capacity resulted from her life transition, and that this type of growth has had an impact on her well-being. In terms of continuity, Olivia talked about changes in her behavior, but these changes revolved around aligning her behaviors with her desires ("in the past ... I might have gone along with the program, whereas this time I might (not) ... So from that standpoint I've been a little bit more cognizant of my desires and ... a little more willing to express them"). Her desires and values persisted, but she acted differently after the loss in a way that brought out "more" of who she was. She separated values from context, transformed them to meet her new conditions in life, and emerged with a better understanding of herself.

Finally, it is important to note that social-cognitive development (from which the present model of identity development largely emerges) is not necessarily the same thing as healthy adaptation (Stewart, Sokol, Healy, & Chester, 1986). However, identity development as conceptualized in this arti-

cle does focus on the increasing capacity to create continuities in a changing life, which are necessary for adaptation (Baumeister, 1991; Erikson, 1959, 1968; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; McAdams, 1993; Weiss, 1993). Therefore, one would expect identity development as conceptualized here to relate at least minimally to adaptation. Indeed, other measures of continuity in narratives have corresponded to positive adjustment (Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Bauer & Bonanno, 2001).

A related question involves the efforts involved in fostering continuity, identity development, and adaptation. From a traditional, pathology-based perspective, successful adjustment to bereavement typically involves a prolonged and painful process of working through the grief. However, as we noted earlier, recent reviews of the literature have highlighted the fact that a surprisingly large number of bereaved individuals exhibit little or no overt manifestations of grief (Bonanno & Kaltman, 1999, 2001; Wortman & Silver, 1989, 1990). Although these individuals may sporadically experience intense pain associated with the loss, they seem to have experienced little difficulty in establishing continuity after the loss. Consider the experience of Dan, who was rated by trained clinicians as showing no overt grief symptoms (dysphoric affect, difficulty concentrating, etc.):

> Basically I'm uh the only thing the only thing that's missing er that's changed is she's not there. I don't think I'm any different for it. um other than you know now I know what loss means. and I know what what a devastating event is. uh you know. and I and I there are moments when I'm for myself I'm terribly lonely. um but I'm still doing the same thing doing the same job uh making the same money living in the same house um all that all the you drive in the same cars um doing the same outside activities running with the same uh friends and people. no—nothing has changed in that regard uh the outside stuff. ... I mean there's still that that loneliness at times but those moments get further and further apart. I don't feel like jumping into a relationship with another lady at the moment. uh I have some excellent opportunities, but that um that that's not a big priority. yeah I don't s—you know I don't I don't see myself as anything special. I have I have confidence in the things that I do but I had confidence in the things that I did prior to her death you know ... uh I'm still you know I'm still continuing the business that we started that she basically started and I supported and now it's you know I'm still continuing on with it. um—I don't know. I uh um I don't think anything that that just the fact that she's not there is the biggest change.

What is particularly striking in this example is that Dan appears to have had a warm and affectionate relationship with his wife, but also to have constructed a strong sense of continuity without much pain. Although he

genuinely appears to miss his wife, his narrative overwhelmingly empha-
sizes the continuities in his life. Indeed, Dan, like several other participants,
describes his continuity as forming almost passively, without deliberate effort,
as if it just happened naturally over the course of time or as a by-product of
circumstances (e.g., "it made me realize"). Dan readily constructed continuity
across many contexts in his life, most notably in contexts involving his wife.
In other words, Dan was able to continue the bonds with his wife (as well
as to continue the goals he had set with his wife) without any indication of
a prolonged and painful process of working through the loss. It is tempting
to speculate how Dan managed to adjust so smoothly. One explanation is
that he had relatively fully internalized the meanings of his relationship with
his wife *prior* to the death, such that the transformation of those meanings
into post-loss contexts involved little difficulty. Further, unlike Sam, Dan's
continuities were not exclusively of the simple, "I'm-the-same-guy" variety;
Dan's continuities included a continuation of the business that originally gave
shared meaning with his wife but now gives meaning to and a new realiza-
tion of himself after her death. Dan later described his wife as his "spiritual
teacher" who taught him elements of a spirituality that he can now live out
"on his own." As such, Dan tells a story of continuity with hints of iden-
tity development that, unlike Olivia's story, gives no indication of a difficult
struggle.

CONCLUSION

The death of a spouse threatens many important goals and relationships,
thereby imposing great discontinuities in the individual's primary sources of
purpose and unity in life. Adaptation demands that these individuals find a
sense of continuity in their lives before and after the loss while also taking
into account the discontinuities of the loss (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Thus,
we have contended in this article that bereaved individuals typically need
to construct a story in which some aspect of their past goals and spousal
relationship continues into the present. The ability to do this depends on
the abilities (1) to internalize the meaningful qualities of past goals and
relationship and (2) to view those meaningful qualities of past activities as
manifested in the activity contexts of the present. Creating such continuities,
we add, is essential if the bereavement period is to be used as an opportunity

for identity development. Our argument rests on the assumption that the
transformation of discontinuity into continuity demands a revision of the
meaningful aspects of the individual's life—an assumption that may appear
to conflict with recent research on bereavement.

As mentioned earlier, one of the most prominent assumptions of traditional
bereavement theory is the notion that successful adaptation to loss requires
an effortful process of "grief work" (Freud, 1917; Kubler-Ross, 1969). This
hypothesis has traditionally been linked to the "continued bonds" hypothesis
(Bowlby, 1980), which shares many of the qualities in our model of narrative
continuity construction. Recent reviews of the empirical literature (Bonanno
& Kaltman, 1999; Wortman & Silver, 1989) have shown that the "grief work"
hypothesis fails to describe the normative process of successful adaptation to
bereavement. We wish to clarify that the continuity-transformation process
need be neither painful nor prolonged. As Dan's story illustrates, the "contin-
ued bonds" hypothesis and the "grief work" hypothesis need not be linked, as
proposed earlier (Bonanno, 2001). What does seem necessary, at least for the
narrative process of transforming discontinuity into continuity, is the ability
first to recognize the personal meanings of past goals and relationships and
then to understand how those meanings can continue in the present.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Antonovsky, A. (1979). *Health, stress, and coping*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Baerger, D. R., & McAdams, D. P. (1999). Life story coherence and its relation to psychological
well-being. *Narrative Inquiry, 9,* 69–96.

Bauer, J. J. (1999). *Constructing narrative identity while adapting to major life change*.
Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Catholic University of America.

Bauer, J. J., & Bonanno, G. A. (2001). Doing and being well (for the most part): Adaptive
patterns of narrative self-evaluation during bereavement. *Journal of Personality, 69,* 451–
482.

Bauer, J. J., & Bonanno, G. A. (in press). I can, I do, I am: The narrative differentiation of
self-efficacy and other self-evaluations while adapting to bereavement. *Journal of Research
in Personality.*

Bauer, J. J., Sakaeda, A. R., & McAdams, D. P. (2001, August). *Growth versus security in key episodes of life stories.* Poster presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco.

Baumeister, R. F. (1991). *Meanings of life.* New York: Guilford Press.

Baumeister, R. F., & Newman, L. S. (1994). How stories make sense of personal experiences: Motives that shape autobiographical narratives. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20,* 676–690.

Bonanno, G. A. (2001). The crucial importance of empirical evidence in the development of bereavement theory: A reply to Archer (2000). *Psychological Bulletin, 127.*

Bonanno, G. A., & Field, N. P. (2001). Examining the delayed grief hypothesis across five years of bereavement. *American Behavioral Scientist, 44,* 798–806.

Bonanno, G. A., & Kaltman, S. (1999). Toward an integrative perspective on bereavement. *Psychological Bulletin, 125,* 760–776.

Bonanno, G. A., & Kaltman, S. (2001). The varieties of grief experience. *Clinical Psychological Review, 20,* 1–30.

Bonanno, G. A., & Keltner, D. (1997). Facial expressions of emotion and the course of conjugal bereavement. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 106,* 126–137.

Bonanno, G. A., Keltner, D., Holen, A., & Horowitz, M. J. (1995). When avoiding unpleasant emotions might not be such a bad thing: Verbal-autonomic response dissociation and midlife conjugal bereavement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69,* 975–989.

Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 3, Loss: Sadness and depression.* New York: Basic Books.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience.* New York: Basic Books.

Erikson, E. H. (1950/1963). *Childhood and society.* New York: Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle.* New York: Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis.* New York: Norton.

Emmons, R. A. (1999). *The psychology of ultimate concerns: Motivation and spirituality in personality.* New York: Guilford Press.

Folkman, S., & Moskowitz, J. T. (2000). Stress, positive emotion, and coping. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9,* 115–118.

Freud, S. (1917/1957). Mourning and melancholia. In J. Strachey (Ed.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 14). London: Hogarth.

Gaines, R. (1997). Detachment and continuity: The two tasks of mourning. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 33,* 549–571.

Hermans, H. J. M., Kempen, H. J. G., & van Loon, R. J. P. (1992). The dialogical self: Beyond individualism and rationalism. *American Psychologist, 47,* 23–33.

Holmes, T., & Rahe, R. (1967). The social readjustment scale. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 11,* 213–218.

James, W. (1890/1950). *Principles of psychology.* New York: Dover.

Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered assumptions: Towards a new psychology of trauma.* New York: Free Press.

Josselson, R. (1996). *Revising herself: The story of women's identity from college to midlife.* New York: Oxford University Press.

King, L. A. (in press). The health benefits of writing about life goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin.*

King, L. A., & Miner, K. N. (2000). Writing about the perceived benefits of traumatic events: Implications for physical health. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26,* 220–230.

King, L. A., Scollon, C. K., Ramsey, C., & May, T. (2001). Stories of life transition: Subjective well-being and ego development in parents of children with Down Syndrome. *Journal of Research in Personality, 34,* 509–536.

Klass, D., Silverman, P. R., & Nickman, S. L. (Eds.). (1996). *Continuing bonds: New understandings of grief.* Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

Kubler-Ross, E. (1969). *On death and dying.* New York: Macmillan.

Loevinger, J. (1976). *Ego development.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lucius-Hoene, G., & Deppermann, A. (2000). Narrative identity empiricized: A dialogical and positioning approach to autobiographical research interviews. *Narrative Inquiry, 10,* 199–222.

Marcia, J. E. (1980). *Identity in adolescence.* In J. Adelson (Ed.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

McAdams, D. P. (1985). *Power, intimacy, and the life story: Personological inquiries into identity.* New York: Guilford Press.

McAdams, D. P. (1989). The development of narrative identity. In D. Buss & N. Cantor (Eds.), *Personality psychology: Recent trends and emerging directions.* New York: Springer-Verlag.

McAdams, D. P. (1990). Unity and purpose in human lives: The emergence of identity as a life story. In A. I. Rabin, R. A. Zucker, R. A. Emmons & S. Frank (Eds.), *Studying persons and lives* (pp. 148–200). New York: Springer-Verlag.

McAdams, D. P. (1993). *The stories we live by: Personal myths and the making of the self.* New York: Morrow.

McAdams, D. P. (1996). Personality, modernity, and the storied self: A contemporary framework for studying persons. *Psychological Inquiry, 7,* 295–321.

McAdams, D. P., & de St. Aubin, E. (Eds.). (1998). *Generativity and adult development: How and why we care for the next generation.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Nolen-Hoeksema, S., McBride, A., & Larson, J. (1997). Rumination and psychological distress among bereaved partners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72,* 855–862.

Nozick, R. (1981). *Philosophical explanations.* Cambridge, MA: Belknap.

Parkes, C. M. (1972). *Bereavement: Studies of grief in adult life.* Madison, CT: International Universities Press.

Parkes, C. M. (1993). Bereavement as a psychosocial transition: Processes of adaptation to change. In M. S. Stroebe, W. Stroebe & R. O. Hansson (Eds.), *Handbook of bereavement: Theory, research, and intervention.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Parkes, C. M., & Weiss, R. S. (1983). *Recovery from bereavement.* New York: Basic Books.

Penuel, W. R., & Wertsch, J. V. (1995). Vygotsky and identity formation: A sociocultural approach. *Educational Psychologist, 30,* 83–92.

Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. (1969). *The psychology of the child.* (Trans., H. Weaver) New York: Basic Books.

Rando, T. A. (1993). *Treatment of complicated mourning.* Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Raphael, B. (1983). *The anatomy of bereavement.* New York: Basic Books.

Shuchter, S. R., & Zisook, S. (1993). The course of normal grief. In M. S. Stroebe, W. Stroebe, & W. O. Hansson (Eds.), *Handbook of bereavement: Theory, research, and intervention* (pp. 23–43). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smyth, J. M. (1998). Written emotional expression: Effect sizes, outcome types, and moderating variables. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 66,* 174–184.

Stein, N., Folkman, S., Trabasso, T., & Richards, T. A. (1997). Appraisal and goal processes as predictors of psychological well-being in bereaved caregivers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72,* 872–884.

Stewart, A. J., Sokol, M., Healy, J. M., & Chester, N. L. (1986). Longitudinal studies of psychological consequences of life changes in children and adults. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50,* 143–151.

Tappan, M. B. (2000). Autobiography, mediated action, and the development of moral identity. *Narrative Inquiry, 10,* 81–109.

Torren, C. (1995). Making history: The significance of childhood cognition for a comparative anthropology, *Man, 28,* 461–478.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society.* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Weiss, R. S. (1993). Loss and recovery. In M. S. Stroebe, W. Stroebe & R. O. Hansson (Eds.), *Handbook of bereavement: Theory, research, and intervention.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Werner, H. (1957). The concept of development from a comparative and organismic point of view. In D. B. Harris (Ed.), *The concept of development.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1995). The need for action in sociocultural research. In J. V. Wertsch, P. Del Rio, & A. Alvarez (Eds.), *Sociocultural studies of mind.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Wertsch, J. V., del Rio, P., & Alvarez, A. (Eds.). (1995). *Sociocultural studies of mind.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Woike, B., Gershkovich, I., Piorkowski, R., & Polo, M. (1999). The role of motives in the content and structure of autobiographical memory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76,* 1–13.

Wortham, S. (2000). Interactional positioning and narrative self-construction. *Narrative Inquiry, 10,* 157–184.

Wortman, C. B., & Silver, R. C. (1989). The myth of coping with loss. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 57,* 349–357.

Wortman, C. B., & Silver, R. C. (1990). Successful mastery of bereavement and widowhood: A life-course perspective. In P. B. Baltes & M. M. Baltes (Eds.), *Successful aging: Perspectives from the behavioral sciences.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wortman, C. B. & Silver, R. C. (2001). The myths of coping with loss revisited. To appear in M. S. Stroebe, R. O. Hansson, W. Stroebe, & H. Schut (Eds.), *Handbook of Bereavement Research: Consequences, Coping, and Care.* Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association Press.

COLLECTED STORIES IN THE LIFE NARRATIVES OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Brian Schiff
St. Martin's College

Chaim Noy
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Bertram J. Cohler
University of Chicago

This research investigates the use of stories that are found through vicarious experience and told in a life narrative in order to communicate the meaning of the personal past. Through the interpretation of the life narratives of Holocaust survivors, we argue that stories outside of direct experience, collected stories, form the background of personal narratives. Collected stories are pieces of social interaction and context that are integrated in our presentation of the past, and self understanding, because they are personally relevant to us and congruent with the situation of telling. These stories have the potential to lose the indications that they are outside of direct experience and become indistinguishable from other stories that draw upon direct experience. Collected stories serve to situate our stories of the past and identity within a cultural horizon of sense and meaning.

As social scientists, we know that words have multiple meanings. Words are the voice of a person as well as the voice of a social group living in a particular historical epoch and culture. The articulation of a personal history and life world, so called life narratives or life stories, can be meaningfully approached from the perspective of the person or the social group. Looking at the life of a single individual, one can understand the significance of words as part of a personal biography that culminates in the present and extends back in time to early childhood (and possibly birth—or before). From the