

Using the Science of Values to Live Well Together: A Fuller Practical Discussion

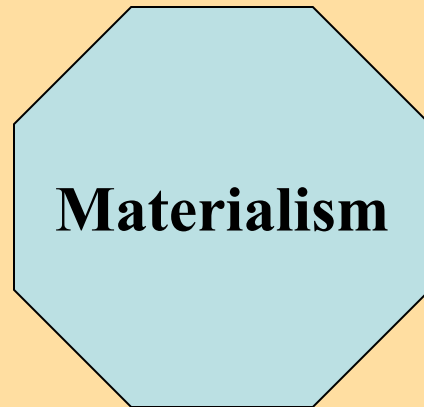
Tim Kasser, Ph.D.



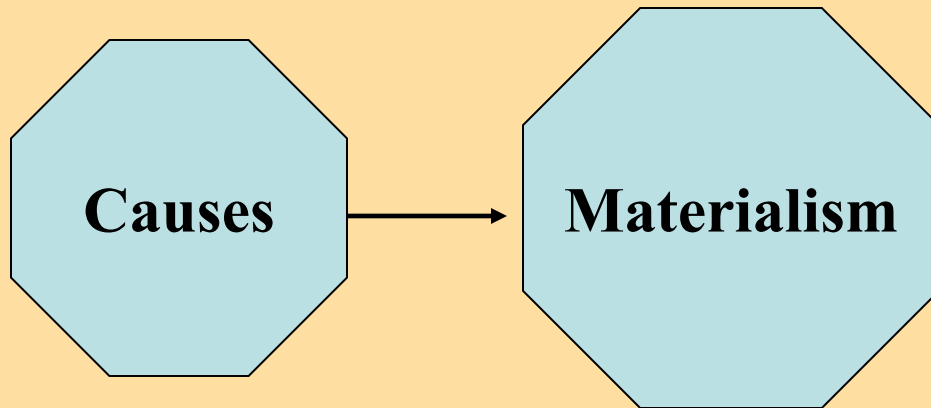
Summary

- Materialistic values undermine both “living well” and “living well together”
 - Lower personal well-being
 - Less prosocial behavior
 - Less ecologically sustainable behavior

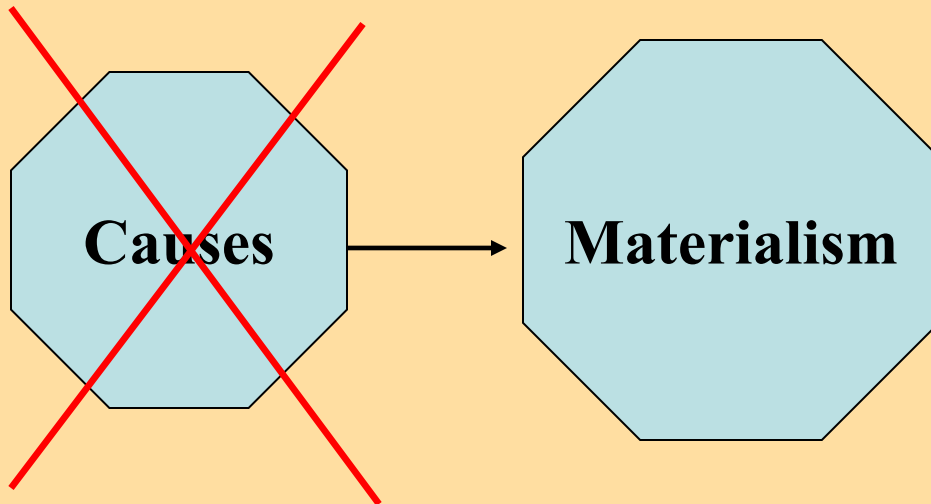
Two-fold Strategy



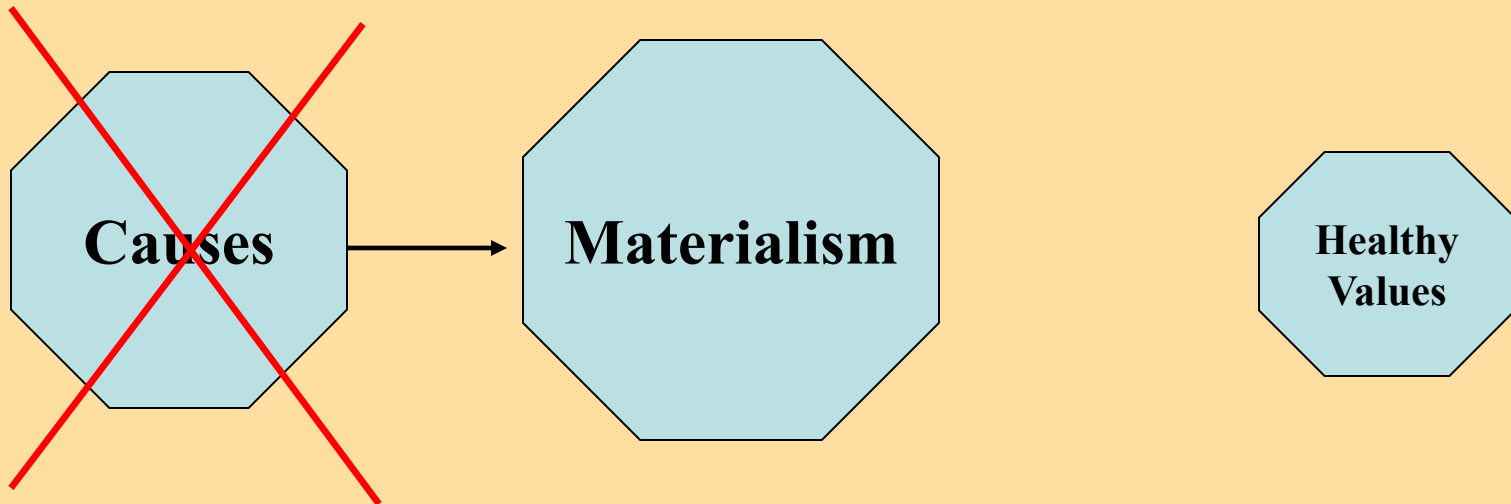
Two-fold Strategy



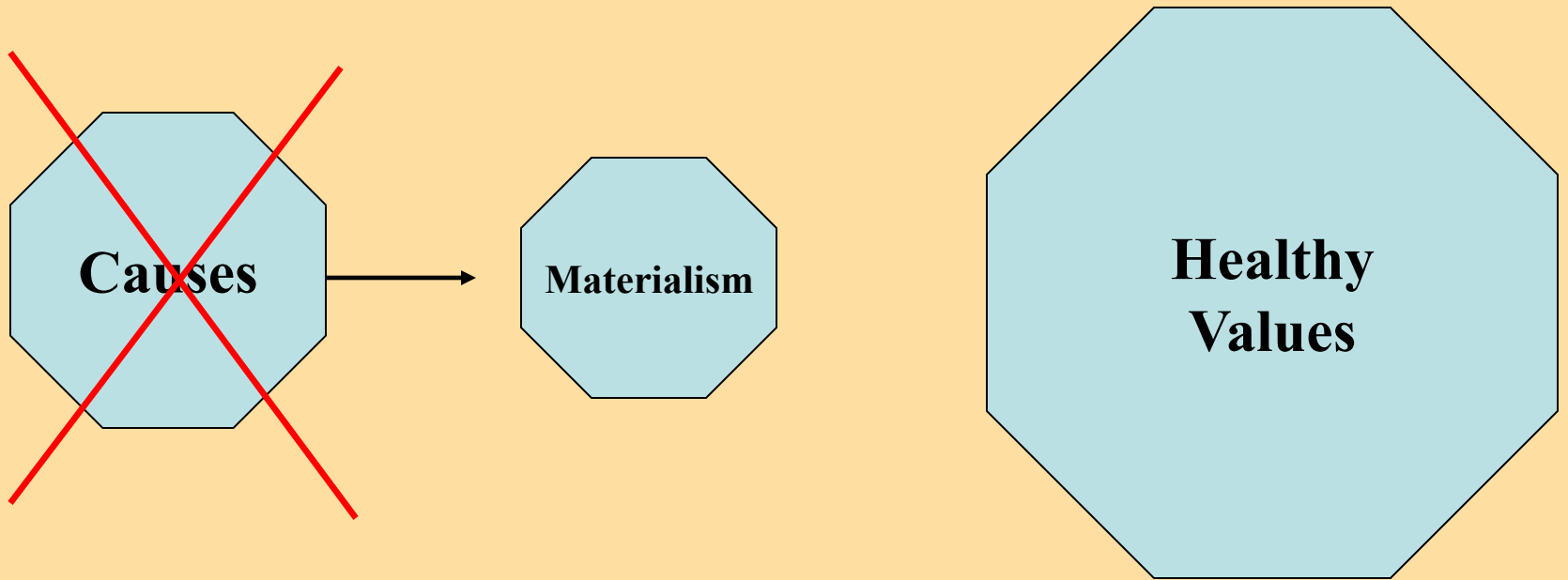
Two-fold Strategy



Two-fold Strategy



Two-fold Strategy



Causes of Materialism

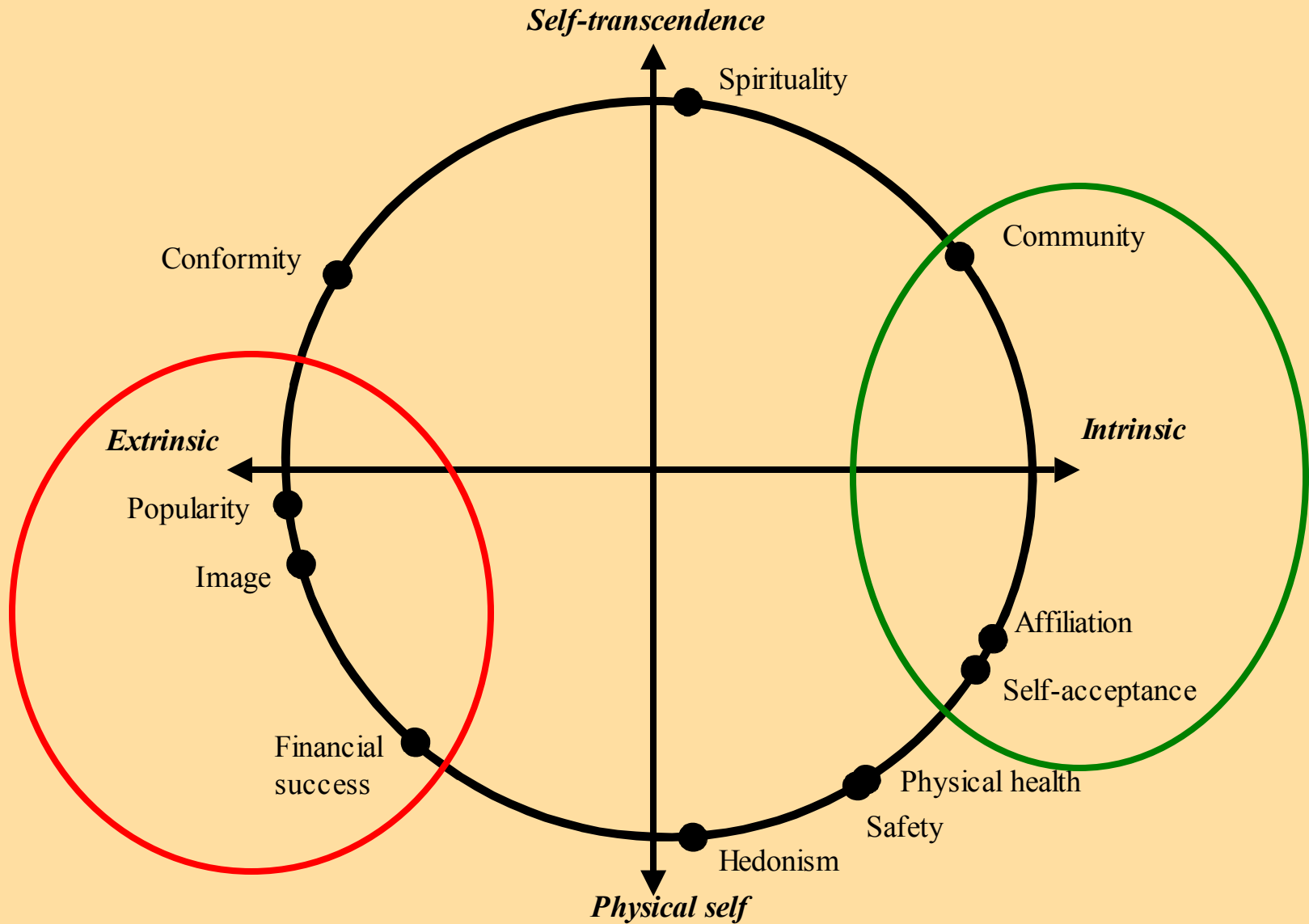
Kasser et al. (2004)

- Social Modeling
 - Friends, parents, or peers who are materialistic
 - Ingestion of more television & advertising
 - Living in neo-liberal capitalist nation
- Insecurity
 - Experience cold parenting or parental divorce
 - Experience poverty
 - Confronted with thoughts of one's own death

Healthy Values

Grouzet, Kasser et al. (2005)

- Assessed aspirations in 11 domains
 - e.g., Spirituality, Hedonism, Affiliation, Health, etc.
- >1800 College students in 15 nations
- Circular Stochastic Modeling
 - Adjacent goals are consistent
 - Opposing goals are conflictual



Intrinsic Values

Kasser & Ryan (1996)

- Self-acceptance

“I will follow my interests and curiosity where they take me.”

- Affiliation

“I will express my love for special people.”

- Community Feeling

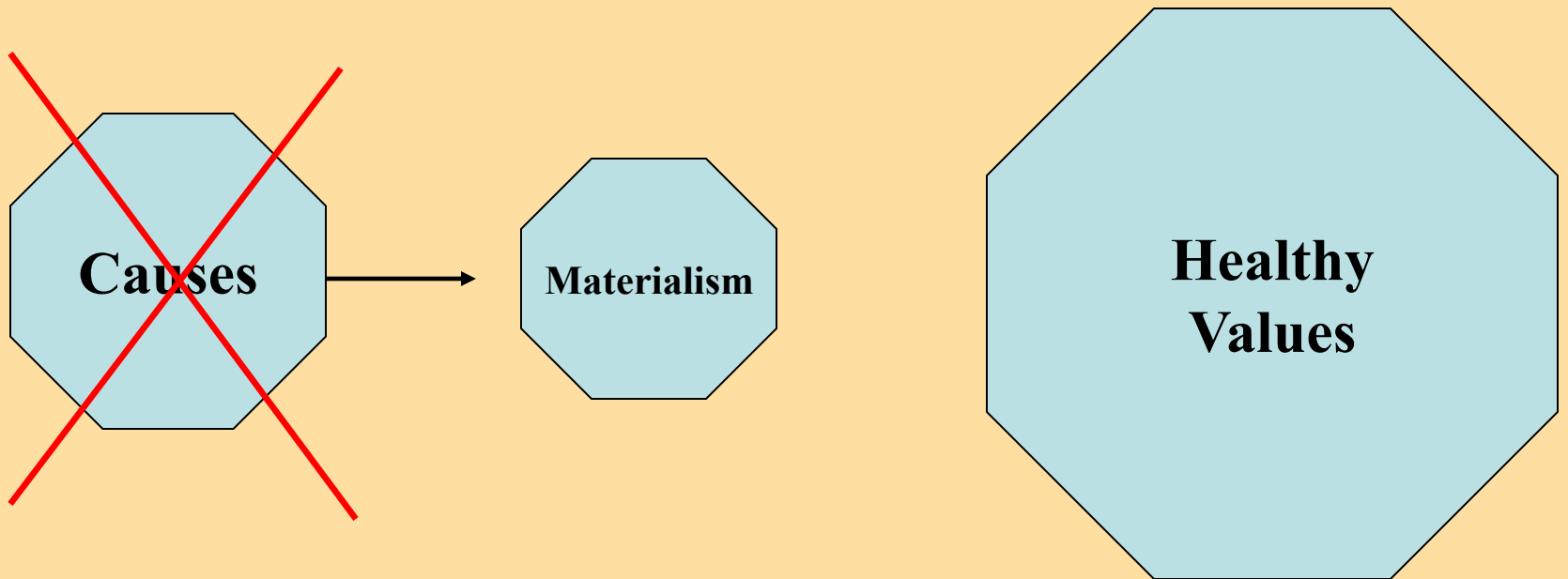
“I will help the world become a better place.”

Living Well Together

Deneulin & McGregor (2010)

- Intrinsic values meet criteria for “living well together”
 - Personal
 - Other humans
 - Future generations of humans
 - Other species

Two-fold Strategy

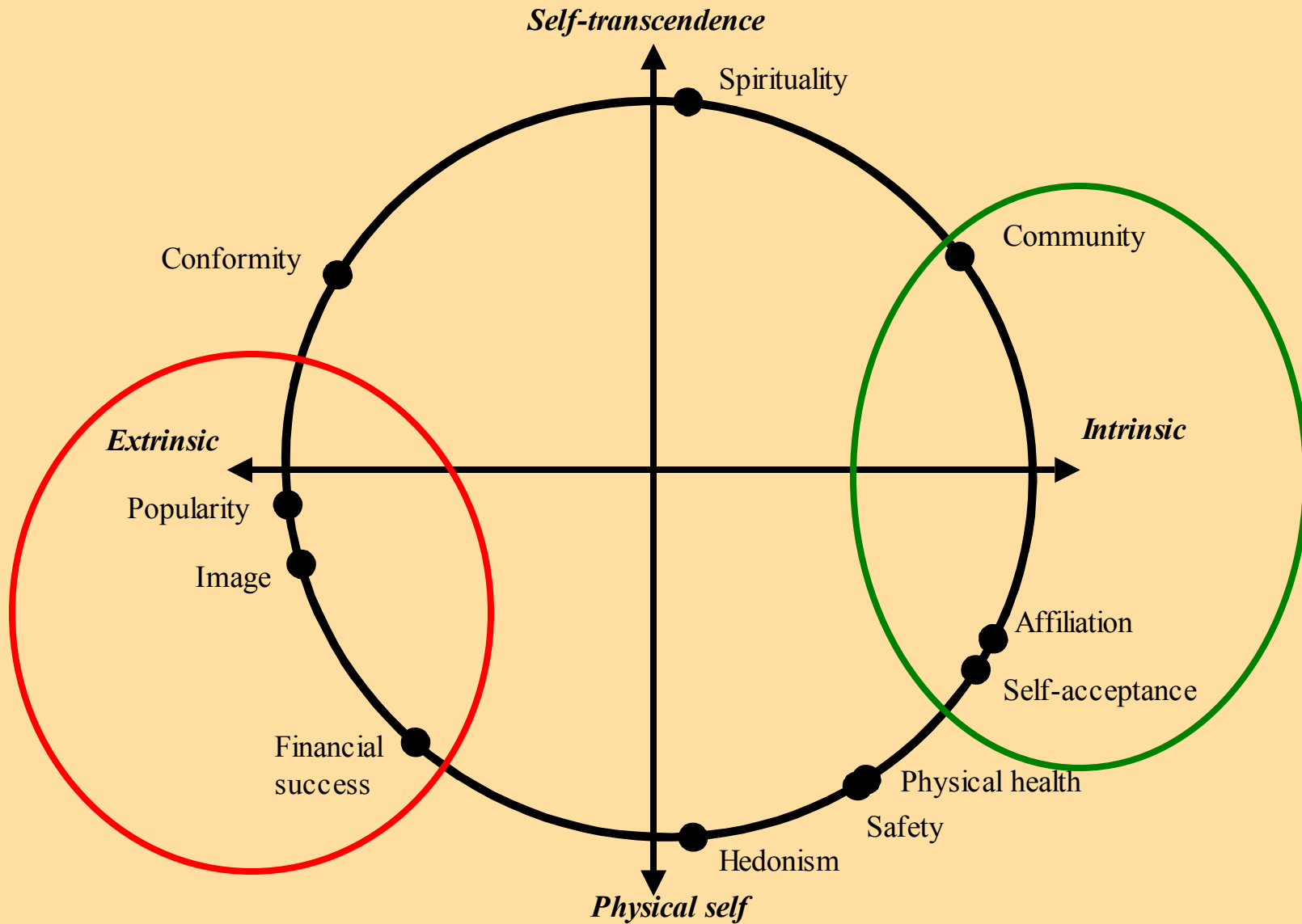


Avenues for Change

- Psychological Interventions
 - I: Activate and encourage intrinsic values
 - II: Promote security
 - III: Increase reflection
- Policy Approaches

Psychological Intervention I

- Activate Intrinsic values
- Doing so will suppress Extrinsic values



Psychological Intervention I

Kasser et al. (2014)

- Three group sessions following Financial Sanity™ curriculum
- Parents & children
- 2 hours each session
- Lectures, discussions, videos, homework assignments

Psychological Intervention I

Kasser et al. (2014)

- Key themes included:
 - Financial habits
 - Needs vs. wants
 - Power of advertising
 - Using values to guide financial behavior
 - Having a money plan
 - Saving and Sharing
 - Allowances

Psychological Intervention I

Kasser et al. (2014)

- Decreased materialism
 - Effects persisted for months
- Increased self-esteem for youth who started high in materialism
 - Effects persisted for months

Psychological Intervention I

Lekes et al. (2012)

- 113 Undergraduates recruited for study about “reflecting on life”
- Control group focused on “life details” like “going to a movie” or “cooking dinner”

Psychological Intervention I

Lekes et al. (2012)

- Experimental group
 - read text defining differences between intrinsic and extrinsic values
 - were tested to ensure knowledge
- Selected 2 important intrinsic values from list and wrote about:
 - why these were important values
 - past experiences with the values
 - how the values were part of their life

Psychological Intervention I

Lekes et al. (2012)

- Received weekly emails over the next month reminding them of the 2 values they chose
- Received quotes relevant to intrinsic values
 - He who is not contented with what he has would not be contented with what he would like to have – *Socrates*
 - How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world – *Anne Frank*
- Invited to reflect on their 2 values

Psychological Intervention I

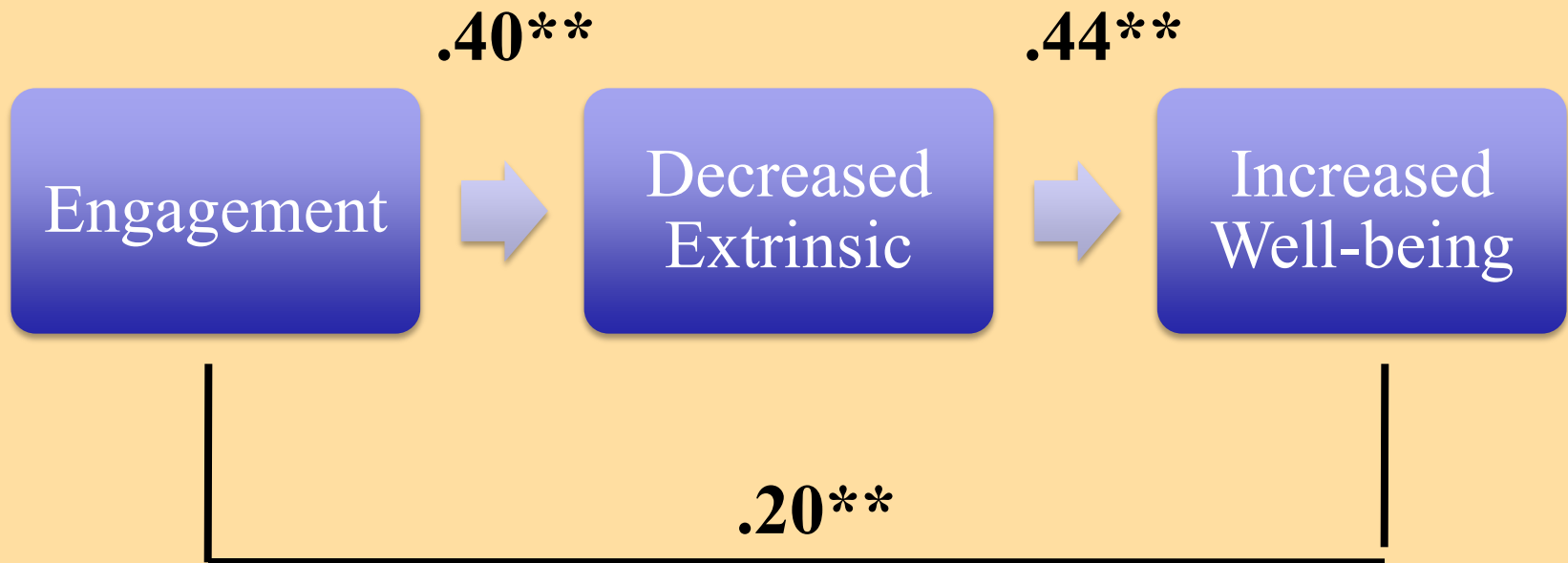
Lekes et al. (2012)

- Compared to those in control condition, those in intrinsic value condition:
- Experienced immediate increase in well-being ($M = 3.59$ vs. 3.23), $p < .05$
- Four weeks later, participants shifted away from extrinsic values more if they deeply engaged the intrinsic value reflections
- And then well-being increased

Psychological Intervention I

Lekes et al. (2012)

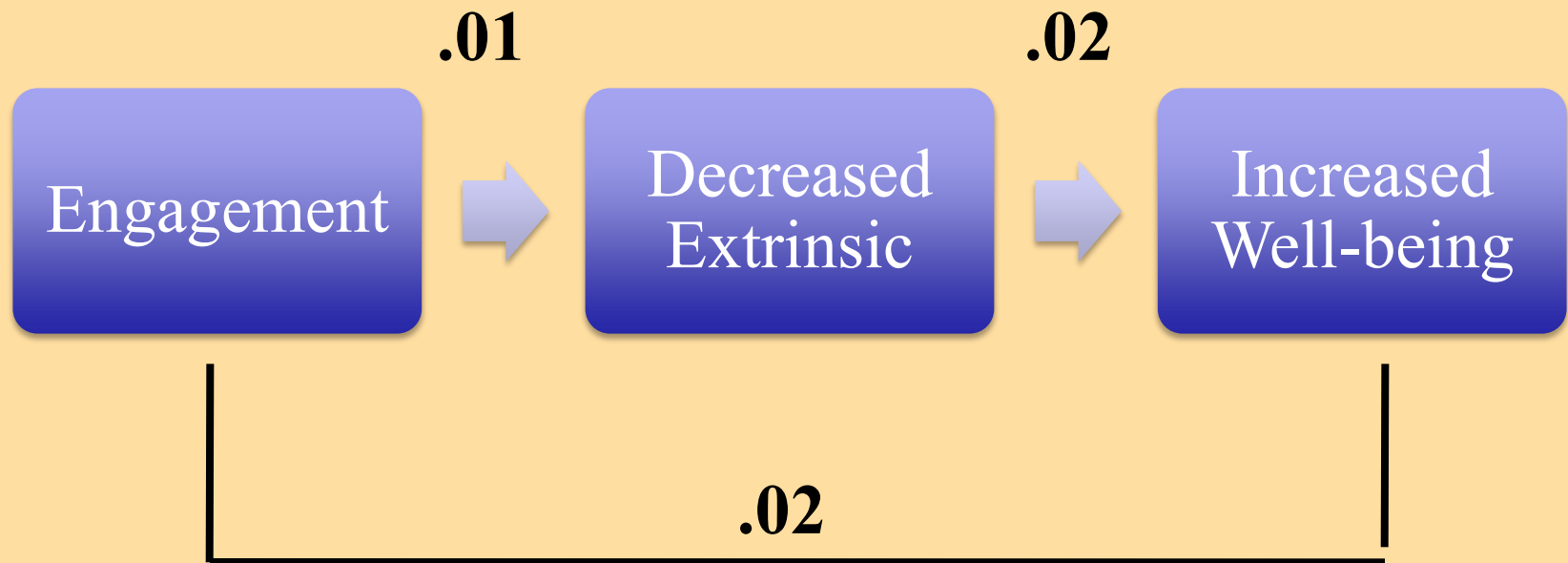
Intrinsic Condition



Psychological Intervention I

Lekes et al. (2012)

Control Condition



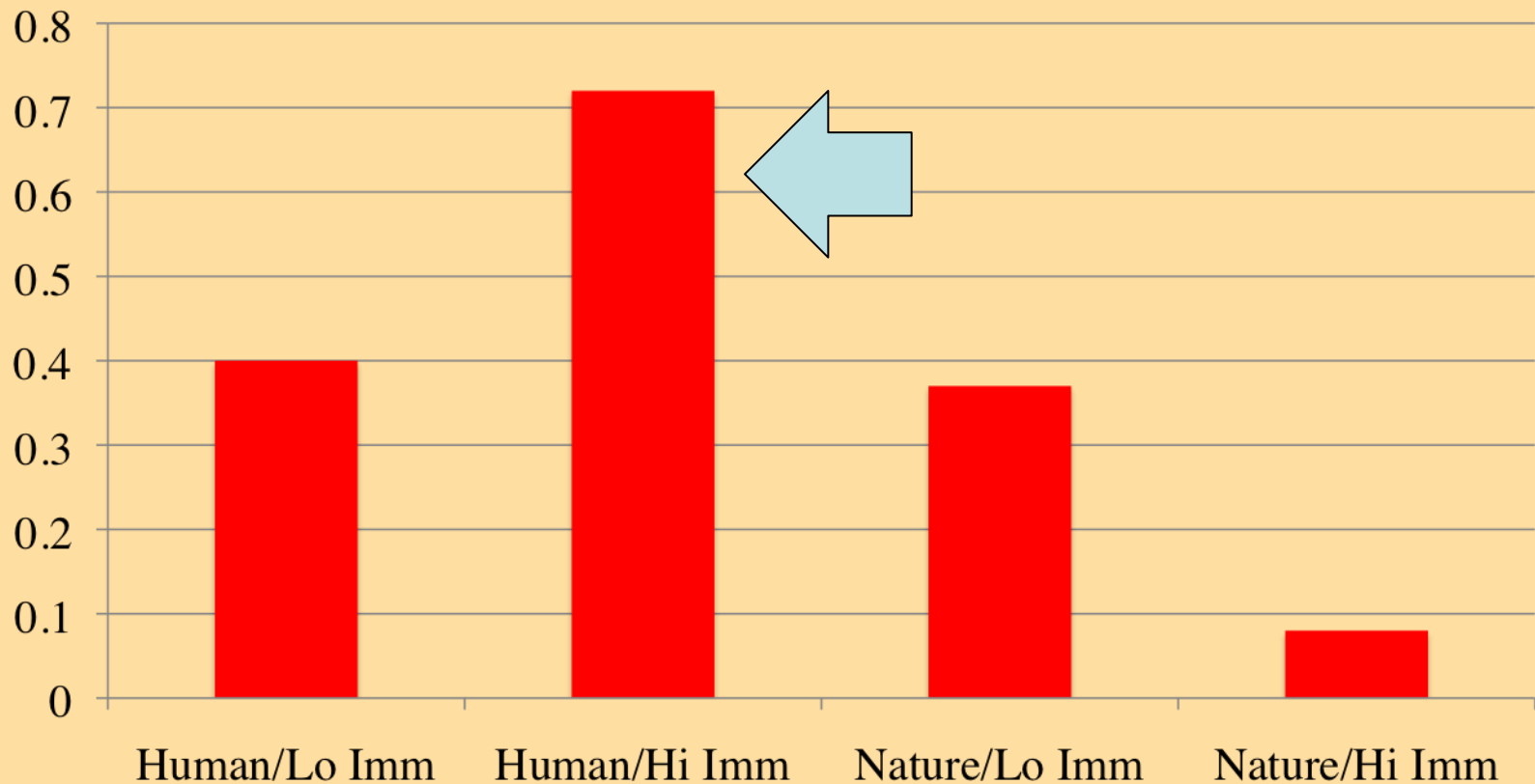
Psychological Intervention I

Weinstein et al. (2009)

- Conducted 4 studies exposing people to photos of natural or human-made scenes
- Measured feelings of immersion in scene
- Then assessed importance of Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic Aspirations

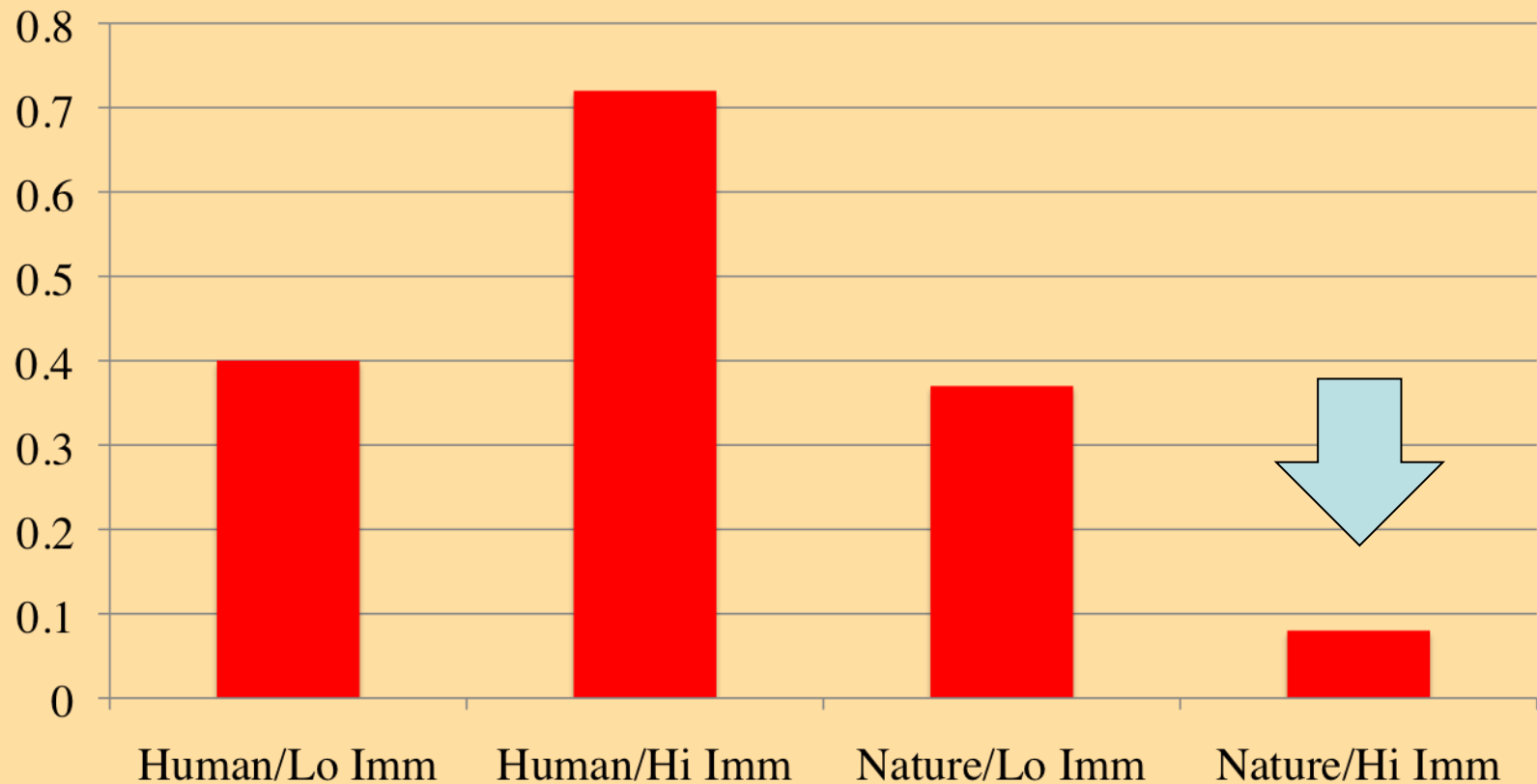
Extrinsic Aspirations

Weinstein et al. (2009)



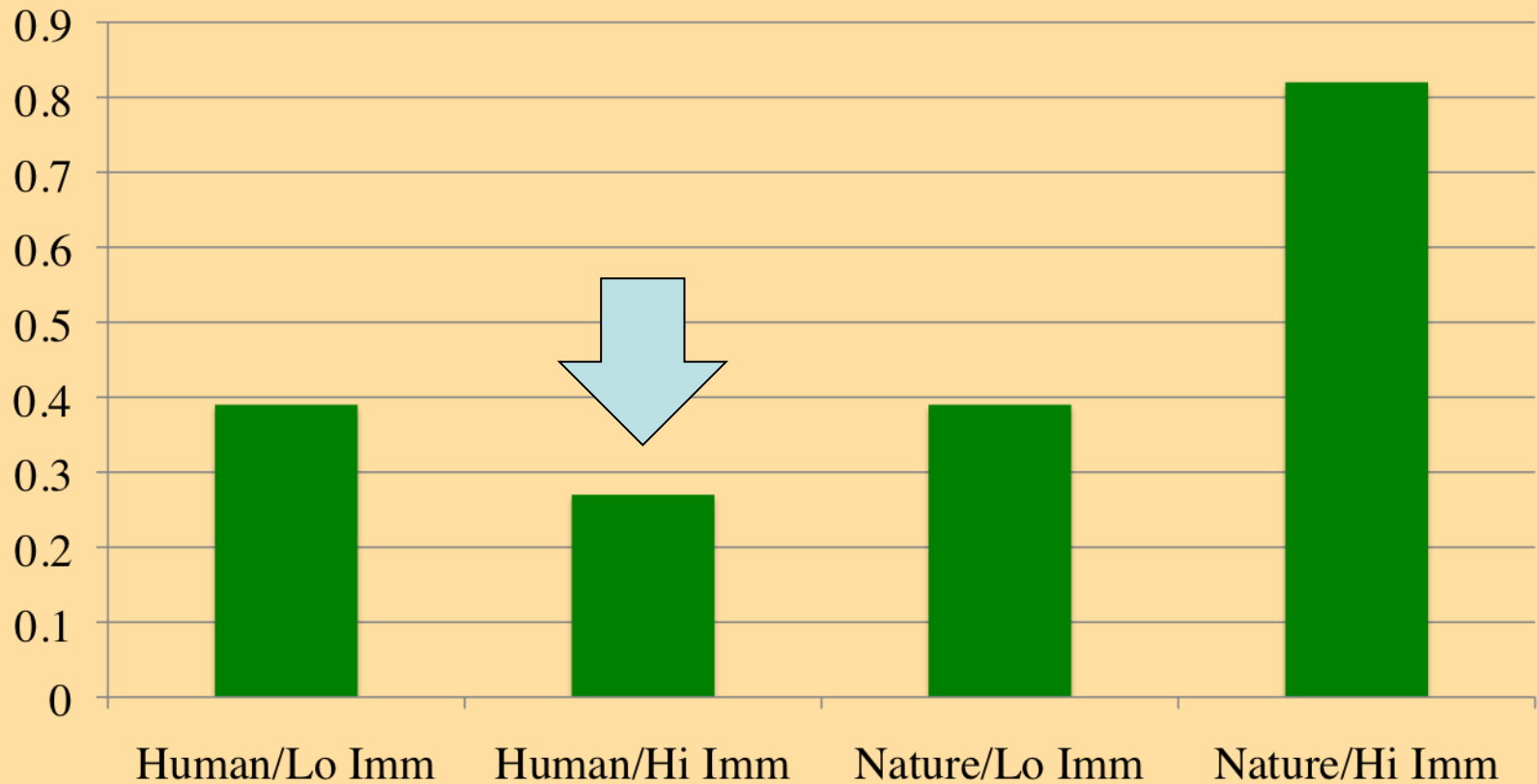
Extrinsic Aspirations

Weinstein et al. (2009)



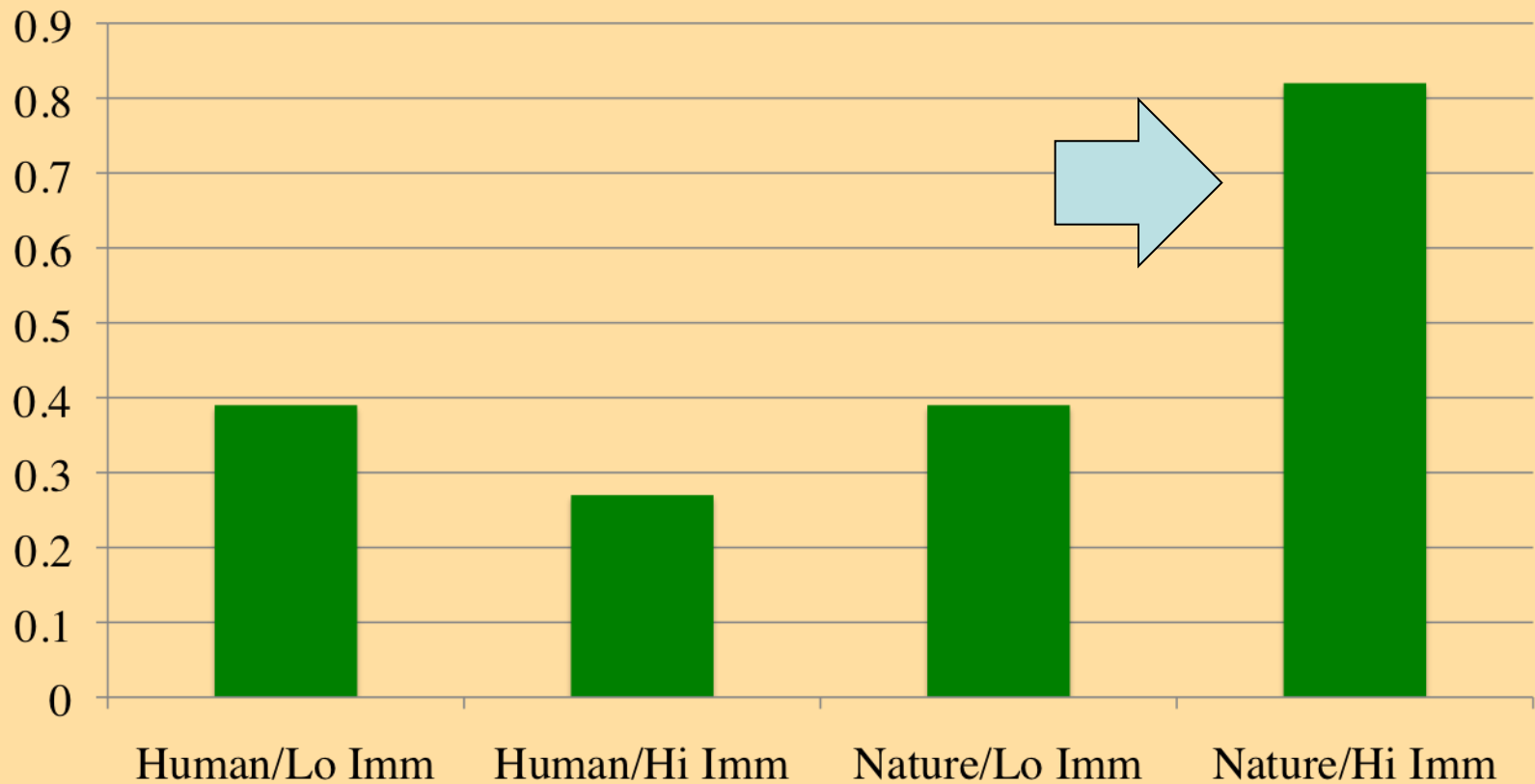
Intrinsic Aspirations

Weinstein et al. (2009)



Intrinsic Aspirations

Weinstein et al. (2009)



Psychological Intervention II

- Help people feel secure, rather than threatened
- Doing so will meet their needs, allowing them to shift away from extrinsic and toward intrinsic values

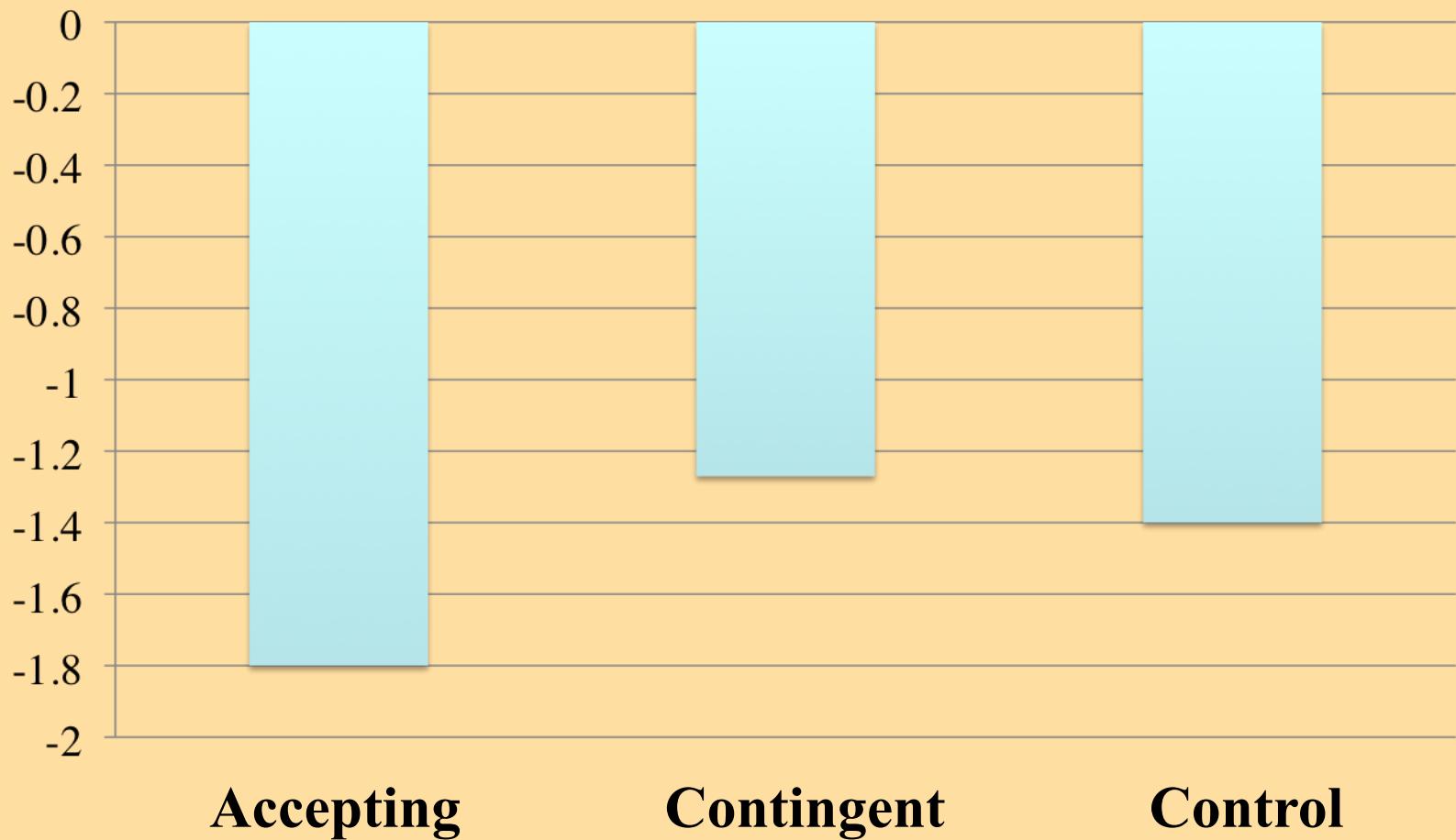
Psychological Intervention II

Sheldon & Kasser (2008)

- Guided visualization of a person who:
 - “...tends to be very accepting and non-evaluative of you, and simply accepts you for who you are”
 - “...tends to be very evaluative of you, and seems to accept you only to the extent that you live up to certain standards of performance”
 - “is a co-worker or a classmate with whom you interact for business or academic purposes but rarely or never interact with socially”
- Completed Aspiration Index

Relative Extrinsic/Intrinsic Aspirations

Sheldon & Kasser (2008)



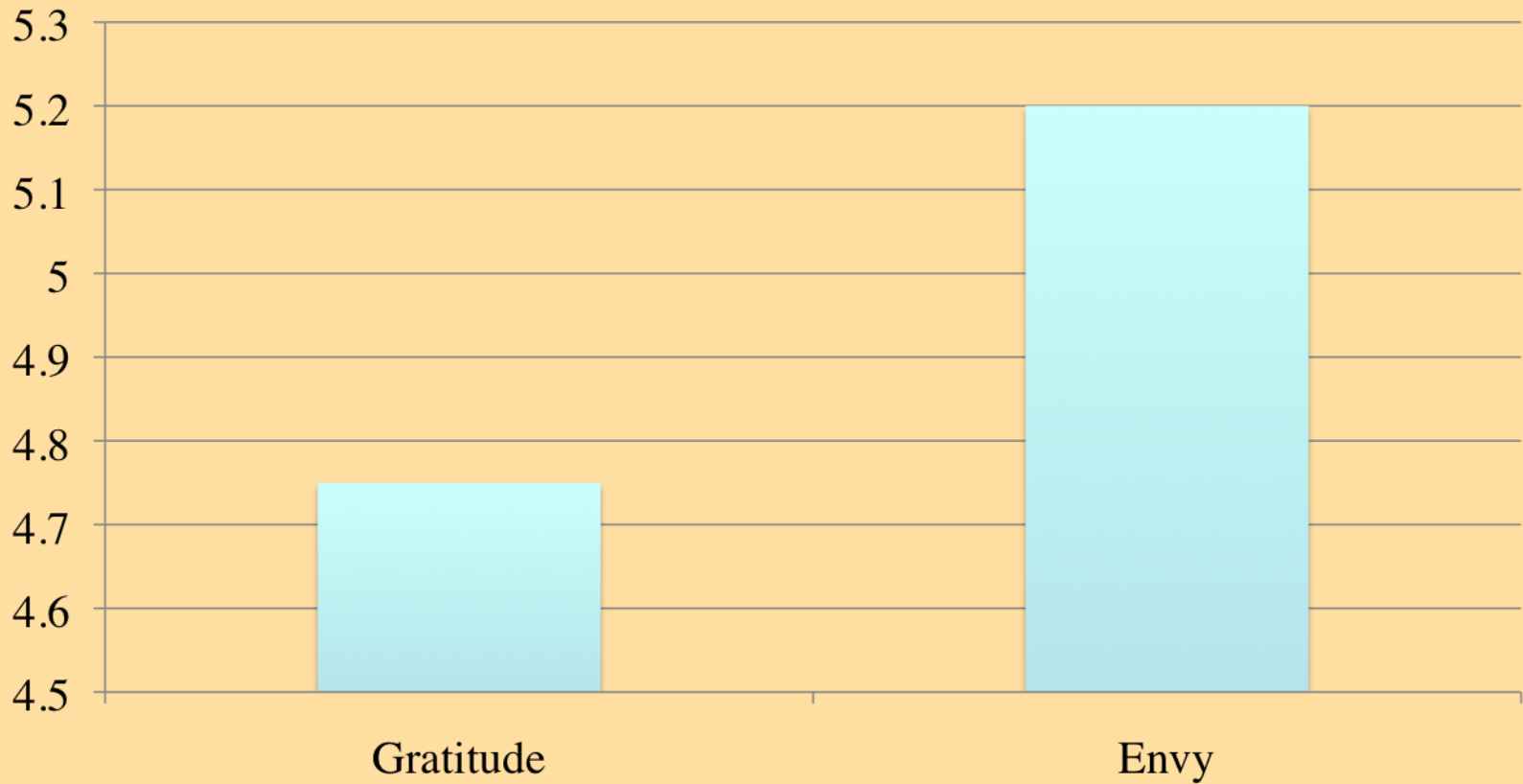
Psychological Intervention II

Lambert et al. (2009)

- Gratitude vs. envy
 - Participants closed eyes, shifted attention to their heart and then
 - Gratitude: focused on “sincerely feeling appreciative for what you have been given in life,” and wrote about experience
 - Envy: focused on a person about whom they felt envious, and wrote about experience
- Completed measure of materialistic desires

Materialistic Desires

Lambert et al. (2009)



Psychological Intervention III

- Inward reflection

Psychological Intervention III

Sheldon et al. (2003)

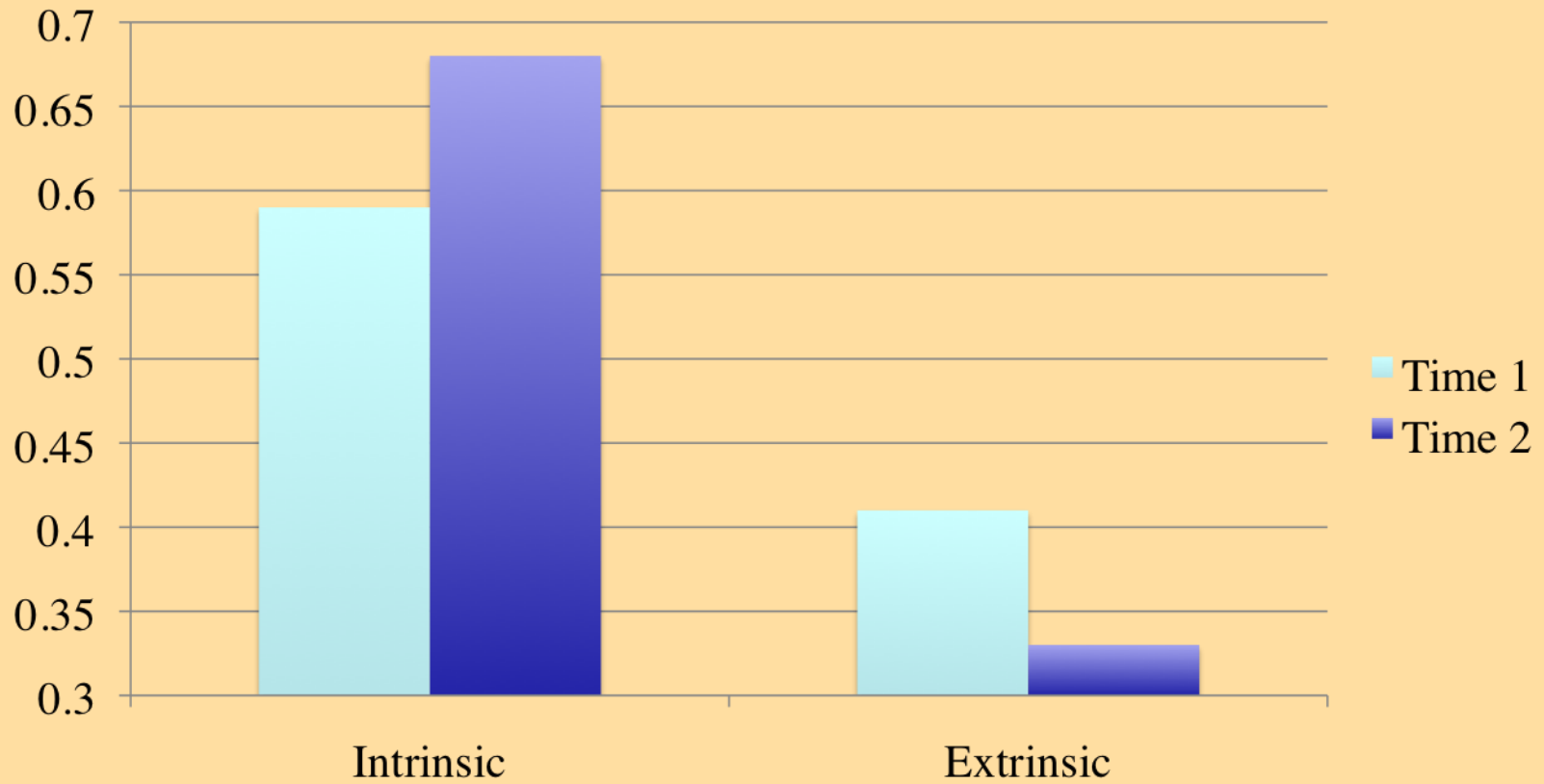
- Organismic Valuing Process (Rogers, 1963)
 - An innate ability to know what is worth pursuing in life, what will bring health
- OVP should lead people to orient towards Intrinsic over Extrinsic values

Psychological Intervention III

Sheldon et al. (2003)

- Conducted 3 studies with same basic procedure
- Completed measure of goals at Time 1
- At Time 2 asked to re-choose how important goals are

Study 3



Psychological Intervention III

- Mindfulness
- “A receptive attention to and awareness of present events and experience” (Brown & Ryan, 2003)
- Cultivated by a variety of spiritual practices
- Higher mindfulness is associated with lower Extrinsic & higher Intrinsic values (Brown & Kasser, 2005)

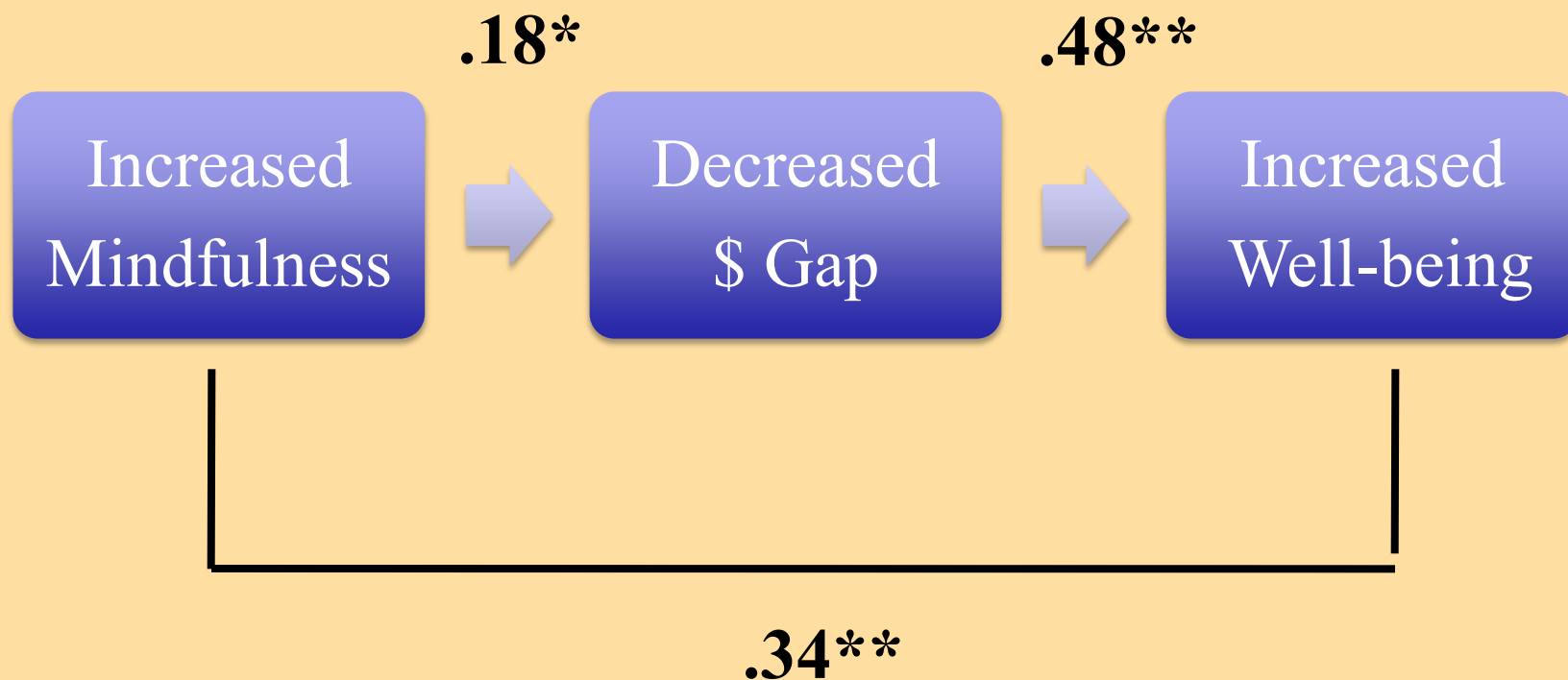
Psychological Intervention III

Brown et al. (2009)

- 69 attendees of mindfulness training program in N. California
- Assessed mindfulness, well-being, and gap between what one has financially and what one wants financially
- Underwent 2 week mindfulness training, 10-12 hours/day

Psychological Intervention III

Brown et al. (2009)



Inward Reflection

- Makes people feel more secure?
- Gets them in touch with “true self” and therefore intrinsic values?
- Disruptive experience that shakes up individuals’ pre-existing lives and helps people create “new narrative” about how to go forward now?

Avenues for Change

- Psychological Interventions
- Policy Approaches
 - Children and advertising
 - Local indicators of well-being

Exposure to advertising

- Children in schools with Channel One have stronger consumer orientation
 - (Brand & Greenberg, 1994)
- Children who watch more TV have higher consumer values, lower well-being, and worse environmental attitudes
 - (Good, 2007; Nairn, Ormrod, & Bottomley, 2007; Schor, 2004)

Exposure to advertising

- Brief exposure to ads decreases children's generosity and interpersonal behaviors
 - Moschis
- Teens' materialism increases when a larger percentage of the U.S. GNP was due to advertising expenditures
 - (Twenge & Kasser, 2013)

Block Influence

- Teach parents that there is no evidence for educational benefits of screens among infants
- Teach parents about American Academy of Pediatrics' guidelines
 - no screen time < 2 years
 - no TV in child's bedroom

Block Influence

Buijzen & Valkenburg (2005)

- Effect of advertising exposure on materialism in Dutch children declines if:
- Parents take active (vs. restrictive) style
 - Tell children that the purpose of ads is to sell products and ads do not always tell the truth
- Parents take concept-oriented (vs. socio-oriented) style
 - Have active discussions about consumer issues

Block Influence

- Give talks to Day Care Providers, Parents' groups, PTAs
- Provide materials about problems of commercialization in bags that new parents bring home from hospitals
- Distribute fact sheets at doctors' offices
- Support Screen-free Week

Policy Changes

- Support policies to remove ads from schools & public places
 - Can do at local level
- End tax subsidy for advertisements
- End advertising to children
 - Canada's Broadcast Code for Advertising to Children
 - Quebec bans ads to children < 13 years

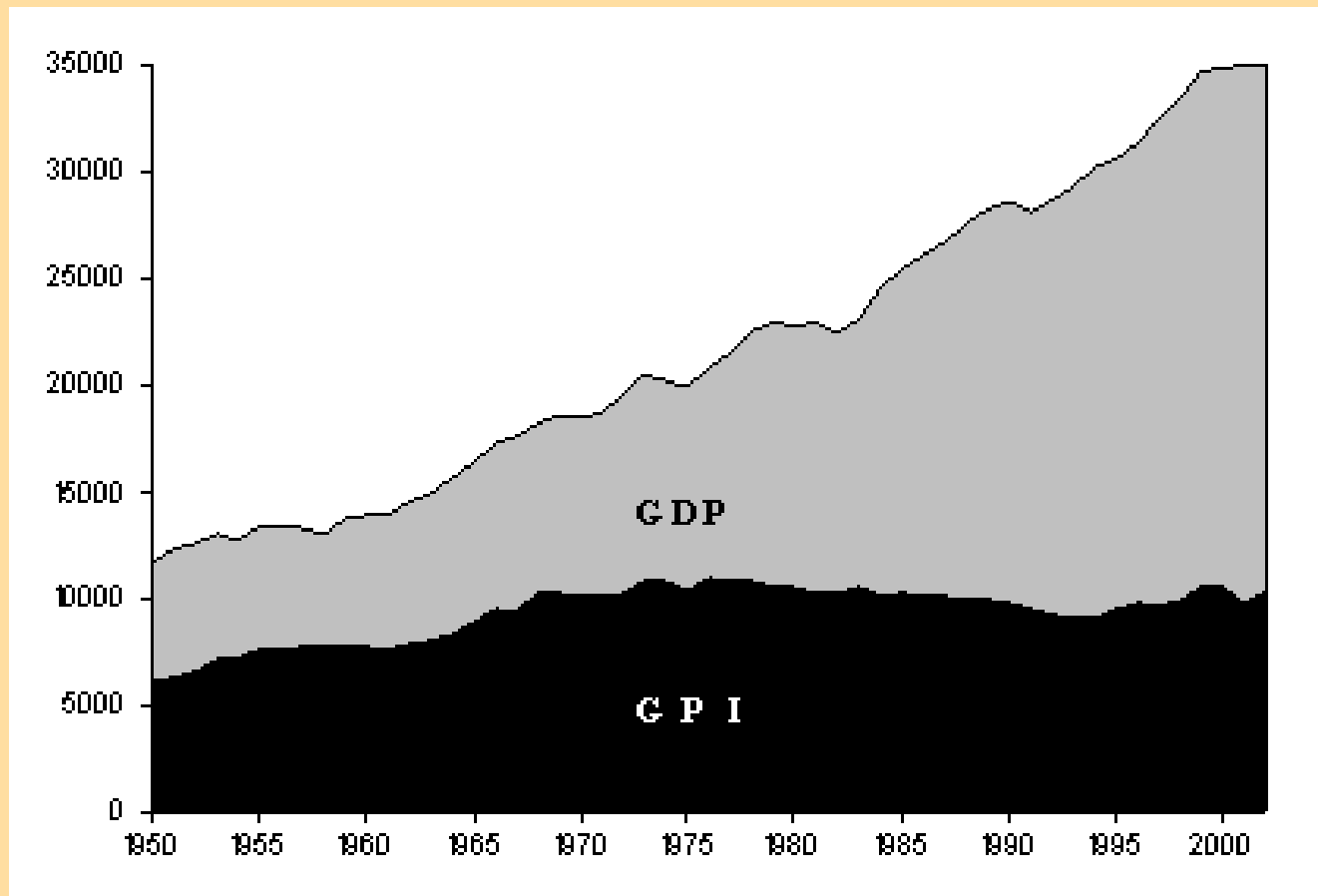
Advertising - Directions

- April 2014 in Brazil – Conanda Resolution 163 states that “the practice of directing advertising and marketing communication to children with the intention of persuading them to consume any product or service” is abusive and, therefore, illegal as per the Consumer Defense Code

National Indicators of Progress

- Currently GNP is dominant
- Alternative indicators include metrics of intrinsic values in computation
- Examples:
 - Bhutan's Gross National Happiness
 - Canadian Index of Well-being
 - Genuine Progress Indicator

GDP vs. GPI



National Indicators - Directions

- Adopt Alternative Indicators
- Models idea that intrinsic values are more important than materialistic values
- Provides information for developing new policies

Local Indicators

- Jacksonville, Florida
- Bristol, England, UK
- Guelph, Ontario
- Santa Monica, California
- Seattle, Washington

Happiness Initiative - Seattle

- Survey designed to assess happiness and satisfaction in multiple domains of life
- Can be compared across time and communities
- Can be used to present to local government to suggest changes

Happiness Initiative - Seattle

- Domains include standard WB measures
 - Life satisfaction, positive & negative affect
 - Physical & Mental Well-being
 - Time Balance & Personal Relations
 - Material well-being

Happiness Initiative - Seattle

- As well as measures relevant to the specific town
 - Trust in community members
 - Faith in local government
 - Access to Natural Environment
 - Access to Education, Art, & Culture

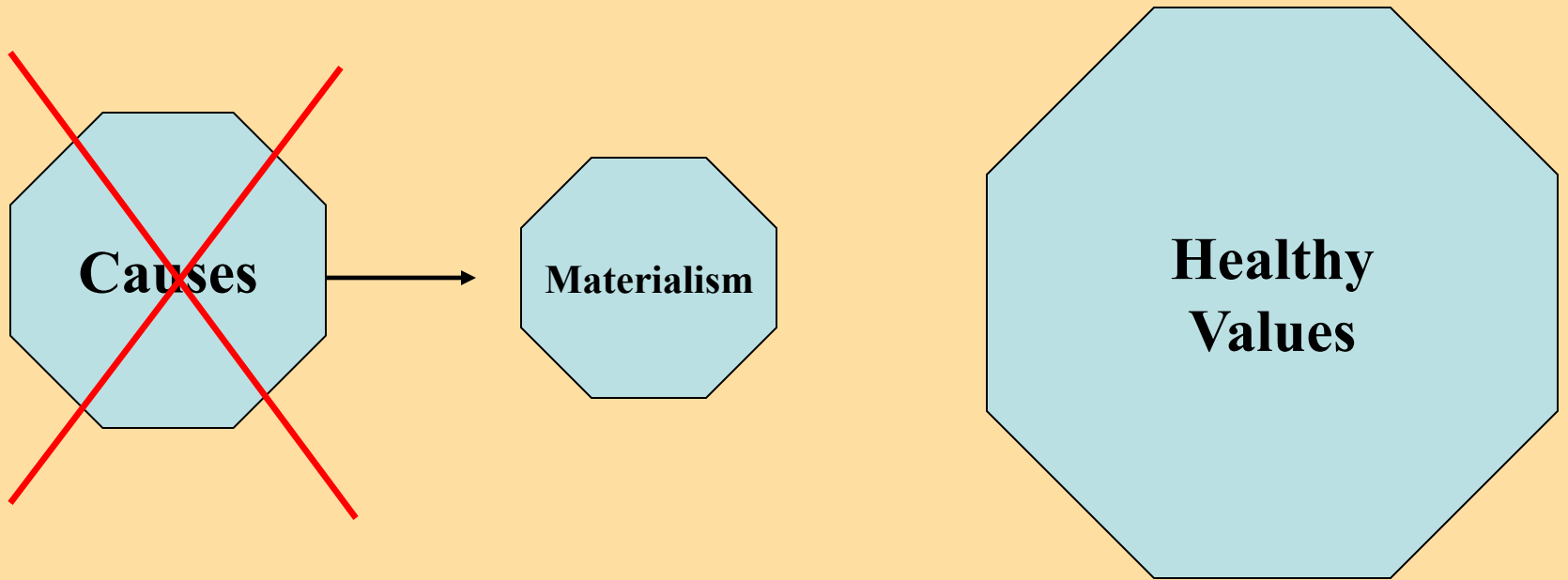
Happiness Initiative - Seattle

- ...WHEREAS The City of Seattle understands the importance of creating a broad assessment of the happiness of its residents, using both objective and subjective indicators of well-being; ...
- NOW, THEREFORE, ...The Seattle City Council intends to consult the available happiness data and the recommendations from these town meetings as it pursues future policy options in a time of scarce resources...

Summary

- Materialistic values undermine both “living well” and “living well together”
- Positive psychologists can help people make changes in their own lifestyles
- Positive psychologists can help push for broader policy & social changes

Two-fold Strategy



Thanks/Merci!

If you want a copy of this slideshow or citations for any research mentioned, e-mail me at:
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