



To: Graduate School Applicants

From: Daphna Oyserman

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in my lab. This document and the hotlinks embedded in it will likely answer many of your questions. After you read it, have clicked on links, and had a look at the papers coming from our lab, I'll be happy to answer whatever else you want to know. Just send me an email at daphna.oyserman@usc.edu.

The [University of Southern California](#) is a private research university in Los Angeles. General information about USC is [here](#). I joined the [social psychology](#) program in January 2014. For information about the **Psychology Department** at USC please visit its [homepage](#), where you can also find much of what you need to know about the [application process](#), the [funding](#) available for Ph.D. students, and the [program requirements](#). Click on [my homepage](#) to see what we are doing and follow up with topics of interest to you. Students have the opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary research as part of the [Dornsife Mind & Society Center](#), which [Norbert Schwarz](#) and I co-direct. The center focuses on the individual-society interface and is located in a new interdisciplinary social sciences building (opened fall 2014).

Culture and Self Lab

My students and I investigate a broad range of issues at the interface of culture and identity taking a situated cognition approach that emphasizes the context-sensitive, embodied and experiential nature of judgment and decision-making. In the next few years I will continue to study how small changes in context can shift people's mindsets, and so, the meaning they make of their own experiences with large downstream effects on judgment, choice, and behavior. These themes are exemplified in the two themes of the research am working on. One focus is on translating and testing identity-based motivation as a platform for intervention inside the classroom in public schools in Chicago, Nevada, and Colorado. The other focus is on further testing and development of the interface between identity-based motivation and other culturally relevant aspects of motivation. The titles of papers just coming out of the dissertation research of my current, and recently graduated, doctoral and postdoctoral students provide a taste of the work we are currently doing:

- *I'll take the high road: Paths to goal pursuit and identity-based interpretations of difficulty*

- *Believing that difficulty signals importance improves school outcomes by bolstering academic possible identities, a recursive analysis*
- *Your fake news, our facts: identity-based motivation shapes what we believe, share, and accept*
- *Identity-based motivation and the paradox of the future self: getting going requires thinking about time (later) in time (now)*
- *Who can I count on: Honor, self-reliance, and family in the United States and Iran.*
- *Seeing what other people see: accessible cultural mindset affects perspective-taking*
- *Cultural fluency means all is okay, cultural disfluency implies otherwise*
- *Making meaning: a culture-as-situated cognition approach to the consequences of cultural fluency and disfluency*
- *Upright and honorable. People use space to understand honor, affecting choice and perception*
- *Identity-based motivation and social class*
- *Seeing meaning even when none exists: collectivism increases belief in empty claims.*
- *Teachers can do it: Scalable identity-based motivation intervention in the classroom*
- *Guiding people to interpret experienced difficulty as importance highlights their academic possibilities and improves their academic performance*
- *Is difficulty mostly about impossibility? What difficulty implies may be culturally variant.*
- *Culturally fluent theories, metascience, and scientific progress: A case example*
- *From possible selves and future selves to current action: An integrative review and identity-based motivation synthesis.*
- *Difficulty-as-improvement: The courage to keep going in the face of life's difficulties.*
- *The upside: How people make sense of difficulty matters in a crisis.*
- *Apt and actionable possible identities matter: The case of academic outcomes.*
- *Culturally fluent real-world disparities can blind us to bias: Experiments using a cultural lens can help.*

I'm looking forward to new and exciting developments and hope that you will consider joining us in this endeavor.