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# Patience as a development virtue and common therapeutic factor

## **Cover Page Footnote**

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# Patience as a Development Virtue and Common Therapeutic Factor

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*This article provides an overview of patience and its associated constructs by examining its role in five domains: (a) confidence and control; (b) distress tolerance; (c) relationship development, maintenance, and repair; (d) character development; and (e) spiritual maturation. It highlights initial evidence that patience contributes to increased self-regulation and impulse control, distress tolerance, self-compassion, mindfulness, empathy in relationships, perspective taking, use of cognitive reappraisals, prosocial orientation, character development, and spiritual maturation. Patience helps with coping with anxiety and depression, aids with handling uncertainty, facilitates relationship maintenance and repair, and sustains the ability to manage the ambiguities present during faith crises. It promotes persistence and long-suffering, and it facilitates humility, wisdom, forgiveness, benevolence, faith, hope, and charity. It also supports primary control efforts and activates secondary control strategies when situations are outside of a client's control. Patience enhances the possibility of benefit finding during periods of adversity. Patience may qualify as a common factor (Wampold, 2015) operating across theoretical models and contexts, and it manifests both as a client characteristic and as a therapeutic change process. Eleven potential interventions for cultivating patience are outlined in this article.*

*Keywords: patience, self-control, emotion regulation, distress, persistence, development, equanimity, religious, self-compassion, goal, adversity*

Patience is essential for the development and refinement of all other virtues and is a key variable related to the change process. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1987), a leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, asserted, "I believe that a lack of patience is a major cause of the difficulties and unhappiness in the world today" (p. 30). If this statement is true, then patience may be a crucial factor in meliorating suffering and unhappiness since it mediates attitudes towards circumstance and sustains intentional efforts. Yet, patience as a therapeutic focus has received little to no attention in promoting beneficial therapy outcomes. Research related to patience, such as self- and emotion regulation, provides compelling evidence for its effect on facilitating well-being (Gross, 2014; Quoidbach, Berry, Hansenne, & Mikolajczak, 2010;

Ryan & Deci, 2000; Simon & Durand-Bush, 2015; Vohs & Baumeister, 2004).

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The Latin root for patience is *pati* meaning “to suffer,” and the French word *patient* means “enduring without complaint.” A contemporary definition is “bearing provocation, annoyance, misfortune, delay, hardship, pain, etc. with fortitude and calm and without complaint, anger or the like,” and a second usage speaks of perseverance and diligence (Patient, n.d.). Patience has been called the “ability to dwell gladly in the present moment” (Roberts, 1984, p. 53), which Robert Emmons (2003) qualified with “when one would rather be doing something else” (p. 121). Operationally, Schnitker (2012) defines patience as consisting of “both behavioral (i.e., waiting) and emotional (i.e., low arousal positive affect and notable absence of high arousal negative affect) components” (p. 263). Based on this definition, intense negative affect (i.e., anger, anxiety, fear) obstructs patience more than low-arousal negative affect (i.e., disappointment, melancholy, sadness), and high-arousal positive affect (i.e., excitement, anticipation, enthusiasm) is less likely to facilitate patience, while low-arousal positive affect (i.e., contentment, awe, gratitude) will. Patience is activated situationally, but at its core, patience is more than a strategy: it is an orientation to life.

Patience requires both capacity and commitment. These include developmental capabilities such as the evolution of the prefrontal cortex’s executive processing abilities, effective self-regulation, and the ability to evaluate future versus present rewards. Patience necessitates valuing long-term outcomes, considering others, understanding life processes, dwelling with discomfort, and accepting and accommodating to circumstance. This article will demonstrate that patience is associated with a host of character and spiritual virtues, well-being indicators, goal pursuit and attainment, development, a strong relational orientation, effective coping mechanisms, and a general state of equanimity. This article highlights five domains where patience plays a significant role:

1. Confidence and control;
2. Distress tolerance;
3. Relationship development, maintenance, and repair;
4. Character development, and;
5. Spiritual maturation.

## PATIENCE DOMAINS (SPHERES OF INFLUENCE)

### *Confidence and Control*

Clients often present with poor self-efficacy, lack self-regulation skills, or have trouble with emotion regulation. Developing confidence in one’s sense of control over self and environment helps address these concerns. Self-efficacy is a person’s belief that they possess the ability to set and achieve goals and attain desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Greater persistence in goal pursuit is tied to increased self-efficacy (Schunk, 1991). The inability to achieve desired outcomes is hampered by a variety of factors, but one of the more important reasons is underdeveloped self- and emotion-regulation abilities. Patience is an emotion-regulation mechanism. Harned’s (1997) definition of patience highlights patience’s role as an emotion regulator: (a) suffering with calmness or composure, (b) forbearance and tolerance of others, (c) willingness to wait without resentment, and (d) constancy and consistency in effort. Each of these elements suggests patience regulates emotion (inhibits impulses) in the service of desired outcomes that are generally deferred and prosocial. In regard to self-efficacy, committed and sustained effort is essential for successful performance, which is viewed as the single most important contributor to an individual’s self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977).

Underlying any sustained effort is the capacity for self-control. It is the behavioral pathway for the development of patience, and patience correlates moderately with self-control ( $r = .38$ ) (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007), indicating patience is similar to, but not synonymous with, self-control. Patience requires being able to assess and value long-term rewards over short-term gains, restrain impulses, and act intentionally. Self-control is orchestrated in the prefrontal cortex of the brain and is an element of the executive functioning process tied to decision-making. Self-control is necessary, but not sufficient, for the exercise of patience.

Schnitker (2012) found that patience plays a vital role in goal pursuit, concluding that it “is especially crucial for well-being when people are facing difficulties and obstacles” (p. 274). Researchers studying the construct of hope note that positive emotions are generated when goals are achieved, especially after

“overcoming impediments” (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2005, p. 258). Patience supports persistence in the face of “impediments” and adversity. It enhances goal attainment, providing a partial explanation for patience’s correlation with satisfaction with life, hope, and elevated self-esteem (Schnitker, 2012; Schnitker & Emmons, 2007), which contribute to a sense of well-being.

Patient people set goals that facilitate eudaimonic well-being, the kind of well-being based on developing human potential. Schnitker (2010) found that “patient people have less hedonic goals than less patient people” (p. 141), suggesting a greater focus on purpose over pleasure. In a related vein, McCullough and Willoughby (2009) provide evidence that “sanctified [nonhedonic] goals appear to generate more commitment, self-efficacy, and persistence than do nonsanctified goals” (p. 79). Sanctified goals are generally more eudaimonic than hedonic in nature, focus on transcending self-interest and immediate rewards, and frequently reflect a prosocial orientation. Prosocial goals provide extra incentive for exerting self-control (Burson, Crocker, & Mischkowski, 2012). Pursuing and achieving meaningful goals is mediated by patience, and goal achievement leads to feelings of control and improved self-efficacy.

Conceptualizing the role of patience through the lens of Regulatory Focus Theory (Higgins, 1997) demonstrates how patience plays a role in control efforts. This theory proposes that goals can be categorized as either promotion/approach/nurturance oriented or prevention/avoidance/security focused. A promotion approach focuses on aspiration and development, leading to gains (adding positives) and limiting nongains (the loss of positives). A prevention approach aims to keep one safe and secure and works to protect what one has (the absence of negatives/nonloss) and to prevent losing things deemed important (the presence of negatives/loss). Both promotion and loss-prevention orientations help develop and sustain a sense of self. Humans are generally wired for development and seek to meet needs that facilitate it. They also attempt to prevent loss. Patience is well suited to aid in promotion goals (adding positives/gains) by sustaining effort and persistence and may also help with handling the disappointment that arises from either a delay in achieving goals or failed attainment efforts (unattained positives/non-gains). For example, the goal of employment is aided by patience; patience sustains the effort in searching for, applying

for, and securing a job (gain). Patience helps when client job applications have not yet led to immediate employment by helping clients cope with feelings of distress and disappointment arising from failed promotion goals (unattained positives/nongains). Patience buffers negative affect and sustains effort—two essential elements of maintaining hope (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007). Prevention goals are also aided by patience by downregulating the negative affect arising from job loss, thus limiting the fuel for negative self-attributions (limiting the presence of negatives/nonloss). Patience also helps cope with loss (presence of negatives) by providing time and emotional space to shift efforts to new goals.

There is convincing evidence that self-control, a core component of patience, leads to a variety of positive personal and social benefits. These include academic achievement, improved ability to resist temptation, higher levels of frustration tolerance, confidence, resilience, greater ability to concentrate, persistence in the face of obstacles, responsiveness to reason, better health, increased happiness, reduced criminal activity, less substance abuse, career success, longevity, and elevated financial standing (Kern & Friedman, 2008; Mehrabian, 2000; Mischel, Shoda, & Rodriguez, 1989; Moffit et al., 2011; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) concludes, “People who learn to control inner experiences will be able to determine the quality of their lives, which is as close as any of us can come to being happy” (p. 2). Patience is the bridle for inner experience (Alma 38:12, The Book of Mormon). Teaching and encouraging the development of patience helps clients develop confidence and effective control.

#### *Distress Tolerance*

Distress drives clients to our doors. It is a motivational agent, but some clients focus more on feeling better than on getting better, choosing to reduce distress sometimes at the expense of solving problems. Therapists strive to help clients develop greater resilience, where reactivity is low and agency is high, where people feel capable of handling the pressures of life, maximize the good, and learn from their challenges. Building resilience, helping clients see new perspectives, teaching effective emotion-regulation strategies, and developing effective interpersonal skills are all methods for effectively managing distress. Engaging

in and developing these abilities requires patience. Reciprocally, patience is embedded within these skills. Clients learn to act and not just be acted upon as they find effective ways to assert control in their lives. This comes by both actively mastering self and environment and accepting what cannot be controlled by adapting self to situation. Clients who succeed in these efforts experience greater equanimity.

Patience fosters equanimity. It facilitates effective emotion regulation, reduces upset, increases compassion for self and others, and provides perspective that permits time for development. Too often, people become perturbed in seconds, which take minutes, hours, or even days to overcome. Distress intolerance, a form of impatience, exacerbates the tendency to think negatively and elevates the risk of experiencing anxiety (Dugas, Freeston, & Ladouceur, 1997). Safer, Telch, and Chen (2009) contend that “the heart of the Distress Tolerance skills is learning how to develop patience, tolerance, and equanimity (nonreaction) in the face of difficulty that cannot be changed right away” (p. 155).

Patience correlates with mindfulness (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007), and mindfulness is used to generate equanimity. Cawley, Martin, and Johnson (2000) fit patience under a “serenity” factor in their four-factor model of personality virtues, providing additional support for patience as a mechanism for facilitating equanimity. Schnitker and Emmons (2007) describe the buffering effect of patience: “It seems that high trait patience precludes individuals from getting upset and physiologically aroused by stressful situations. Thus, they experience less negative emotions” (p. 198). Patience correlates positively with certain types of positive affect and has an inverse association with negative affect, neuroticism, and depression (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007).

Patience is associated with using cognitive reappraisals that reduce distress. Schnitker (2010) found that “patience corresponds to increased use of proactive coping, which leads to decreased depression” (p. 32). Proactive coping is defined as striving for a desired future rather than trying to prevent a negative one (Sohl & Moyer, 2009)—promotion versus prevention—and involves gathering resources and setting realistic goals. Patience is generally deployed in the service of a future outcome. Restraint coping is another patience-

driven coping strategy (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989) described as

waiting until an appropriate opportunity to act presents itself, holding oneself back, and not acting prematurely. This is an active coping strategy in the sense that the person’s behavior is focused on dealing effectively with the stressor, but it is also a passive strategy in the sense that using restraint means not acting. (p. 269)

Patience facilitates acceptance, a form of secondary control, which can lead to a “subjective sense of coherence, cognitive satisfaction, or serenity” (Morling & Evered, 2006, p. 285). How clients respond to things they can and cannot control largely determines whether they experience distress or equanimity. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf (2010), a leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, teaches, “Patience means accepting that which cannot be changed and facing it with courage, grace, and faith” (p. 59). Patience facilitates the shift from primary control, the direct effort to control a person’s environment, to secondary control, which involves adapting self to the environment. Morling and Evered (2006) suggest that “secondary control can involve changing one’s perspective on adversity, it may also be adaptive because it enhances people’s sense of understanding and meaning in events (see Park & Folkman, 1997), which helps people to cope” (p. 288).

Baumeister and Vohs (2002) hypothesize that “giving meaning to the negative life event may constitute a form of control” (p. 612). Finding meaning in adversity is aided by patience. Making sense of challenging experiences requires time to integrate new ideas into existing beliefs or to alter beliefs to fit new realities. For example, patience provides a classroom for learning what trust and love mean after experiences of abuse. Patience is the art of bearing burdens, and meaning is the mule that packs them.

Schnitker and Emmons (2007) speculate that collectivist cultures, which emphasize equanimity, may use more secondary control strategies and embrace patience more. Supporting this assertion, Chen, Ng, and Rao (2005) posit that Asian cultures value the future more than the present and therefore may “be more patient than their American counterparts” (p. 292). Laran (2010) suggests that culture influences the target of goal striving: “Eastern cultures place high value on the concept of patience and calmness in important

pursuits" (p. 16). This cultural valuing of patience appears to coincide with a greater reliance on secondary control strategies.

Bryant's (1989) four-factor model of perceived control illuminates the role of patience in promoting primary and secondary control. This model "consists of self-evaluations of one's ability to (a) avoid negative events (primary-negative control), (b) cope with negative events (secondary-negative control), (c) obtain positive events (primary-positive control), and (d) savor positive events (secondary-positive control)" (p. 774). By holding his or her tongue, a client may prevent a negative event. Patience aids in coping with negative events by reducing the upset of negative affect. It facilitates obtaining positive events, such as enhancing goal attainment. Finally, patience enables people to slow down, savor achievements, and "smell the roses." Feeling some level of control is crucial to a sense of self; therefore, it is important to have the knowledge and ability to shift between primary and secondary control strategies as a way of sustaining identity. Baumeister and Alquist (2009) claim that

all organisms need to achieve some sort of harmony with their environment so that they can live in reasonable security and peace and can satisfy their needs. Changing the environment to suit the self is one way of achieving such harmony, but changing the self to fit the environment is also a viable strategy. (p. 117)

Patience helps create the synthesis between primary and secondary control strategies and increases distress tolerance.

#### *Relationship Development, Maintenance, and Repair*

Patience is essential in creating and maintaining healthy relationships with self (intrapersonal), others (interpersonal), and God (transcendental). Patience with oneself is frequently an issue for clients. Whether clients are addressing perceived failures, problematic habits and self-destructive behaviors, shame, maladaptive perfectionism, or an overly harsh critical inner voice, patience with oneself is essential. Change is often slow, difficult, hard to measure, and marked by episodes of success and failure. Patience permits the process of change to unfold. Elder Wirthlin (1987) suggests that patience may be a particularly challenging virtue in our age: "Perhaps the practice

of patience is more difficult, yet more necessary, now than at any previous time" (p. 30).

It is easy for clients to become harsh critics of themselves, demand perfection, and live with anxiety and discouragement. They forget that they are in the process of development. Elder Wirthlin (1987) stated, "we should be satisfied with our progress even though it may come slowly at times" (p. 32), and Elder Uchtdorf (2010) added "It's OK that you're not quite there yet. Keep working on it, but stop punishing yourself . . . Please remember also to be compassionate and patient with yourself" (p. 120). Clients struggle to strike the balance between developmental efforts and perfection. Progress is better measured in trends rather than in events. Life's journey might be described as the quest to close the gap between the actual and ideal self, transitioning from the natural man to the saint and reconciling the self to the will of God.

Patience promotes a healthy and adaptive view of the self and leads to self-compassion, or the ability to acknowledge the good-faith efforts of oneself. Neff (2003) states, "Recognition that the self, as a member of humankind, deserves to be treated with the same patience and respect as others is an important feature of self-compassion" (p. 235). Elder Uchtdorf (2010) pleads, "Never give up on anyone. And that includes not giving up on yourself" (p. 58).

Patience helps clients learn from their experience. And patience with self is enhanced when clients acknowledge that they are traveling in the same boat as their fellow life travelers, when they treat themselves kindly even in the face of their inadequacy, when they accept failure as an element of eventual success, and when they believe they can face (rather than avoid) whatever pain or darkness is lurking in their minds and hearts. Researchers have found that "those who experienced an increase in self-compassion also experienced increased social connectedness and decreased self-criticism, depression, rumination, thought suppression, and anxiety" (Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 149). Gilbert (2005) suggests that self-compassion "deactivates" the threat system related to insecurity, protectiveness, and the limbic system. It "activates" the self-soothing system associated with security, safety, and oxytocin. The available evidence indicates that patience is closely associated with self-soothing abilities and negatively related to anxiety. Thus, patience with

self is an important catalyst for growth and development. But the threat system plays an important role as well, warning clients when they should take action. Thus, a woman in a domestic abuse situation may need to take action to avoid physical violence. Patience will be necessary in the healing process—it will contribute to the development of self-compassion that comes as part of healing.

Patience with others is often a therapy focus. Whether it is patience in marriage or with children, coworkers, roommates, or people in general, much upset is experienced when the behavior or beliefs of others do not conform to what the client expects or desires. Too often clients want others to “ticktock” to their own clock. Schnitker and Emmons (2007) found correlations with those who rated themselves as *valuing patience* as a virtue and who also evaluated themselves as *possessing patience* with the following: (a) having a compassionate and nonjudgmental view of others, (b) feeling a sense of connectedness to humanity, (c) possessing a positive and benevolent view of people, (d) exhibiting an appreciation for others, (e) experiencing empathic concern, (f) adopting a new perspective, and (g) having an abundance mentality. These factors contribute to satisfying interpersonal relationships and social cohesion. Patience negatively correlates with avoidant attachment style, which diminishes intimacy strivings (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007). Other factors influence the development of patience. For example, trustworthy caregivers, meaningful experiences with waiting, and beliefs that delayed rewards are worth waiting for contribute to delayed gratification and patience. In one study, delay of gratification in children was significantly influenced by whether they trusted that delayed rewards would be available (Kidd, Palmeri, & Aslin, 2013). It can be difficult for clients if their childhood experiences have taught them that waiting has an unreliable payoff.

Patience correlates with social desirability, suggesting patient people care about what others think and feel. Elder Uchtdorf (2010) encouraged us to “understand that they [others], like us, are imperfect. They, like us, make mistakes. They, like us, want others to give them the benefit of the doubt” (p. 58). President Ezra Taft Benson (1986), a leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, exclaimed, “A patient [person] is understanding of others’ faults” (p. 47).

Schnitker and Emmons (2007) claim that “patience may enable individuals to tolerate flaws in others therefore displaying more generosity, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness” (p. 201). They also found that patience correlates positively with forgiveness, one of the 24 character strengths identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004). Patience serves both as relationship maintenance and repair mechanism. It fosters forgiveness and forbearance. Others have found that patient people are more cooperative (Curry, Price, & Price, 2008, p. 783). Researchers have found that delaying gratification reduces “rejection sensitivity, the disposition to expect, perceive, and overreact to interpersonal rejection (Ayduk et al., 2000)” (Duckworth, 2009, p. 536). Elevated levels of self-control are negatively correlated with even the precursors of anger—malevolent intentions (Tangney et al., 2004). Self-control contributes to “the ability to step outside one’s own point of view and understand someone else’s concerns” (Tangney et al., 2004, p. 303). This helps explain why those with high self-control are “more inclined to make amends” when relationships are breached (Tangney et al., 2004, p. 311). Thus, by association, patience, self-control, and delay of gratification lead to more benevolent views of others. Schnitker (2012) postulates that

if patient people were willing to suffer for the sake of the other and for the sake of the relationship, we would predict that patience could transform those relationships . . . [by] remain[ing] calm and positively (or at least neutrally) engaged with people who are potentially frustrating. (pp. 163–164)

Although it is a virtue to learn to tolerate the weaknesses of others and forgive, no one should use patience as an excuse to allow behaviors that degrade themselves or others, permit violence, or condone abuse. If “patience” is used as a way to deny reality and give unwarranted “second chances,” then it can actually perpetuate harmful behaviors. When to draw the line between giving people a second chance (patience) and when to act to prevent further harm may sometimes be difficult to distinguish and is a personal decision. But any *pattern* of abuse should not be accepted because the perpetrator pleads for patience. In cases of abuse/violence, protecting oneself and loved ones becomes a higher priority than continuing in patience

with a perpetrator's behavior. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland (2018), a leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, taught, speaking of forgiveness, "[Christ] did *not* say . . . In order to forgive fully, you have to reenter a toxic relationship or return to an abusive, destructive circumstance" (p. 79).

Schnitker and Emmons (2007) found that patience is related to experiencing a personal relationship and union with God. They speculate that a "patient individual may be more apt to experience a connection with God as he or she is willing to wait patiently for answers to prayers and for a feeling of intimacy with God" (p. 199). Patience with oneself and others is significantly aided if God is viewed as benevolent and patient with His children (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992; Pargament, Smith, Koenig, & Perez, 1998). Clients are more forgiving of their own mistakes if they believe God is forgiving. Patience builds trust that God's timing is intentional.

#### *Character Development*

Patience is critical for character development. It is hard to conceive of anyone developing a trait (e.g., becoming more loving, improving self-control, or becoming less judgmental and more tolerant) without patience. Development requires sustained time and effort, and patience provides the persistence to stick with the process.

Patience correlated most highly with the following strengths in Peterson and Seligman's (2004) classification of 24 strengths: fairness, forgiveness, leadership, teamwork, and kindness (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007). Of the six core strengths comprising the 24 individual strengths, temperance (forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation), justice (teamwork, fairness, leadership), and transcendence (appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality) predicted higher patience scores, while courage (bravery, perseverance, honesty, zest), a core strength, predicted lower patience scores (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007). It should be noted that of the four strengths comprising courage, perseverance is defined as a core element of patience, while zest, a high-arousal positive strength, is predicted to be uncorrelated with patience, helping to explain this negative correlation. Three themes are present in these correlations: (a) a strong relational theme that emphasizes cooperating,

seeing that others are treated well and giving people the benefit of the doubt; (b) self-regulation; and (c) a view of life that is positive and transcendent.

In relation to the Big Five personality traits (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991), patience correlates positively with agreeableness (compassion, cooperation, trust, helpfulness), openness (curiosity, appreciation for art, imagination, willingness to try new things), and conscientiousness (self-regulation, thoroughness, planning, deliberateness, and dependability). These correlations are similar to the themes found with correlates of character strengths. Elevated scores on neuroticism (anxiousness, reactivity, emotional instability, distress intolerance, pessimism, and distrust) and extraversion (energy, positivity, and assertiveness) predict lower levels of patience (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007). Emotional instability, trust issues, and high-arousal positive and negative emotions may act as patience inhibitors. Schnitker (2010) postulates that "this pattern of results depicts the patient person as an agreeable, conscientious, and open individual who does not often experience negative emotions and who may or may not be extraverted" (p. 48).

It is important to note that individuals who present with trauma histories may manifest emotional instability, exhibit trust issues, and experience strong negative emotions as just mentioned. In these cases, an emphasis on patience may recede while the work of processing the trauma, establishing safety, exploring decision-making about reporting abuse or proceeding in a relationship, and other emotionally laden issues are addressed. Patience could be useful during this process, but focusing on patience at the expense of other issues may feel like invalidation, inhibit emotional expression, restrain decision-making that may require timeliness, and even weaken the therapeutic bond.

Patience was inversely correlated with negative affect, but uncorrelated with positive affect in Schnitker and Emmons's (2007) study. However, in Schnitker's (2012) study, which included a patience intervention, participation in the patience intervention "predicted decreased depression and increased positive affect" (p. 160). Schnitker and Westbrook (2014) claim "patience can be conceptualized as a buffer against negative emotionality . . . People high in the virtue of patience may experience fewer negative emotions because their patient disposition prevents the activation of these emotions

in frustrating situations and circumstances” (p. 163). They add, “Patience may allow people to feel more positive emotions or may directly lead to the activation of certain positive emotions” (p. 163). Schnitker (2012) speculates that low-arousal positive emotions like serenity, contentment, and equanimity may be generated by patience, while high-arousal positive emotions such as excitement, happiness, and zest may not.

Researchers provide evidence that emotion regulation improves with age (Birditt, Fingerhant, & Almeida, 2005; Carstensen, Fung, & Charles, 2003). Allemand, Zimprich, and Hertzog (2007) found age-related increases in agreeableness and conscientiousness through midlife into old age. These personality traits are associated with greater patience, self-regulation, and social harmony. They found that neuroticism (anxiety) decreases with age. Life teaches that patience is an important part of success and happiness, both personally and relationally. We know from the marshmallow study (Mischel et al., 1989) and the Dunedin study (Moffitt et al., 2011) that children who possess a greater capacity for self-control experience more success in subsequent years. Children vary in this ability, as do adults. Fortunately, evidence suggests that people generally develop greater emotional stability and enhanced emotional well-being as they age. Older people are less reactive, demonstrate increased capacity for self- and emotion regulation, have an enhanced ability to deal with problems (Birditt et al., 2005; Röcke, Li, & Smith, 2009), experience better mental health (Thomas et al., 2016), and participate more in “passive constructive behavioral reactions (e.g., doing nothing) than younger adults” (Allemand et al., 2007, p. 337). Patience is one of those “passive constructive” responses. Patience may be embraced as individuals shift from an achievement orientation to a relational perspective that often accompanies aging.

Patient people experience greater humility, which correlates with less depressive symptoms (Schnitker, 2010). Relatedly, Tong et al. (2016) reported, “there appears to be good support for the hypothesis that humility predicts higher self-control” (p. 38). Means, Wilson, Sturm, Biron, and Bach (1990) identified patience as an element in their four-factor description of humility. The four factors consist of willingness to admit one’s faults, a recognition that one cannot

control all social encounters, an attitude of patience and gentleness with other people, and a sense of empathy for others. Psychological definitions of humility also have elements of patience embedded in their descriptions (Landrum, 2011; Tangney, 2000). Other researchers have found that “self-reported humility correlated positively with prosocial qualities like forgiveness and gratitude” (LaBouff, Rowatt, Johnson, Tsang, & Willerton, 2012, p. 17), which are correlates of patience. As evidence of discriminant validity, Wilcox, Kramer, and Sen (2011) found that pride reduces delayed gratification, and Schnitker (2010) found that “narcissism is negatively correlated with patience” (p. 65). Elder Uchtdorf (2010) taught that “impatience . . . is a symptom of selfishness. It is a trait of the self-absorbed” (p. 57). Thus, patience is associated with increased humility and negatively related to narcissism, one form of pride. It is important, however, to recognize that not all impatience is due to selfishness. Clients may be impatient while waiting for the medical report for someone they are worried about. They may find it hard to be patient when they are concerned about the decisions being made by a loved one. Clients need to be careful about being judgmental when they view others as impatient and leap to the conclusion that they are selfish. If the client walked in their shoes, would he or she also feel impatient? Remember humility is an attitude of patience and gentleness towards others that leads to giving people the benefit of the doubt.

Scholars have also made a conceptual case—supported by ancillary evidence—for the connection between patience and wisdom. Hall (1922) speculated that the development of wisdom accrued with age and experience and was facilitated by a meditative attitude, philosophic calmness, and impartiality. The first two of these characteristics—and potentially the third—appear to be closely related to the expression of patience. Baltes, Glück, and Kunzmann (2005) conclude that “wisdom is acquired through an extended and intense process of learning and practice” (p. 332), implying the presence of patience. Staudinger and Glück (2011) postulate three important components in the development of wisdom: (a) a cognitive component that entails a “deep and broad insight into self, others, and the world” (p. 217); (b) an emotional component

that they define as an emotion-regulation ability that enables the “tolerance of ambiguity” (p. 217); and (c) a certain type of motivation “that transcends self-interest and is invested in the well-being of others and the world” (p. 217). Patience is an emotion-regulation strategy and helps when coping with ambiguity, partly because it downregulates negative emotions (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007). Patience meets the criteria for “transcending self-interest” and investing in the “well-being of others” by increasing perspective taking and empathy for others, enhancing tolerance, and facilitating greater acceptance of human limitations (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007). Kramer (2000) contends that successfully integrating life’s dialectics, one form of wisdom, leads a person to become “less judgmental, more tolerant, and more accepting of opposing perspectives and of human limitations” (p. 86), which are also correlates of patience. In a qualitative study of “wisdom from life’s challenges,” researchers found that patience is one of the themes commonly associated with wisdom, along with perseverance and acceptance, which are both strongly associated with patience (Choi & Landeros, 2011, p. 610). Patience is the librarian of experience as it catalogues lessons and creates a library of wisdom.

The Apostle Paul’s formula suggests that tribulation or distress “worketh patience.” Thus, the exercise of patience during difficulties leads to “experience” or, in other words, wisdom—the lessons from experience—which fuels hope (Romans 5:3–4, King James Version). Thus, patience serves as a gateway to wisdom and hope.

Patience correlates with forgiveness and agreeableness (Schnitker and Emmons, 2007), and “agreeable people tend to forgive their offenders” (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010, p. 904). Patience is a forgiveness enabler and mediates the upset that contributes to relationship ruptures. McCullough, Fincham, and Tsang (2003) suggest that forbearance, “the exercise of patience or restraint” (p. 542), is a principal element of forgiveness, and Harned (1997) identified forbearance as one of the four factors comprising patience. McCullough et al. (2003) claim that forbearance moderates reactions to transgressions. Thus, forbearance and patience dampen the intensity and reactivity to offenses. Not only is patience critical in the process of forgiving, but it also helps prevent taking offense.

### *Spiritual Maturation*

Patience is essential for spiritual development. It correlates with religious behaviors, such as frequency of prayer, scripture reading, number of religious friends, and religious service attendance (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007). It is associated with spirituality, one of 24 character strengths identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004). It is related to a spiritual approach to life that includes experiencing a relationship with God and feeling a sense of abundance and gratitude, as well as holding a compassionate and nonjudgmental view of others (Schnitker & Emmons, 2007). There is bidirectional evidence that supports religiosity as fostering greater patience, but there is also some evidence that embracing patience may increase the value of a spiritual approach to life. For example, patience cultivates prosocial views, forbearance, secondary control, long-term versus short-term value orientations, and eudaimonic goals, or values that lead to harmony (humility and wisdom) that may enhance a spiritual approach to life.

Research across the world demonstrates that “religious people are lower in impulsivity and more willing to delay gratification than are their less religious counterparts” (Carter, McCullough, Kim-Spoon, Corrales, & Blake, 2012, p. 228), which can be considered a hallmark of patience. Chen et al. (2005) speculate that believing in an afterlife likely enhances the importance of future outcomes, offsetting the value of immediate rewards. Duckworth (2011) states, “arguably, every major religious tradition advocates forsaking pleasure in the moment to realize greater deferred rewards” (p. 2639). Researchers have found initial evidence that “religious people (or people who have had religious mental content activated) will experience less self-regulatory depletion after tasks that rely on self-regulatory strength” (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009, p. 83). Priming religious thinking in “believers” restores self-regulation energy after self-regulatory-taxing activities, when the predicted outcome would be for self-regulatory depletion (Rounding, Lee, Jacobson, & Ji, 2012).

Religious tenets reinforce the importance of patience, identifying it as one of God’s divine characteristics, as a characteristic important for submitting to God, and as a way to interact with one another. Thinking about one’s religious values appears to help people react with less defensiveness and distress to their perceived errors (Inzlicht & Tullet, 2010), increasing the probability for

self-compassion and personal peace. Inzlicht and Tullet (2010) conclude:

If thinking about religion leads people to react to their errors with less distress and defensiveness—an effect that occurs within a few hundredths of a second—in the long run, this effect may translate to religious people living their life with greater equanimity than nonreligious people, being better able to cope with the pressures of living in a sometimes hostile world. (pp. 1188–1189)

In the Old Testament, New Testament, and Christianity in general, control of self is given primacy over controlling the external world, others, and circumstances. The author of Proverbs states, “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Proverbs 16:32). People may master the world and still lose their own souls (Mark 8:36). Patience is a value commitment, based on a benevolent view of self and others that weighs the merits of long-term rewards with short-term gains and triggers the enactment of self-control in generating patience.

Patience is essential for those striving to become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). In the divine sequence of development, patience mediates between virtue (righteous desires) and self-control on the one hand and the development of godliness and charity (2 Peter 1:5–7) on the other hand. Therefore, patience harnesses righteous desires and sustains self-control in the development of godliness and charity. In fact, the Apostle Paul’s description of charity has embedded within it various elements of patience: suffering long, enduring, bearing burdens well, and not being easily provoked (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5, 7). Elder Uchtdorf taught “patience is a process of perfection” (2010, p. 59).

Faith requires the exercise of patience since faith is “not to have a perfect knowledge” (Alma 32:21). The drama of faith is played out on the stage of uncertainty, where people choose to believe in things they cannot see because they believe the “seed” will develop and grow as promised. People engage patience as they nurture the seed and wait to see whether it will produce good fruit. But the suspense of uncertainty can be unsettling and lead to impatience. People are tempted to give up what they know because of the things they don’t know. President Brigham Young (1978), a leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

said, “Give me patience to wait until I can understand it for myself” (p. 224). Humans are prone to catastrophize when dark clouds appear, not knowing when the skies will clear again. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1990), a leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, taught, “Patient endurance permits us to cling to our faith in the Lord and our faith in His timing when we are being tossed about by the surf of circumstance” (p. 34). Patience provides a path by “still waters” which “restoreth” the soul (Psalms 23:2–3). Those that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength (Isaiah 40:31). Faith is the settling of uncertainty with evidence that is personal, private, authentic, compelling, and often ineffable. In many ways, patience is an act of faith and hope. It is the belief that restraint now will lead to something better later. Patience provides time for the seeds of faith to sprout in the soil of uncertainty. Patience sustains faith and breeds humility, which delivers God’s children to His will. The lessons that come from the trials of life are best received by patience. Patience is the glaze in the refiner’s fire that allows the client’s divine potential to become a work of beauty.

In summary, patience is integral to change, growth, and development. It is critical for those struggling with addictions or trying to change habits/lifestyles, who make repeated efforts to improve. Sometimes these efforts are made with growing hopelessness as clients begin to believe they will never succeed. The application of patience reveals that effort itself is part of the victory, and the lessons learned from each successive effort can help the next attempt become more successful. These persistent efforts provide God the opportunity to judge and reward intent (D&C 6:16, The Doctrine and Covenants) as well as outcome. Distress that is persistent or reoccurring requires patience in order to take one step at a time, to develop new perspectives, and to sometimes adapt to a reality where meaning and satisfaction include living with “thorn[s] in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7). Patience is necessary to repair injured relationships, where it takes the good-faith efforts of two fully flawed people. Forgiveness is both a decision and a process, and patience turns that decision into a process that nurtures healing. Patience is required for any goal that requires sustained effort when success is incomplete. It respects the influence of timing and the constraints of control. Patience allows people to endure suffering and provides admittance to

the advanced classroom for lessons only adversity can teach. It is the bridge all clients must cross between the actual life being lived and the ideal life they are striving to live up to. It is accepting inadequacies while striving to be better and recognizing that there is joy in the journey and not just the arrival. Patience is the fisherman of opportunity, the coach of persistence, the author of control, the trainer of the tongue, the tutor for timing, the pupil of experience, the witness for pain, the caretaker of troubles, the friend to compassion, the guide for forgiveness, the custodian of hope, the farmer for faith, the companion of serenity, the explorer of hidden strengths, the builder of talents, the sage for wisdom, the colleague of humility, the scholar of human relations, the guardian of civility, the apprentice to charity, the sculptor of the soul, and the thermostat for distress. Patience helps soothe the distress of suffering. Adversity is the tiller of the soul. It uproots noxious weeds and loosens the soul's hardened ground. Patience fertilizes this soil of the soul in the garden of the Gods.

If life proceeded exactly as people wanted and expected, if life's wind always blew them towards their desired destinations, and if their priorities always trumped everyone else's, everyone might have little need for patience. But life—with timetables and "interruptions" not of their own making—is a mix of what people want and do not want and what they have and do not have, where expectations and goals are important but can also lead to frustration and disappointment, and where developing and flawed people (including themselves) with their own needs and desires exist. Patience allows people to maneuver through the expected and unexpected, distill lessons, develop and grow, experience peace, and live in love with oneself, neighbors, and perceived enemies.

#### CULTIVATING PATIENCE

A variety of interventions can cultivate patience. Here are few ideas.

##### *Enhance Self-control*

Self-control by its very nature is designed to focus attention and energy on a goal (an intentional act) and to reduce the influence of competing impulses and distractions. Consider the following: create a plan for

scripture study, work on remembering the names of those you meet, commit to an exercise plan, or enact a savings plan. Clients will have greater success if their plan is specific, measurable, realistic, highly committed, and supported by trusted others and if they avoid working on too many goals at one time.

##### *Improve Distress Tolerance*

Difficulties and frustrations arise for everyone. Patience is developed by being less reactive to situations, less fearful, and not so rushed, thus reducing discomfort. It comes when clients soothe and calm themselves, when they see problems from a growth perspective and adopt a learning attitude. This includes seeing challenges as opportunities rather than threats. Consider the following interventions: develop mindfulness; focus on benefit finding; improve self-soothing abilities; avoid overgeneralizing, personalizing, and thinking of negative events in permanent ways; learn relaxation skills; strengthen a sense of purpose and meaning; foster friendships and social support; and build faith and hope in God. Teach clients to expect and accept challenges, to understand the role of opposition in God's plan, to develop effective coping skills, and to appreciate surviving while working toward thriving. Learning to sit patiently with discomfort helps clients tolerate the journey of discovery that comes from facing their fears and pain. They sometimes realize that their fears were exaggerated, find that they are stronger than they supposed, become aware that they can offer real empathy to others and themselves, come to understand that mercy and grace are available—that God will make all things work for their good according to His timing—and learn that God was already present when pain appeared at their door. For God "descended below all things" (D&C 88:6) into the abyss of suffering (D&C 19:16–18), knows what it is like to feel alone ("why hast thou forsaken me?"; Mark 15:34), and learned how to aid and comfort His children through His own suffering (Alma 7:12).

##### *Foster Self-compassion (Seeing Ourselves Through the Eyes of God)*

People are more patient with themselves when they recognize that everyone experiences a gap between their good intentions and their actual behavior. That is no reason to resort to demeaning and criticizing one's

self. Encourage attitudes that emphasize learning from mistakes, being patient with progress, making continued efforts to improve, crediting effort even if success is incomplete, and realizing that grace will replace one's inadequacy with God's completeness. Self-compassion is enhanced by using language with oneself that is gentle, encouraging, and filled with goodwill, while also envisioning God as a loving father who is rooting for you, avoiding comparing oneself to others, developing and acknowledging good intentions, congratulating oneself on efforts to live according to those good intentions, and asking God to fill us with His love. Self-compassion is not an excuse for lack of effort; rather it is a way to emphasize one's divinity.

#### *Increase Benevolent Attitudes*

Patience comes more easily when clients understand the needs, desires, and challenges of those around them; when they give others room to be human; and when they treat themselves with that same goodwill. Interventions to increase benevolence include viewing oneself and others as potential gods and goddesses, developing empathy, being willing to give to others what clients want, remembering their own inadequacies and failures, discovering the strengths of oneself and others, forgiving oneself and others, creating I/Thou relationships that unite rather than separate clients from others (Buber, 1970), and attempting to see themselves and others through God's eyes. Viewing oneself and others positively gives us the benefit of the doubt, creates a greater commitment to community, and generates an incentive for patience.

#### *Learn to View Things from a Different Perspective*

Impatience frequently arises when clients believe things should be different than they are: "She takes too much time in the bathroom," "That driver should not be cutting in like that," or "I go to church, pray, and try to read my scriptures, so why do I keep struggling with pornography? There must be something wrong with me." Teach clients to reframe and make more positive and adaptive cognitive appraisals. This means looking for alternative explanations that give others and themselves the benefit of the doubt. Clients can challenge their negative assumptions, invite other explanations that might account for circumstantial factors, give credit for their own effort, avoid assuming

that others are intentionally making life difficult for them, and provide other beneficent explanations.

#### *Engage Curiosity*

Patience is generated if clients choose curiosity rather than threat in the face of the unknown. Help clients pose questions like the following: "What is my anxiety trying to teach me?" "What can I learn from my anxiety that could help me?" "What assumptions do I hold that make me react with impatience?" "What happens if I try to act positive, even if I don't feel positive?" and "What might it be like if the next time I have an unpleasant/upsetting thought I acknowledge it and then shift my attention to a more constructive thought rather than berate myself for the thought?" Approaching problems with curiosity creates a different relationship with those problems, thus reducing the threat, increasing problem-solving and learning, and generating greater patience.

#### *Nurture Persistence*

We live in a time of fast food, Twitter-sized thoughts, and media that shows quick resolutions to complex problems. Developing plans and giving dedicated effort toward them is not modeled well. Learning to persist in meaningful pursuits will cultivate patience. Persistence is the combination of self-control and resilience over time. Help clients learn to identify values, set goals aligned with those values, build plans, work through challenges, and feel a sense of accomplishment (e.g., become more sensitive to holy promptings, improve important relationships, or enhance a desired virtue). Start small to begin with. The key is to pick a project that will take time, have a high investment, and may include no definitive endpoint.

#### *Cultivate Gratitude*

Some emotions can lead to impatience, such as anger, sadness, fear, and anxiety (Lerner, Li, & Weber, 2013), while other emotions contribute to greater patience. Gratitude is associated with prosocial behaviors and attitudes, is a low-arousal positive emotion, and may generate more appreciation for a future perspective (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006; DeSteno, Li, Dickens, & Lerner, 2014). Thus, gratitude interventions may enhance patience for oneself and others. These interventions may include gratitude journals;

counting blessings; gratitude prayers; writing and sending regular thank-you notes, texts, or emails; and focusing on how others have blessed them.

#### *Enjoy the Journey*

If clients' destinations become more important than the quality of their journey, they may find that where they arrived is not much different from where they came from. It is aging without development, experience without learning, and activity lacking fulfillment, as well as not seeing or appreciating much of life's scenery. Patience allows clients to extract the "honey" from their lives that sweetens their journey. How they undertake their mortal journey actually determines their eternal destination. A divine destination requires a mortal journey, and clients might as well try to learn from and enjoy, as best as they can, every twist and turn in that journey. As Elder Wirthlin's (2008) mother taught, "come what may, and love it." Patience allows clients to participate more fully in the journey. Help clients recognize that, for the most part, it is the small and simple things that actually make life worth living. Another element of enjoying the journey is remembering that life is not a solo trek. Patience is an attitude of respect and appreciation for others. If our clients' lives are too focused on their own outcomes, they may be prone to see others as obstacles and forget that life is a laboratory for learning how to treat one another well. See whether they can attend to the "interruptions" in their lives and discover whether these uninvited experiences lead to meaningful lessons. Focus on helping clients increase the joy present each day by savoring the good, seeing opportunities, living intentionally, celebrating even small successes, making time to enjoy others, and limiting avoidance of things they dislike and fear. Many of life's significant lessons are unexpected and uninvited. Patience facilitates letting go of expectations when they become barriers rather than stepping stones. Frustration is often the fruit of impatience and robs clients of much of the sweetness in life. Exercising patience reduces the probability for regret later.

#### *Learn to Be Still*

God invites all of us to "be still and know that I am God" (D&C 101:16), and patience aids with that revelation. But the constant noise of mortality may

interfere with our clients' abilities to hear the divine whisperings of heaven that remind them of their holy heritage (3 Nephi 11:3). In some cases, clients fear what they might discover about themselves if they quiet their minds and their lives and look inward, believing that they are flawed, unacceptable, and unlovable. When they finally face themselves, they generally discover their fears are overblown and there is much to be valued and appreciated. Patience is developed as clients are encouraged to prioritize time to ponder, pray, appreciate, experience, wonder, and seek beauty and virtue. It is seeing anew what once brought them joy, discovering beauty along the highway of life, and magnifying their ability to see the hand of God in their lives. Patience allows our clients to notice growth in the ashes of their adversity. It helps them discover that every experience can be consecrated (2 Nephi 2:2) for their gain by Him who also experienced what He wished He could avoid (Matthew 26:39). Each thread of experience can add to life's tapestry. Teach clients to listen well, to observe keenly, and to develop "hearts that know and feel" (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985, p. 252). Invite clients to take time to sit by a lake, watch a sunset, stroll along the beach, take a nature hike, enjoy a conversation with loved ones and friends, read a good book, engage in a hobby, unplug from mortality's buzz, or do anything that soothes the soul and helps to savor life, live more abundantly, and develop and maintain a divine perspective. Instruct them to make time and space for things that do not have to be checked off a list. Patience diminishes frustration and helps them wait on the Lord who "renews" strength (Isaiah 40:31).

#### *Develop Faith and Trust in God*

Alma teaches that enhancing a relationship with God leads to greater patience: "and thou didst bear all these things with patience because the Lord was with thee" (Alma 38:4). Assess the client's view of God. A benevolent view of God is more likely to breed patience than a harsh view. Help clients discover ways they can learn to trust in God. In situations that cannot be controlled, patience is more easily exerted if clients believe there is a purpose. They may not be able to comprehend that purpose, but they can come to trust that God knows how to make all things work for their good. Help them let go of the demand for

God to act on their timetable and meet their requests, since God knows what they need and when they need it. Remind clients that God's ways, with no veil blocking His understanding, are higher than their ways (Isaiah 55:8–9). Unlike mortals, God does not experience frustration (D&C 3:3). Help clients understand that God's design is to make His children joint heirs of all that He has (Romans 8:17). Only He knows how to prepare His children to be worthy beneficiaries.

This is a brief review of potential patience interventions. Other interventions might include teaching mindfulness, resilience skills, relaxation and breathing exercises, attention refocusing, and emotion-regulation strategies, balancing achievement drive with relationship building, and focusing on eudaimonic pursuits as well as hedonic satisfaction.

#### CONCLUSION

This overview of psychological research and literature provides compelling evidence for the influence of patience as a substratum for psychological health and well-being, relational harmony and happiness, and spiritual maturity and development. It provides a convincing claim that developing patience enhances a variety of desirable therapy processes and outcomes. It provides support for patience as a client characteristic as well as a therapeutic process, which crosses theoretical orientations and facilitates well-being processes, qualifying patience as a common factor. It highlights a variety of paths for developing patience. As therapists practice and model patience, encourage and teach clients to become more patient with themselves, others, and life and to value the incremental process of change that is inherent in therapy—evidence points to significant therapeutic gains.

Patience is grounded in self-control, generates pro-social action, serves as a coping strategy, fits the definition for an emotion-regulation mechanism, and provides an orientation to life. Individuals vary in temperament for patience; thus, it may be either undervalued or at variance with their personality style. Evidence suggests that patience can be improved, which idea is aligned with the divine injunction to cultivate patience. This article demonstrates that patience is associated with an array of helpful outcomes.

This survey of patience research serves as a call to examine the role of patience in psychological treatment. As a caveat, no virtue alone serves as the sole

road to Shangri-La. Patience is necessary but not always sufficient in and of itself to produce helpful outcomes. Patience without purpose leads nowhere. Worse yet, patience without morality can facilitate evil ends. Patience is best viewed as a dialectic between action and restraint, control and acceptance, promotion and loss, immersion and narrative, commandment and context, and efficiency and effectiveness. It is expressed both as a disposition and as a response. It can be enhanced and developed. Schnitker and Westbrook (2014) assert that “initial evidence supports that interventions intending to increase patience also lead to increases in well-being, pointing to favorable prospects of adding patience to the repertoire of positive psychological interventions” (p. 155). Schnitker (2010) concludes, “findings suggest that patience is an especially vital character strength for people facing difficulties, suffering, or hardships” (p. 132), echoing Elder Wirthlin's (1987) statement that the “lack of patience is a major cause of the difficulties and unhappiness in the world today” (p. 30). The accumulated evidence suggests patience may be a particularly helpful focus for many who seek counseling. This is an invitation to explore the clinical topography of patience both as an intervention and as a way of being.

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