

# New Research From Psychological Science

August 02, 2013

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## [When Holding Back Helps: Suppressing Negative Emotions During Sacrifice Feels Authentic and Is Beneficial for Highly Interdependent People](#)

*Bonnie M. Le and Emily A. Impett*

Can suppressing negative emotions help people's relationships? Participants kept a daily diary in which they noted whether they had made a sacrifice for their partner. Each time participants made a sacrifice, they completed measures of suppression and of personal and interpersonal well-being. Suppression of negative emotions during sacrifice benefited the relationship quality and well-being of people with high levels of interdependence and hurt the relationship quality and well-being of people with low levels of interdependence. Although suppressing one's emotions is generally thought to lead to negative outcomes, this study finds an instance in which suppression may be beneficial.

## [Differential Electrophysiological Signatures of Semantic and Syntactic Scene Processing](#)

*Melissa L.-H. Võ and Jeremy M. Wolfe*

Past research has shown that syntactic and semantic language violations elicit different event-related potentials. Are such differences also seen when people view inconsistencies in a scene? Participants looked at pictures of real-world scenes that violated semantic and syntactic expectations. Pictures with syntactic violations showed objects that were misplaced within the scene, whereas pictures depicting semantic violations showed incongruent objects. The researchers found that semantic inconsistency and syntactic violations produced different types of event-related potentials, leading them to conclude that syntactic and semantic inconsistencies in perceptual scenes are processed differently.

## [Women Are More Likely to Wear Red or Pink at Peak Fertility](#)

*Alec T. Beall and Jessica L. Tracy*

In many species, females signal their reproductive period by displaying red or pink coloring. Could this be true in humans as well? Female participants were split into a high-conception-risk group and a low-conception-risk group based on the date of their last period of menses. The researchers then asked the women to report what color shirts they were wearing. Women with a high conception risk were more likely to report wearing a red or pink shirt than were women with a low conception risk. According to the researchers, these findings suggest that displays of red and pink adornments — such as clothing — are a fertility cue in women.

*Jean-Philippe van Dijck, Elger L. Abrahamse, Steve Majerus, and Wim Fias*

Although researchers have claimed that there is a link between working memory and attention, many models of this relationship do not take into account processes involved in serial order — a major function of working memory. Participants saw a series of ordered digits between 1 and 8 and then performed a go/no-go task that included the previously seen digits. The researchers found that participants' attention shifts during the go/no-go task reflected the order in which the digits were presented, thus indicating a link between serial order in working memory and spatial attention.