

**For Immediate Release
John Templeton Foundation**

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Positively Influencing Relationships

Researcher focuses on effects of positive interpersonal behaviors on attachment---wins positive psychology dissertation award

While the theory of attachment has received much attention in psychological research for some time, most investigators have focused on the role of *negative* life events, and their tendency to contribute to avoidance and anxious behavior in romantic relationships. Recently, in an attempt to look at attachment theory in a more *positive* light, University of Western Ontario doctoral student Bethany Butzer examined the relationship between positive interpersonal behaviors and changes in adult attachment over time, and won the **10th Annual Martin E.P. Seligman Award for Outstanding Dissertation Research in Positive Psychology**.

The award, funded by the **John Templeton Foundation**, includes a \$1000 cash grant and recognition among prominent investigators in the field of positive psychology.

For the past ten years, the **Seligman Award** has recognized talent and promise among young researchers exploring topics in the expanding field of positive psychology. Psychology traditionally has been problem-focused, but the more recent movement stresses building human strengths and focuses more on positive vs. negative behavior.

Butzer's research investigated the relationship between positive and negative interpersonal behaviors enacted within one's romantic relationship and changes in attachment anxiety and avoidance over time. Her findings revealed that individuals show decreases in their levels of anxiety and avoidance over time when they and/or their partners engage in supportive, nurturing, and intimate behaviors towards each other.

Currently a Research Analyst at Infotech Research Group in London, Ontario, Butzer received her BA at the University of Guelph, and both her MA and PhD from the University of Western Ontario. On being chosen as this year's award recipient, Butzer notes, "I am honored to be the recipient of the 2008 Seligman award, as I believe that this award highlights the important role of positivity in the field of psychology. I hope that my research inspires others to focus their studies on the factors that allow individuals to change for the better, as I believe that the ability to overcome life's obstacles is what makes human beings such remarkable and wondrous creatures."

About the John Templeton Foundation

The John Templeton Foundation (www.templeton.org) serves as a philanthropic catalyst for research and discoveries relating to what scientists and philosophers call the Big Questions. We support work at the world's top universities in such fields as theoretical physics, cosmology, evolutionary biology, cognitive science, and social science relating to love, forgiveness, creativity, purpose, and the nature and origin of religious belief. We encourage informed, open-minded dialogue between scientists and theologians as they apply themselves to the most profound issues in their particular disciplines. And we seek to stimulate new thinking about wealth creation in the developing world, character education in schools and universities, and programs for cultivating the talents of gifted children.

For more information on the Seligman Positive Psychology Award go to www.templeton.org/SeligmanAward .