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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AND
HUMAN BEHAVIOR


Please Reply to: California College of Medicine
University of California Irvine Medical Center
101 City Drive South
Orange, California 92668

I am writing you regarding Dr. Deane Shapiro's Grand Rounds presentation entitled "A Functional Analysis of Control and Self-Control: The Cross-Cultural Perspective of Bali" on April 5, 1988, at which I had the pleasure of introducing him and making some final comments on his talk.

This talk was a truly academic presentation. Dr. Shapiro began with a description of the psychological construct of "sense of control" and its effects on individual physical and emotional health and well-being. Dr. Shapiro explored how one's culture molds one's sense of control both directly and indirectly. In spite of its importance, cultural influence is not recognized because of its universality with the culture. The Balinese were explored, in terms of their attitudes and behaviors, within the context of their cultural rituals and beliefs. The importance of the cultural influence was highlighted by contrasting the Bali culture with our own western culture, distinguishing such expressions as fear of loss of control, desire for control, assertive and yielding modes of control, control by a benevolent other, desire to let go of control, and coping and mastery models. The material was very relevant in contrasting these two diverse cultures. The locus of control or sense of control plays a key factor in our concepts of illness, death, personal identity and our interpersonal relationships. Dr. Shapiro went on to speculate on the potential of evolutionary importance of the construct of human control. Through his contrasting these issues in cultures as diverse as the Balinese and American, the listener was able to transcend the more subtle effects, often unrecognized, in our own culture because of our own unconscious cultural bias.

Dr. Shapiro's presentation was quite scholarly in combining information from psychological literature and anthropology case studies, and relating them to a universally applicable theory of human control.

Sincerely,


Steven G. Potkin, M.D.
Professor
Director of Research
UCIMC