Storying God Images:
Bringing Narrative Integration to Our Experience of the Divine

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For a majority of us Americans, spirituality is a powerful facet of our lived experience (Badenoch, 2008; Pargament, 2007). A recent nationally representative poll found that 92% of adult Americans believe in "the existence of God or a universal spirit" (Pew Research Center, 2008, p. 5), and 76% report that religion/spirituality is *very* or *somewhat important* in their life (Pew Research Center, 2008, p. 23). Moreover, 60% of adult Americans believe in a personal God with whom they can have a relationship (Pew Research Center, 2008, p. 5), and 51% feel that "relationship with God" is the centrally defining feature of their faith (Gallup & Jones, 1989; cf. Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2008). The narrative of a person's relationship with a divine attachment figure (DAF; e.g., God, Allah, Jesus, Mary, Buddha, Krishna, and many others) has only recently become the subject of scholarly writing (Davis, 2009; Hall, 2007b; Moriarty & Davis, in press). The principles of interpersonal neurobiology (IPNB) can add to this discussion because they provide a framework for understanding how relationships shape our brains and minds, how implicit and explicit memory systems create two potentially distinct narratives of relational experience, and how narrative integration offers a path whereby those two narratives may be reconciled.

Given how central religion/spirituality is to many Americans' lives (Gallup & Jones, 1989; Pew Research Center, 2008), IPNB's focus on facilitating narrative integration will often need to include a religious/spiritual component (Badenoch, 2008). Our human capacity for mindsight (i.e., the ability to see into and shape minds through empathy and insight; Siegel, 2010) and mindful awareness (i.e., our ability to attune to the present moment of our experience, including bodily experience) can facilitate this integrative process.

We will later return to this possibility, but here we will start with some grounding definitions.

God images. Davis (in preparation) has proposed the following working definition of the term *God images*, integrating consilient (Wilson, 1998)—albeit nascent—theory and research from the fields of attachment, emotional information processing, neurobiology, social/affective neuroscience, cognitive science, social cognition, relational psychoanalysis, and the psychology of religion and spirituality:

God images are internal working models of a specific divine attachment figure (DAF; for example, God, Allah, Jesus, Mary, Buddha, Krishna, and many others) and the self as experienced in relationship with that DAF. These relational and emotion schemas (cf. Baldwin, 1992; Bucci, 1997) underlie a person's actual emotional experience in relationship with the DAF. That is, they reflect the person's "heart knowledge" of the DAF (Gibson, 2006) and can therefore be described as religious forms of implicit relational knowing (Noffke & Hall, 2007; cf. Lyons et al., 1998) that correspond to the DAF as personally experienced (i.e., "knowledge-by-acquaintance" [Gibson, 2006]). God images are emotion-laden mental representations (e.g., cortical-subcortical neural networks [Garzon, 2007], cognitive-affective units [cf. Mischel & Shoda, 2008]) that are comprised primarily of implicit mental models of relationship (cf. Siegel, 1999). They are learned chiefly via early relational experience and encoded mainly as bodily sensations, behavioral impulses, emotional surges, and perceptions (cf. Badenoch, 2008; Siegel, 1999). God images guide and integrate how a person experiences the DAF at an emotional, physiological, largely nonverbal, and usually

implicit level (i.e., outside of conscious awareness; Noffke & Hall, 2007). They are activated in the presence of certain learned intrapersonal cues (e.g., active moods, schemas, needs, goals) and situational cues (e.g., features of the religious/spiritual environment and relationship partners who are present; cf. Mischel & Shoda, 2008). Lastly, they are processed mainly (a) by the emotional-experiential information-processing system (cf. Epstein, 1994, 2003; i.e., the hot emotional system [cf. Metcalfe & Jacobs, 1998]); (b) using right-mode, cortical-subcortical brain circuitry (Garzon, 2007); (c) within the psychological unconscious and preconscious (cf. Kihlstrom, 2008); (d) in a reflexive, fast, automatic, stimulus-controlled, and holistic manner (Gibson, 2006; cf. Epstein, 1994, 2003; Metcalfe & Jacobs, 1998); (e) via parallel distributed processing systems (Gibson, 2006; cf. Bucci, 1997); and (f) at the subsymbolic or nonverbal-symbolic levels (Noffke & Hall, 2007; cf. Bucci, 1997).
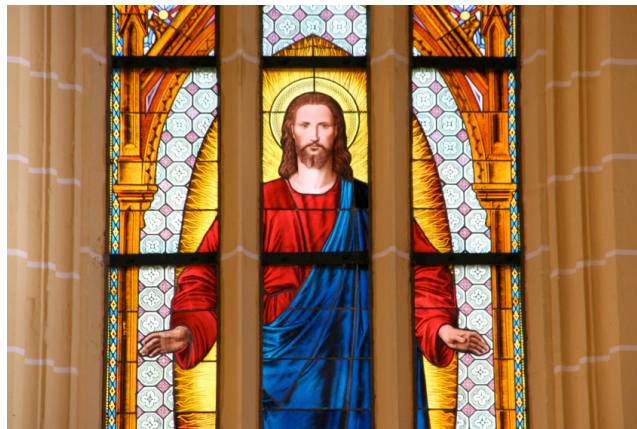
God concepts. Davis (in preparation) also proposed the following working definition of the related term *God concepts*, integrating the same consilient theory and research:

God concepts are a theological set of beliefs about a specific DAF's traits; about how that DAF relates with, thinks about, and feels toward humans (including the self); and about how humans (including the self) should relate with, think about, and feel toward the DAF. These doctrinal schemas underlie a person's conscious, linear knowledge about the DAF. That is, they reflect the person's "head knowledge" of the DAF and can therefore be described as propositional religious cognitions that correspond to the DAF as theologically understood (i.e., "knowledge about"; Gibson, 2006). God concepts are emotion-neutral mental representations (e.g., cortical-only neural networks [Garzon, 2007], cognitive-only units [cf. Mischel

& Shoda, 2008]) that are comprised primarily of explicit thoughts, memories, and knowledge, particularly explicit declarative knowledge (cf. Siegel, 1999). In other words, they are known mainly through left-mode processing, without any necessary connection to the right-mode processing that underlies God images. They are learned chiefly via explicit and intentional learning (cf. Badenoch, 2008; Siegel, 1999), and they are encoded mainly in verbal-symbolic representational code (cf. Bucci, 1997; Noffke & Hall, 2007). God concepts guide and integrate how a person thinks and talks about a DAF at an abstract, theological, conceptual, and usually explicit level (i.e., inside conscious awareness). They are activated in the presence of certain learned intrapersonal cues (e.g., active doctrinal schemas and verbal scripts) and situational cues (e.g., features of the religious/spiritual environment and relationship partners who are present; cf. Mischel & Shoda, 2008). Lastly, they are processed mainly (a) by the rational information-processing system (Epstein, 1994, 2003; i.e., the cold cognitive system [Metcalfe & Jacobs, 1998]); (b) using left-mode, cortical brain circuitry (Garzon, 2007); (c) within the psychological conscious (cf. Kihlstrom, 2008); (d) in a reflective, slow, self-controlled, and analytic manner (Gibson, 2006; cf. Epstein, 1994; Metcalfe & Jacobs, 1998); (e) via sequential processing systems (Gibson, 2006; cf. Bucci, 1997); and (f) at the verbal-symbolic level (cf. Bucci, 1997).

It is important to note that at the present time, these two working definitions may only be offered with tentativeness, given that the empirical study of God images and God concepts is in its nascence. However, hopefully they will be useful in generating hypotheses and guiding future research on these constructs. For an expanded, tabular version of the proposed conceptual contrasts

between God images and God concepts, see the table at the end of this paper (see also Davis, in preparation, Appendix B, for conceptual definitions of related constructs). A few additional definitions will help frame our discussion:

Narratives are "sequential descriptions of people and events that condense numerous experiences into generalizing and contrasting stories" (Siegel, 1999, p. 323).

Spiritual narrative is the tale of an individual's past, present, and anticipated-future journey in his or her search for the sacred (Pargament, 2007); this tale also includes the relational aspects of that journey.

God-image narrative identity is "an individual's internalized, evolving, and integrative story of the self" (McAdams, 2008, p. 242) in relationship with a DAF (Brokaw, Davis, Carafa, & Hudson, 2009; cf. Hall, 2007b; Moriarty & Davis, in press).

Mindsight is the intrapersonal and interpersonal skill whereby we perceive our own inner world (and that of others) through the lens of empathy and insight. This practice of mindsight allows us to shape our brains, minds, and relationships in the direction of increasing kindness and compassion (Siegel, 2010).

Mindful awareness is "the extent to which one pays attention to the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003) and is highly aware of immediate internal and external stimuli in a non-judgmental and unbiased manner (Brown & Ryan, 2003)" (Lakey, Kernis, Heppner, & Lance, 2008, p. 231).

Internal working models are the cognitive-affective mental representations of self, others, and self-in-relationship-with-others. They are mentally organized in a global, domain-specific, and relationship-specific hierarchy (Collins, Guichard, Ford, & Feeney, 2004; Overall, Fletcher, & Friesen, 2003), and they intra-/interpersonally

guide all attachment-related functioning (Bowlby, 1973).

Implicit relational knowing is "implicit knowing about what to do, think, and feel in a specific relationship context. This knowing is not conscious (nor is it dynamically unconscious, that is, repressed). It simply operates out of awareness," (Stern et al., 1998, p. 302) and is usually experienced in the form of bodily sensations, behavioral impulses, emotional surges, and perceptions (Badenoch, 2008; Siegel, 1999).

God-Image Development and Dynamics

In the past 20 years, attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973, 1980, 1988) has become a popular framework for conceptualizing and studying God images (Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Kirkpatrick, 2005; Noffke & Hall, 2007). Four attachment-based hypotheses have emerged in an effort to explain God-image development and dynamics: (a) the *internal-working-model correspondence hypothesis* (Kirkpatrick, 1992; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992), (b) the *emotional compensation hypothesis* (Kirkpatrick, 1992; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990), (c) the *socialized correspondence hypothesis* (Granqvist, 1998, 2002; Granqvist & Hagekull, 1999), and (d) the *implicit-relational-knowing correspondence hypothesis* (Hall, 2004, 2007a; Hall, Halcrow, Hill, & Delaney, 2005). All four hypotheses assume that internal working models underlie relationships with humans and with DAFs.

The *internal-working-model correspondence hypothesis* (Kirkpatrick, 1992; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992) posits that the attachment tendencies we develop through affect-laden relational experiences with humans come to correspond to the attachment tendencies we develop and exhibit in emotional relationship with a DAF. The

emotional compensation hypothesis (Kirkpatrick, 1992; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990) suggests that an insecure attachment history with caregivers leads to the development of an insecure global attachment style with humans (undergirded by negative, global internal working models of self and/or others) and a subsequent compensatory emotional relationship with a DAF. The *socialized correspondence hypothesis* (Granqvist, 1998, 2002; Granqvist & Hagekull, 1999) argues that extensive experience with religious/spiritual caregivers who are emotionally available and responsive leads to the development of a secure global attachment style with humans (undergirded by positive, global internal working models of self and others) and a subsequent adaptive emotional relationship with a DAF (undergirded by positive, relationship-specific internal working models of that DAF). Of note, the latter hypothesis acknowledges our internalization of significant others—those attachment figures who continue to impact us through their internal influence (Badenoch, 2008; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2004).

Research on these first three hypotheses has revealed somewhat inconsistent findings in that there is substantive empirical support for each hypothesis (see Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Kirkpatrick, 2005; Moriarty & Davis, in press, for reviews). In an attempt to reconcile these discrepant findings, Hall and his colleagues proposed the *implicit-relational-knowing correspondence hypothesis* (Hall, 2004, 2007a; Hall et al., 2005). This hypothesis starts with the assumption that we develop implicit relational knowing through our affect-laden relational experiences with humans (Badenoch, 2008; Lyons-Ruth et al., 1998; Stern et al., 1998). It goes on to assert that we develop corresponding implicit relational knowing in our emotional relationship with a DAF. According to this hypothesis, our implicit relational knowing is reflected in our implicit religious/spiritual functioning (i.e., our relational, experiential, and emotional experience in this domain), but not necessarily in our explicit religious/spiritual functioning (e.g., our theological beliefs or our overt commitment to a religious/spiritual path), because the latter does not

directly draw on our implicit relational knowing. Further, Hall et al. (2005) have argued that many findings used to support the emotional compensation hypothesis (e.g., insecure persons experiencing sudden conversion or dramatically increased religiousness after a relational crisis, see Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2008, for a review) actually support the implicit-relational-knowing correspondence hypothesis, because they reflect the operation of implicit affect-regulation strategies (cf. Badenoch, 2008; A. N. Schore, 2003, 2009; J. R. Schore & A. N. Schore, 2008). There is preliminary support for this conclusion (Hall et al., 2005).

In sum, using the lens of IPNB to reconcile these four hypotheses, we can see how several right-brain-mediated processes (e.g., imprinted early-attachment patterns, internalized attachment figures, ingrained affect-regulation strategies, and embodied implicit relational knowing, see Schore, 2003) have a powerful and ongoing influence on our God images. With so many differentiated neural networks involved in our God-image-related functioning, it is easy to see how our God images may become disassociated from each other and/or from our left-brain-mediated God concepts (Moriarty & Davis, in press). In both of these cases, narrative integration is a means for facilitating neural integration.

Personal Narratives and Their Integration

According to narrative expert Dan McAdams (1993), "personal [narratives] should ideally develop in the direction of increasing (1) coherence, (2) openness, (3) credibility, (4) differentiation, (5) reconciliation, and (6) generative integration. The prototype of the 'good story' in [terms of] human identity is one that receives high marks on these six narrative standards" (p. 110; cf. McAdams, 2008, for a review). In other words, at any given time, our and our clients' narratives are optimally characterized by:

Coherence: Do the events, themes, characters, and settings make sense in light of each other? Do they

fit together well, or do they contradict each other? This need for coherence is especially crucial when it comes to God images and God concepts.

Openness: Is the story optimally flexible and resilient—that is, is it able to change and develop? Or, is it too rigid or conversely too chaotic?

Credibility: Is the story based on facts that can be verified? Is it free from gross distortion of reality?

Differentiation: Is the story rich and complex, with many layers of meaning? Are there dynamic complexities and contradictions that give the story texture and depth?

Reconciliation: In the midst of any dynamic complexities and contradictions, is there movement toward harmony, resolution, and integration? Is there movement toward equanimity and balance among the differentiated components of the story?

Generative integration: Does the story compel the protagonist (i.e., the self) to contribute to the betterment of others, including the enrichment of others' narratives? To what degree is the protagonist dedicated to creative involvement in a social world that is larger and more enduring than him- or herself? (cf. McAdams, 1993, p. 110-113)

These optimal features resonate well with our IPNB conceptualization of well-being. For example, they resound with the IPNB goal of facilitating greater *integration* (i.e., "the linkage of differentiated elements" [Siegel, 2007, p. 27] within and among one's mind, brain, and relationships [Badenoch, 2008; Siegel, 1999, 2007]). Second, they coincide with the IPNB aim of fostering increased FACES flow (i.e., systems that are *f*lexible, *a*daptive, *c*oherent, *e*nergized, and *s*table) and COHERENCE (*c*onnected, *o*pen, *h*armonious, *e*ngaged, *r*eceptive, *e*mergent, *n*oetic, *c*ompassionate, and *e*mpathic; Badenoch, 2008; Siegel, 2007). Furthermore, they reverberate with the IPNB focus on cultivating COAL-based neural nets (i.e., socioemotional tendencies to be *c*urious, *o*pen, *a*ccepting, and *l*oving toward both the self and others, thereby enjoying intra- and

interpersonal attunement; Badenoch, 2008; Siegel, 2007).

In addition, these optimal features echo Fosha's (2008) notion of human *transformance*—that is, "the overarching motivational force that strives toward maximal vitality, authenticity, adaptation, and coherence, and thus leads to growth and transformation" (p. 175). Indeed this shared appreciation for transformance is scientifically supported, given that our embodied brains are intrinsically self-organizing. In other words, our brains inherently develop in the direction of achieving maximal complexity and coherence (via differentiation and linkage)—unless any substantive constraints impede this process (Badenoch, 2008; A. N. Schore, 2003; Siegel, 1999).

Even more specific to our current topic,

McAdams's (1993, 2008) narrative-identity theory resonates well with Cozolino's (2002, 2006), Siegel's (1999, 2007), Badenoch's (2008), and Hall's (2007b) ideas on narrative integration. For instance, one of Cozolino's (2002) working hypotheses for the neuroscientific bases of psychotherapeutic change is that "the *co-construction of narratives* between parent and child or therapist and client provides a broad matrix supporting the integration of multiple neural networks. Autobiographical memory creates stories of the self capable of supporting affect regulation in the present and the maintenance of homeostatic functions into the future. Memory, in

this form, may maximize neural network integration as it organizes vast amounts of information across multiple processing tracks. *Stories serve to bridge and integrate neural networks* both in the present moment and through time (Siegel, 1999)." (p. 63-64, emphasis in original)

In particular, Cozolino (2006) has discussed how, by their very nature, narratives involve varied neural networks and are consequently an optimal vehicle for maintaining homeostasis, facilitating integration, and promoting well-being (Rossi, 1993). For example, narratives incorporate left and right hemispheres, cortical and subcortical processes, dorsal and ventral structures, and parasympathetic and sympathetic systems (Cozolino, 2006, p. 305). Narrative co-construction is therefore an excellent means for SNAGing the brain (*s*timulating *n*euronal *a*ctivation and *g*rowth) and for fostering the neural integration of SIFT (*s*ensations, *i*mages, *f*eelings, and *t*houghts; Siegel, 2007; cf. Badenoch, 2008; Cozolino, 2002). Badenoch (2008) has also highlighted how narrative co-construction with an empathically attuned person (e.g., a therapist or any other *security-enhancing attachment figure*, Mikulincer and Shaver, 2004) can cultivate narrative, memory, and state integration, helping states gradually consolidate into traits.

Narratives ultimately emerge as stories that are connected to words and thereby communicated to others (McAdams, 2008). Thus, narratives might appear to be constructed solely in the left hemisphere. However, as Cozolino (2006) and Siegel (2007) have pointed out, coherent narratives actually emerge from converging processes in *both* hemispheres. The raw materials of our narratives are initially gathered in our right hemisphere, in our ventromedial prefrontal circuits. As our conscious mind relaxes (e.g., when we are daydreaming or asleep), our autobiographical memories are integrated at a nonconscious level (Fox, 2008; Greicuis et al., 2008; Horovitz et al., 2008). These integrated components are reflected in our felt/lived experience (e.g., bodily sensations, behavioral impulses, emotional surges, and

perceptions) and hence can be referred to as our *felt/lived narratives*.

Ideally, our felt/lived narratives become connected with our *verbal/communicable narratives*, which are logical and linear and are verbally symbolized and encoded in our left hemisphere (Badenoch, 2008). In other words, one of the main goals of narrative integration is for the felt/lived narratives of our right hemisphere to become integrated with the verbal/communicable narratives of our left hemisphere. Such integration optimally occurs via focused attention and cross-hemispheric communication (Cozolino, 2006; Siegel, 2007) that includes a substantive emotional component (Bucci, 1997). Without narrative input from our right hemisphere, our verbal/communicable narratives are logical stories that lack connections with our experiential reality, where the felt streams of meaningful life are generated. Such a hemispheric divide is why we can have vastly different God-image and God-concept narratives.

Hall (2007b) has also discussed narrative integration, with a view toward the integration of spiritual narratives. In his reflections, Hall (2007b) used his *implicit relational representational theory* (Hall, 2004) as a guiding framework. Foundational to that theory is the notion that the human brain has two distinct memory systems (explicit and implicit), which respectively support two types of knowledge (explicit and implicit) and two ways of knowing (paradigmatic and narrative). The explicit memory system undergirds declarative memory, and it therefore uses primarily "high-road" (dorsal-left) brain circuitry (LeDoux, 1996), mainly processing conscious, linear, verbally mediated knowledge (i.e., explicit knowledge), with a focus on facts and logically related concepts (i.e., paradigmatic mode of knowing). In contrast, the implicit memory system undergirds behavioral (e.g., procedural), emotional, perceptual, and somatosensory memory (cf. Ogden, 2009), and it therefore uses primarily "low-road" (ventral-right) brain circuitry (LeDoux, 1996; cf. A. N. Schore, 2003, 2009), mainly processing nonconscious, nonlinear/holistic, and nonverbally mediated knowledge (i.e., implicit knowledge), with a focus

on emotional and visceral/embodied meaning (i.e., narrative mode of knowing; cf. Cozolino, 2006; Ogden, 2009; Siegel, 1999; Tronick, 2009).

According to Hall (2007b), in order to facilitate storied transformation (our own and that of our clients), we need to:

- Seek to facilitate the integration of narrative and paradigmatic stories (what we have called *felt/lived narratives* and *verbal/communicable narratives* here), via the articulation of "between-the-lines stories" and their embedded meanings.
- Seek to facilitate the integration of implicit relational knowledge and explicit verbal knowledge, via the articulation and storying of "unthought knowns" (Bollas, 1987; see Tronick's [2009, p. 104-106] somewhat contrary ideas about "unthought knowns").
- Seek to facilitate the integration of implicit and explicit memories, (a) via a harmonious and synergistic, back-and-forth "knowledge spiral" whereby each memory system continuously "refers to the other [in order] to develop qualitatively new knowledge" (Hall, 2007b, p. 36); and (b) via the encoding of implicit memories into explicit memories through focused, conscious attention (Badenoch, 2008; Siegel, 1999).

According to Hall, the desired result of narrative integration is the creation of personal narratives that are both logical and emotionally meaningful, reflecting a high degree of *referential activity* (i.e., integration between verbal communication and emotional meaning; Bucci, 1997, 2001).

Hall (2007b) argued that in our therapeutic work, one of the best ways for us to promote such integration is to "create a relational environment in which our clients' unthought knowns can become 'speakable' through a translation process that links their raw, implicit relational knowledge with words" (p. 35). He stated, "This can be pictured as a 'bottom up' integration process, bringing together our clients' 'gut level' experiences with explicit 'head' knowledge" (Hall, 2007b, p. 35). Such a psychotherapeutic approach resonates well

with various IPNB approaches (e.g., Badenoch, 2008; Cozolino, 2002; Fosha, Siegel, & Solomon, 2009), as well as with various therapies that aim to foster congruence between theologically sound God concepts and emotionally adaptive God images (Moriarty & Davis, in press; Moriarty & Hoffman, 2007).

The Integration of God-Image Narrative Identity

As it relates to spiritual narratives, it would seem that for religious/spiritual individuals, three overarching narrative-integration goals need to occur:

- The spiritual narrative needs to become increasingly well-integrated.
- The personal narrative needs to become increasingly well-integrated.
- The spiritual narrative needs to become increasingly well-integrated into the personal narrative.

For many religious/spiritual individuals—particularly those who are Christian, Muslim, or spiritual but unaffiliated (see Pew Research Center, 2008, p. 5)—the integration of their spiritual narrative will of necessity need to incorporate the integration of their God-image narrative identity.

Unfortunately, as Badenoch (2008) and Moriarty and Davis (in press) have alluded, this narrative identity is commonly characterized by disassociated neural networks, whereby God images and God concepts are quite discrepant. In other words, the DAF that we experience with our heart (God images) often differs substantively from the DAF we know about with our head (Moriarty & Hoffman, 2007; Rizzuto, 1979). For instance, a Christian may theologically believe that God is loving and responsive, but actually tend to emotionally experience Him as cold and removed. Or a Muslim may theologically believe that Allah is mercifully forgiving, but actually tend to emotionally experience Him as mercilessly punitive (Badenoch; Moriarty & Davis).

As Moriarty and Davis (in press) have discussed, there are many ways to facilitate the adaptive integration of one's God-image narrative identity (e.g., by reading and emotionally engaging with allegorical literature such as C.S. Lewis's [1950-1956/2001] *Chronicles of Narnia* and W. P. Young's [2007] *The Shack*). However, from a uniquely IPNB framework, two exceptional tools to use for this task are mindsight and mindful awareness. For instance, given that "spirituality is [perhaps] best conveyed through narratives" (Pargament, 2007, p. 225), one component of an initial assessment with religious/spiritual clients might be the elicitation of the client's spiritual story (Badenoch, 2008; Pargament, 2007). Ideally such elicitation will occur in a natural (e.g., unstructured or semistructured) and relationally embedded way, such that it is "interwoven into the clinical conversation and larger life story of the client" (Pargament, 2007, p. 226). (As a guiding framework for such an assessment, Richards and Bergin's [2005] *multilevel, multisystemic assessment strategy* is quite effective.)

Subsequently, across our therapeutic journey with a client, various forms of integration (e.g., narrative, memory, state) can incorporate religion and spirituality into the mix, using mindful awareness as a gateway to recognizing areas in need of integration and mindsight as the tactic for facilitating that goal. We have found it particularly effective to invite clients to become mindfully aware of tracing their bodily feelings as they/we enter into the experience of relating with a DAF (cf. Ogden, 2009). The body is a powerful gateway into the implicit world, so noticing the body's response to interacting with a DAF can often promote client contact with the implicit relational knowing that undergirds their felt experience of the Divine (Badenoch, 2008).

In this endeavor, our clients commonly trace their embodied implicit relational knowing back to imprinted early-attachment patterns and internalized attachment figures, and in so doing, the connections between personal and spiritual narratives become elucidated. Over time, as their mindsight (empathy and insight) develops for all aspects of their inner life, clients can mindfully embrace differentiated aspects of their personal and spiritual narratives, achieving increased levels of narrative integration. Moreover, client-therapist collaboration can lead to the development of revised features (e.g., themes, tone, settings, characters, anticipated endings) of the clients' personal narrative in general and of their spiritual and God-image narratives in particular. Such changes are often the result of adaptive shifts in implicit relational knowing (cf. Lyons et al., 1998; Stern et al., 1998)—particularly increased levels of secure attachment (cf. Badenoch, 2008), affect tolerance (cf. Fosha, 2009; Ogden, 2009; A. N. Schore, 2009), and multilevel meaning (cf. Tronick, 2009). Ultimately, the goal is for the client to have personal, spiritual, and God-image narratives that are characterized by FACES flow, COHERENCE, and COAL-based neural nets (cf. Badenoch, 2008; Siegel, 2007), thereby demonstrating an orientation toward increasing coherence, openness, credibility, differentiation, reconciliation, and generative integration (McAdams, 1993). For those of us who are religious/spiritual ourselves, this goal is indeed one of the overarching aims of our own lives—whether stated explicitly or merely yearned for (and sought after) implicitly.

Table 1

Expanded Proposed Conceptual Contrasts Between God Images and God Concepts

Domain	God images	God concepts	Cross Reference(s)
Definitional contrasts	Internal working models of a specific divine attachment figure (DAF) and the self as experienced in relationship with that DAF	Theological set of beliefs about a specific DAF's traits; about how that DAF relates with, thinks about, and feels toward humans (including the self); and about how humans (including the self) should relate with, think about, and feel toward the DAF	Badenoch (2008); Bowlby (1973); Collins, Guichard, Ford, and Feeney (2004); Gibson (2006); Noffke and Hall (2007); J. R. Schore and A. N. Schore (2008); Siegel (1999)
	Relational and emotion schemas underlying one's actual emotional experience in relationship with the DAF	Doctrinal schemas underlying one's conscious, linear knowledge about the DAF	Baldwin (1992); Bucci (1997); Gibson (2006)
	"Heart knowledge" of the DAF	"Head knowledge" of the DAF	Gibson (2006); Moriarty (2006)
	Implicational religious cognitions (e.g., the DAF as personally experienced, "knowledge-by-acquaintance")	Propositional religious cognitions (e.g., the DAF as theologically understood, "knowledge about")	Gibson (2006); Teasdale and Bernard (1993)
Representational contrasts	Emotion-laden mental representations (e.g., cortical-subcortical neural networks, cognitive-affective units)	Emotion-neutral mental representations (e.g., cortical-only neural networks, cognitive-only units)	Badenoch (2008); Garzon (2007); Mischel and Shoda (2008); Siegel (1999)
	Comprised primarily of implicit thoughts, memories, and knowledge, particularly implicit relational knowledge	Comprised primarily of explicit thoughts, memories, and knowledge, particularly explicit declarative knowledge	Garzon (2007); Hall (2004, 2007a); Hall, Halcrow, Hill, and Delaney (2005); Kihlstrom (2008); Lyons et al. (1998)
	Learned mainly via implicit, emotional, and incidental learning	Learned mainly via explicit and intentional learning	Kihlstrom (2008); Smith and Kosslyn (2007)
	Encoded mainly in subsymbolic and nonverbal-symbolic representational code	Encoded mainly in verbal-symbolic representational code	Bucci (1997, 2001); Hall (2004, 2007a); Hall et al. (2005)

Domain	God images	God concepts	Cross Reference(s)
Functional contrasts	Guide and integrate how a person experiences the DAF at an emotional, physiological, nonverbal, and usually implicit level	Guide and integrate how a person thinks and talks about a DAF at an abstract, theological, conceptual, and usually explicit level	Hall (2004); Hall et al. (2005); Horowitz (1991); Moriarty (2006); Noffke and Hall (2007)
Information-processing contrasts	Activated in the presence of certain learned intrapersonal or situational cues	Activated in the presence of certain learned intrapersonal or situational cues	Mischel and Shoda (2008); Moriarty and Davis (in press)
	Processed mainly by the emotional-experiential information-processing system (i.e., the hot emotional system)	Processed mainly by the rational information-processing system (i.e., the cold cognitive system)	Epstein (1994, 2003); Gibson (2006); Metcalfe and Jacobs (1998)
	Processed mainly using right-hemispheric, cortical-subcortical brain circuitry	Processed mainly using left-hemispheric, cortical brain circuitry	Badenoch (2008); Garzon (2007); Noffke and Hall (2007)
	Processed mainly within the psychological unconscious and preconscious	Processed mainly within the psychological conscious	Hall (2004); Hall et al. (2005); Kihlstrom (2008)
	Processed mainly in a reflexive, fast, automatic, stimulus-controlled, and holistic manner	Processed mainly in a reflective, slow, self-controlled, and analytic manner	Epstein (1994, 2003); Gibson (2006); Metcalfe and Jacobs (1998)
	Processed mainly via parallel distributed processing systems	Processed mainly via sequential processing systems	Bucci (1997, 2001); Gibson (2006); Yarborough (2009)
	Processed mainly at the subsymbolic or nonverbal-symbolic levels	Processed mainly at the verbal-symbolic level	Bucci (1997, 2001); Hall (2004); Noffke and Hall (2007)
Changeability contrasts	Slower and harder to change	Quicker and easier to change	Epstein (1994)
	Changes with right-brain-to-right-brain relational experiences that are emotionally repetitive, intense, and/or meaningful	Changes with left-brain-to-left-brain exchange of DAF-related explicit knowledge, especially if that knowledge is obtained from a credible source, is personally relevant, and/or is supported by logic and	Badenoch (2008); Cozolino (2002, 2006); Epstein (1994); Fosha (2009); Ogden (2009); A. N. Schore (2009); J. R. Schore and A. N. Schore

Domain	God images	God concepts	Cross Reference(s)
		evidence	(2008)

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There can be no spirituality without storytelling. The ego challenge is how do I connect my "little" story to the "big" story.

~anonymous

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