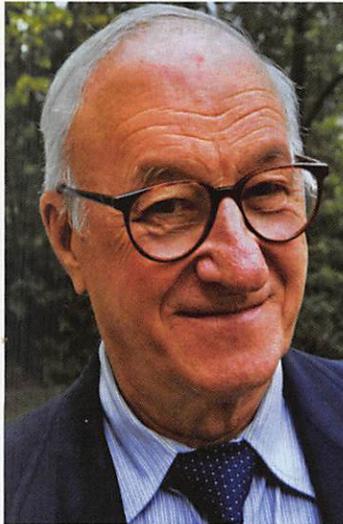


## APS Fellows Win Grawemeyer Awards

Two APS Fellows, Albert Bandura and Philip Tetlock, have been awarded 2008 University of Louisville Grawemeyer Awards. Each year, the Grawemeyer Foundation awards \$200,000 each to recipients for works in music composition, ideas improving world order, psychology, education, and religion. Bandura received the 2008 psychology award and Tetlock received the 2008 award for ideas improving world order.

A native of Canada, Albert Bandura received his doctoral degree from the University of Iowa in 1952. He began his appointment at Stanford University in 1953, where he remains as the David Starr Jordan professor of social science in psychology. In 2002 Bandura was ranked the 20th Century's fourth most eminent psychologist in a survey conducted by the *Review of General Psychology*, coming in behind only B.F. Skinner, Jean Piaget, and Sigmund Freud. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Bandura has received APS's highest honors, the William James Fellow Award and the James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award, in recognition of his lifetime of contributions to both basic and applied psychological science. In addition to the APS awards, Bandura has received the Gold Medal Award for lifetime contributions from the American Psychological Foundation.

Bandura's list of distinctions, including the Grawemeyer Award, stems from his ground-breaking research on motivational factors and self-regulatory mechanisms that influence behavior. His famous "Bobo Doll Studies" of the determinants and mechanisms of observational learning led to the development of social learning theory; an approach later termed Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura showed that people's attitudes, values, and styles of behavior can be shaped through the power of social modeling. The way we learn and act in the future can be shaped simply by watching others and modeling our behavior after them. His early later research focused on the role of self-efficacy in motivation, learning, and action. This emphasis on cognition is what set Bandura apart from other behaviorists at the time, who explained behavior solely in terms of its environmental



Albert Bandura

influence effects.

Philip Tetlock, professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business, won the Grawemeyer for the ideas presented in his seminal book, *Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?* Tetlock's book focused on the fact that political experts — both the talking heads on TV and the knowledgeable scholars quoted in the newspaper — are no better at predicting world political events than are simple extrapolation algorithms or the rest of us. Tetlock told the *Observer* that he was happy to win "because the award is one of a number of signs that scholars of world politics are taking psychological research on human judgmental biases increasingly seriously."

Tetlock's conclusions, drawn from a 20-year study in which 284 experts made over 27,000 predictions about various world events, also show that once proven wrong, experts, like the rest of us, find it very hard to admit. As Tetlock explained, "My...book documents how often really smart political and economic observers make confident but contradictory predictions and how rare it is for these observers to acknowledge error. There are just too many convenient dissonance-reducing strategies available: 'my predictions were just off on timing,' ... 'what I predicted did not happen but it almost did,' and — of course — the 'I-made-the-right-mistake' defense which declares that it is better to have made a type 1 error than a type 2 error" or vice versa.

But, although everyone may have trouble making accurate predications, some people are better than others. Using Isaiah Berlin's hedgehog and fox metaphor, Tetlock divided the experts in his study into two groups: the hedgehogs, who make decisions based on a single expertise or perspective, and the foxes, who use multiple sources and more flexible thinking to come up with a prediction. The foxes in Tetlock's sample were better predictors, but, as Tetlock said, "The problem is that these 'on-the-one-hand-and-on-the-other-hand' experts...lose the battle for political influence to experts who equivocate less — and promise simple and decisive solutions."

Learn more about the Grawemeyer Awards at <http://www.grawemeyer.org>. ♦



Philip Tetlock

## The Power in Willpower

Until recently, psychologists used to think of “willpower” as a metaphor, part of folk psychology having no relation to what actually happens in the head. The brain, seat of our decisions, wasn’t a muscle, after all. Self-control wasn’t “powered”, it was a cognitive thing, more like a computer than a car engine.

But new research from a lab at Florida State University is revealing that folk psychology was right all along. Self-control takes fuel — literally — and when we exercise it, resisting this or that temptation to misbehave, our fuel tank gets depleted, making subsequent efforts at self-control more difficult.

Florida State psychologist and APS Fellow Roy F. Baumeister and his colleagues Kathleen D. Vohs, University of Minnesota, and Dianne M. Tice, Florida State, showed this quite strikingly with an experiment using the Stroop task, a famous way of testing strength of self-control. Participants in this task are shown color words that are printed in different-colored ink (like the word *red* printed in blue font) and are told to name the color of the ink, not the word. Stress and other mentally depleting situations impair people’s ability to inhibit their first response (“red”) in favor of the correct one (“blue”); Baumeister found that when participants perform multiple self-control tasks like the Stroop test in a row, they do worse over time. Like a muscle, which gradually tires and eventually reaches exhaustion if strained to its limit, the ability to control ourselves wanes as it is exercised.

Moreover, the fuel that powers this ability turns out to be one of the same things that fuels our muscles: sugar, in the form of glucose.

The experimenters measured the blood glucose levels of participants before they engaged in another self-control task or a control task that did not involve self-control, and found that the self-control group (but not the controls) had suffered a depletion in glucose afterward. And in another experiment, two groups performed the Stroop task two times each, drinking one of two sweetened beverages in between. The control group got lemonade with Splenda, a sugar-free sweetener; the test group got lemonade sweetened with real sugar. The sugar group performed

better than the Splenda group on their second Stroop test, presumably because their blood sugar had been replenished.

Now, if you’re watching your weight, you may already be scratching your head at the Catch-22 implied here. Sugar, the great white death, the 21st-century dieter’s antichrist, is also what helps you resist temptations ... temptations like sugary drinks. Huh? Baumeister et al.’s findings are not a recipe for going out and consuming more sugar so that you can ... well ... resist sweets. For one thing, blood sugar does not stay with you but is constantly being depleted and consumed by the body.

But the research does suggest the possibility of psychological interventions for helping people achieve greater self-control. For one thing, again like muscles, self-control *may* be able to be strengthened through exercise. Results so far are inconsistent, Baumeister says, and some regimens work better than others, but he envisions that greater understanding of the biological and psychological underpinnings of our ability to control ourselves will have important real-world application for people in the self-control business, such as coaches, therapists, teachers, and parents.

To find out more about Baumeister’s research, see “The Strength Model of Self-Control” in the December issue of *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. ♦

- Eric Wargo

### APS Welcomes Rob Kail



This month, Rob Kail, Purdue University, officially begins his term as Editor of *Psychological Science*, APS’s flagship journal. Although Rob has already been editing behind the scenes for months, the January 2008 issue marks the first with his name on the masthead of the journal.

The start of Kail’s editorship coincides with unprecedented submissions levels for *Psychological Science* and a 20 percent increase in the size of the journal to accommodate more of the excellent research that is submitted to the journal on a daily basis.

Kail is also ushering the journal into a new technological era as the first editor to exclusively use an online submissions system, a move that has streamlined the process for submitters, reviewers, and editors alike. A profile of Kail appeared in the May 2007 issue of the *Observer*. For more about the history of the APS journals, see page 23.