

Title?

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Dr. Wong's work is important and far-reaching and extends psychology and positive psychology into areas that have been sorely neglected. His work, for instance, on a positive psychology of suffering has been transformational, and this field would not be what it is today without Dr. Wong's work. Much work on suffering and adversity has focused on coping, on getting through the difficulties. This is of course an important and critical topic. But Dr. Wong's work pushes beyond this. He explores how suffering itself can be transformational and how it can in fact empower deeper forms of well-being that would not be possible without the experience of suffering. He notes that "suffering, like gravity, is pervasive and inescapable. We need to adopt a more positive attitude towards suffering... suffering is not only a messenger telling us that something is out of balance, but also essential for growth" (Wong, 2023). His remarks are in stark contrast with most contemporary well-being paradigms. He points to the need for an acceptance that some degree of suffering in a person's life is inevitable, and towards a realization that the suffering itself may be a source of growth, or even of the expansion of the potentialities of the human person necessary for deeper dimensions of flourishing; that, in fact, suffering may be "necessary for flourishing as a tree must sink its roots deep into the dark soil to grow and bear much fruit" (Wong, 2023). Dr. Wong's work has been instrumental in moving towards a better scientific study of the transformation of suffering so that we can understand when and how that growth and transformation can take place, when and how the anecdotes of transformation through suffering can be attained, and when and how the spiritual and religious traditions pointing towards that transformation can be realized (VanderWeele et al., 2023). He has truly been an innovator. Dr. Wong, moreover, pairs this work with a nature, as a person, that is kind, determined, insightful, wise, and courageously pursues these new and uncharted directions. His person, work, and legacy are indeed to be celebrated.

References

VanderWeele, T.J., Cowden, R.G., Kelly, P., and Peteet, J.R. The need for the scientific study of the transformation of suffering. *International Journal of Existential Positive Psychology*, in press.

Wong, P.T.P. (2023). Spiritual-existential wellbeing (SEW): the faith-hope-love model of mental health & total wellbeing. *International Journal of Existential Positive Psychology*, in press.