

# BETHANY E. KOK

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## EDUCATION

- 2012 Ph.D. in Social Psychology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Dissertation: *Testing the Socio-Autonomic Spiral Model of Social Connection and Health* (Advisor: Barbara L. Fredrickson)  
Minor: Quantitative Psychology
- 2008 M.A. in Social Psychology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2006 B.A. in Psychology, St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, graduated with distinction, *summa cum laude*  
Minors: Statistics, Computer Science

## CAREER

- 2013 – present Statistical Consultant  
Department of Social Neuroscience, Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences, Leipzig, Germany under Tania Singer
- 2012 – present Postdoctoral Researcher  
Department of Social Neuroscience, Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences, Leipzig, Germany under Tania Singer

## SELECTED RESEARCH AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2006 - 2011 William R. Kenan Jr. Fellowship, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2011 2011 Christopher R. Agnew Research Innovation Award, Social Psychology Program, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2010 Outstanding Research Award, SPSP Graduate Student Committee, for *Upward spirals of the heart: Autonomic flexibility, as indexed by vagal tone, reciprocally and prospectively predicts social connectedness and positive emotions.*
- 2008 Honorable Mention, NSF Graduate Research Fellowship
- 2002 - 2006 National Merit Scholar
- 2006 Phi Beta Kappa, St. Olaf College
- 2004 - 2005 NSF Undergraduate Research Fellowship in Statistics, Center for Interdisciplinary Research at St. Olaf College

## TEACHING AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2007-2012 Teaching Fellowship, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2009 Psychology Club Graduate Research Mentor Award, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

- 2008 (Fall) Recognized for superior teaching skill, Psychology Department, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- 2008 (Spring) Recognized for superior teaching skill, Psychology Department, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## GRANTS

- 2007 Graduate Mentor Support Grant, Office of Undergraduate Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (\$1,000)

## PUBLICATIONS (\*indicates student/trainee co-author)

- Kok, B.E.** & Singer, T. (2016). Phenomenological fingerprints of four meditations: Differential state changes in affect, mind-wandering, meta-cognition, and interoception before and after daily practice across 9 months of training. *Mindfulness*, 1-14.
- \*Bornemann, B., **Kok, B.E.**, Böckler, A. & Singer, T. (2016). Helping from the heart: Voluntary upregulation of heart rate variability predicts altruistic behavior. *Biological Psychology*, 119, 54-63.
- \*Lumma, A-L., **Kok, B.E.** & Singer, T. (2015). Is meditation always relaxing? Investigating heart rate, heart rate variability, experienced effort and likeability during training of three types of meditation. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 97(1), 38-45.
- Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (2015). Evidence for the Upward Spiral stands steady: A response to Heathers, Brown, Coyne, and Friedman (2015). *Psychological Science*, 26(7), 1144-1146.
- Pek, J., Chalmers, R.P., **Kok, B.E.** & Losardo, D. (2015). Visualizing confidence bands for semiparametrically estimated nonlinear relations among latent variables. *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, 40, 402-423.
- Kok, B.E.**, Coffey, K.A., Cohn, M.A., Catalino, L.I., Vacharkulksemsuk, T., Algoe, S., Brantley, M. & Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). How positive emotions build physical health: Perceived positive social connections account for the upward spiral between positive emotions and vagal tone *Psychological Science*, 24(7), 1123-1132.
- Kok, B.E.**, Waugh, C.E. & Fredrickson, B.L. (2013). Meditation and health: The search for mechanisms of action. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 7(1), 27-39.
- Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (2010) Upward spirals of the heart: Autonomic flexibility, as indexed by vagal tone, reciprocally and prospectively predicts social connectedness and positive emotions. *Biological Psychology*, 85(3), 432-436.
- Pek, J., Sterba, S.K., **Kok, B.E.** & Bauer, D.J. (2009). Estimating and visualizing nonlinear relations among latent variables: A semiparametric approach. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 44, 404-437.

## MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW OR IN PREPARATION

- \*Isgett, S., **Kok, B.E.**, \*Baczowski, B., Algoe, S., Grewen, K. & Fredrickson, B.L. (revise and resubmit). Influences of oxytocin and respiratory sinus arrhythmia on social behavior and emotions in daily life.

- Kok, B.E.** & Singer, T. (revise and resubmit). Contemplating the other: Introducing the Contemplative Dyad and its effects on social closeness, motivation and personal disclosure over six months of mental training.
- Engert, V., **Kok, B.E.** & Singer, T. (submitted). Connect to de-stress: Differential effects of long-term mental training on cortisol and subjective stress reactivity.
- \*Borneman, B., Bernhardt, B., \*Valk, S., **Kok, B.E.** & Singer, T. (in prep). Structural brain correlates of autonomic regulation: Cortical thickness in anterior cingulate and insula cortex relates to voluntary up-regulation of heart rate variability.
- Engert, V., **Kok, B.E.**, Koester, A.M., Riepenhausen, A. & Singer, T. (in prep). Boosting recovery rather than buffering reactivity: A new perspective on the involvement of peripheral oxytocin in the human stress response.
- Engert, V., **Kok, B.E.** & Singer, T. (in prep). The structure of stress: Towards a better understanding of diurnal cortisol indices in healthy individuals. (Kok and Engert are joint first authors)
- \*Major, B., **Kok, B.E.**, & Fredrickson, B.L. (in prep). Positive emotions link social closeness and cardiac vagal tone.

## CHAPTERS

- Kok, B.E.** and Fredrickson, B.L. 2013. Wellbeing begins with “We”. *Wellbeing: A Complete Reference Guide*. 6:1:7, 1–29.
- Kok, B.E.** (2013). The science of subjective experience: Positive emotions and social closeness influence autonomic functioning. In T. Singer & M. Bolz (Eds.), *Compassion: Bridging Practice and Science*.
- Kok, B. E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (2012). How positive emotions broaden and build. In J. J. Froh & A. C. Parks (Eds.), *Activities for Teaching Positive Psychology: A Guide for Instructors*. Washington DC: APA Books.
- Kok, B.E.**, Catalino, L.I. & Fredrickson, B.L. (2008). The broadening, building, buffering effects of positive emotions. In S. Lopez (Ed.). *Positive Psychology [Four Volumes]: Exploring the Best in People. Vol. 3 Capitalizing on emotional experiences*. (pp.1-19). Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Company.

## PRESENTATIONS

### Symposium Chair

- “Social bodies: How and why social interactions influence health,” Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, 2012, San Diego, CA.  
Other speakers: John T. Cacioppo, University of Chicago  
Shelley L. Gable, University of California, Santa Barbara  
Steve Cole, Division of Hematology-Oncology, School of Medicine, UCLA
- “Social bodies: How and why social interactions influence health,” Society for Experimental Social Psychology Conference, 2011, Washington, D.C.  
Other speakers: Sally S. Dickerson, University of California, Irvine  
Sara Algoe, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Stephanie L. Brown, Stony Brook University and University of Michigan

“Promoting positive life change: Improving emotion regulation, cognition and physiological states through reflection and mind-training,” Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, 2011, San Antonio, TX.

Other speakers: Clifford Saron, Center for Mind and Brain, University of California, Davis  
Erika L. Rosenberg, Center for Mind and Brain, University of California, Davis  
Laura A. King, University of Missouri, Columbia

#### Conference Talks

**Kok, B.E.** & Singer, T. (August, 2015). *Differential psychological fingerprints of reported subjective experiences during and after four types of mental practices*. International Society for Research on Emotions Conference, Geneva, Switzerland.

**Kok, B.E.** (October, 2013). *Social connectedness: A mechanism of action for Loving-Kindness Meditation*. Mind and Life Europe Symposium for Contemplative Studies, Berlin, Germany.

**Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (January, 2012). *Upward spirals of the heart: Reciprocal vagal/social effects*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, San Diego, CA.

**Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (October, 2011). *Upward spirals of the heart: Vagal influences on social connectedness interventions*. Society for Experimental Social Psychology Conference, Washington, D.C.

**Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (July, 2011). *Psychophysiological upward spirals of well-being*. Second World Conference on Positive Psychology. Philadelphia, PA.

**Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (May, 2011). *Vagal tone moderates the effect of Lovingkindness Meditation on positive emotions, while meditation practice increases vagal tone*. Association for Psychological Science Conference. Washington, D.C.

**Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (January, 2011). *Vagal tone moderates the effect of Lovingkindness Meditation on positive emotions, while meditation practice increases vagal tone*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference. San Antonio, TX.

#### Invited Talks

**Kok, B.E.** (September, 2013). *Upward spirals of the heart: Psychological and physiological effects of loving-kindness meditation*. Sozialpsychiatrie – Seminar, Bergen auf Rügen, Germany.

**Kok, B.E.** (May, 2012) *Upward spirals at work: The health consequences of a social connectedness intervention*. IBM. Raleigh, NC.

**Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (March, 2011). *The BLESS Project: Results and implications for work environments*. Center for Creative Leadership. Greensboro, NC.

#### Selected Poster Presentations

**Kok, B.E.** & Singer, T. (August, 2014). *Differential psychological fingerprints of reported subjective experiences during and after four types of mental practice*. Mind and Life Europe Summer Research Institute. Chiemsee, Germany.

**Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (May, 2013). *Vagal and oxytocinergic influences on social perception and emotion*. Association for Psychological Science Conference. Washington, D.C.

**Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (January, 2010). *Upward spirals of the heart: Baseline vagal tone predicts increases in social connectedness, positive emotion, which in turn predict future baseline vagal tone.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference. Las Vegas, NV.

**Kok, B.E.** & Fredrickson, B.L. (May, 2009). *Baseline vagal tone predicts social connectedness, positive emotion, and may predict progesterone levels.* Association for Psychological Science. San Francisco, CA.

## SOFTWARE

**Kok, B.E.**, Pek, J., Sterba, S., Bauer, D.J. & Chalmers, P. *PlotSEMM: An R package for visualizing nonlinear relations among latent variables, Version 2.1.* Comprehensive R Archive Network: <http://cran.r-project.org/>

## SELECTED MEDIA MENTIONS

“A corrente de felicidade.” [“Current of happiness”]. May 21, 2013, *Folha de S. Paulo*. [Portuguese]

“Heilen mit dem Geist.” [“Healing with the mind”]. May 5, 2013, *Der Spiegel*. [German]

“Think yourself well.” December 18, 2012, *The Economist*. <http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21567876-you-can-it-helps-think-well-yourself-first-place-think-yourself>

“Psychology beyond the brain: What scientists are discovering by measuring the beating of the heart.” October 5, 2010, *Scientific American*. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=the-neuroscience-of-heart>

## COURSES TAUGHT

Berlin School of Mind and Brain, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
Social Neuroscience of Decision-Making co-taught with T. Singer and A. Tusche (masters)  
Statistical Models: Selection and Application (masters)

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Introduction to Social Psychology (undergraduate)  
Introduction Social Psychology online course (undergraduate)  
Independent Research (undergraduate)  
Senior Honors Thesis (undergraduate)

St. Olaf College  
Introduction to Psychology: Laboratory (undergraduate)

## SERVICE

To the Department/University  
2010-2012 LGBT Safe Zone Speaker  
2011 Graduate Student Appreciation Night and Undergraduate Q&A speaker  
2009 Received LGBT Safe Zone Ally Training, UNC LGBT Center  
2008 - 2009 Academic Liaison, Social Psychology Program  
2006 UNC at Chapel Hill Psi Chi *Life in Graduate School* guest speaker

To the Discipline: Ad Hoc Reviewer  
American Psychologist  
Cognition and Emotion  
Counseling and Psychotherapy Research  
Emotion  
Frontiers in Neuroendocrine Science  
Mindfulness  
Motivation and Emotion

Personality and Social Psychology Review  
Plos One  
Psychophysiology

To the Discipline: Reviewer, Grants and Awards  
2015 Mind and Life 1440 Awards  
2011 SPSP Student Poster Award

## **OTHER PUBLICATIONS**

**Kok, B.E.** (2010). Zinfandel. In Potter Craft (Ed.), *The Art of Knitted Lace: With Complete Lace How-To and Dozens of Patterns* (pp. 63-69). New York, NY: Potter Craft.

**Kok, B.E.** (2009, Spring). Shipwreck. *Knitty Magazine*. Retrieved March 17, 2009 from <http://www.knitty.com/ISSUESpring09/PATTshipwreck.php>