

# Does faith cause more psychological harm than good?

Glynn Harrison

# Global Study Shows Half Think That Religion Does More Harm than Good

Half (49%) in a new global study agree that religion does more harm than good in the world, and 51% disagree, according to new data from Ipsos Global @dvisor survey.

12 October 2017 Religion



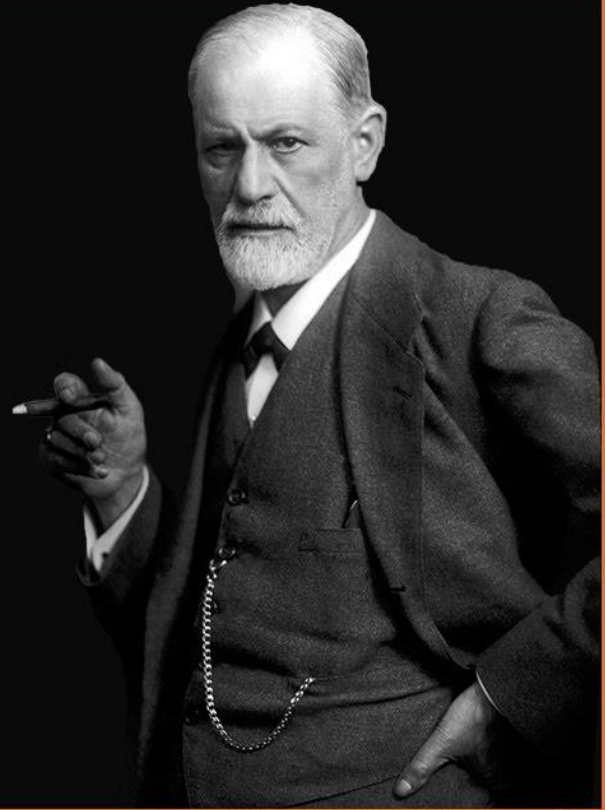
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The survey, conducted among online adults aged under 65 in 23 countries world-wide, finds people split on their views about religion's impact on the world. Countries which are most likely to believe that religion does more harm than good tend to be in Western Europe

THE AUTHOR(S)

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**Religion**  
=  
**Wish Fulfillment?**





**At bottom God  
is nothing more  
than an exalted father.**

~ Sigmund Freud

[abrainyquote.com](http://abrainyquote.com)

Factors associated with happiness:  
country comparisons

- Divorce rate
- Unemployment rate
- Fraction members of community organisations
- Quality of government
- Fraction belief in God

# Bonelli and Koenig (2013)

## Evidence for health benefits of religion

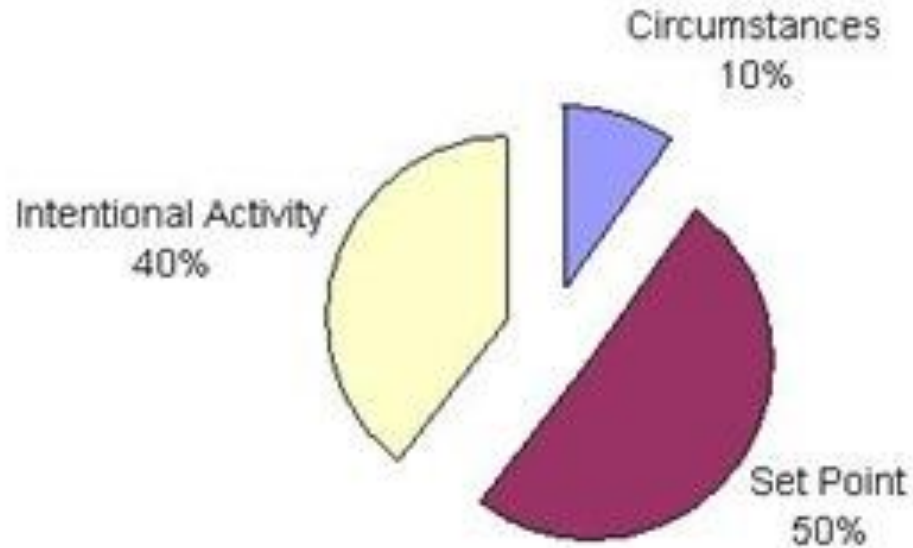
- depression, suicide, substance mis-use
- Anxiety disorders and dementias
- Psychosis and bipolar disorders



“Most studies have shown that religious involvement and spirituality are associated with better health outcomes, including greater longevity, coping skills, and health-related quality of life (even during terminal illness) and less anxiety, depression, and suicide. Several studies have shown that addressing the spiritual needs of the patient may enhance recovery from illness.”

Mueller et al, 2001

## Factors That Determine Our Happiness



Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade (2005)



# Intentional activities

- Community and social networks
- Acts of kindness
- Marriage and stable families
- `Decentering' spiritual practices
  - Worship (communal and orientated to transcendent)
  - Gratitude
  - Awe



By **David Robson**  6th January 2022

Intentionally seeking the feeling of awe can improve memory, boost creativity and relieve anxious rumination.

- Wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt 7:15)
- Shepherds who 'feed off' their flock (Ezek 34:2)
- Teachers who lead people astray with false or inadequate messaging (Romans 16:18)

# References

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## Fundamentalist religion and its effect on mental health

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PMID: 24276911 DOI: [10.1007/BF00987752](#)

### Abstract

The national self-help group, Fundamentalists Anonymous (F.A.), has focused attention upon mental problems that may be caused or exacerbated by authoritarian religion. In this article we outline assertions about the mental problems caused by membership in fundamentalist religion, illustrate these with two case histories, briefly discuss intervention strategies, and describe conceptual and empirical issues. While former members have presented problems severe enough to warrant professional treatment, a causal link between their symptoms and their religious membership has not yet been established, because there is little empirical work on the subject.