

 [\[JOB-LIST\] Chicago Booth Grant Competition for Behavioral Science](#)

[Research](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 29]

The Center for Decision Research at The University of Chicago Booth School of Business is pleased to announce a \$750,000 research initiative, the New Paths to Purpose Request for Proposals (RFP), supported with funding from the John Templeton Foundation. The center is now accepting letters of intent proposing behavioral science research on purpose, with the expectation that up to ten 27-month projects (with budgets of at least \$50,000, but not more than \$250,000) will ultimately be funded starting in April 2013.

This RFP is part of a 3-year project led by Richard Thaler, Ralph and Dorothy Keller Distinguished Service Professor of Behavioral Science and Economics, and Eugene Caruso, Associate Professor of Behavioral Science. The project is aimed at transforming the study, as well as the prevalent understandings and experiences, of purposeful living. The notion of purpose captures the desire and effort that individuals put forth to accomplish their goals, make significant contributions to society, and maintain a meaningful existence. Through rigorously-scientific observation, experimentation, and analysis, behavioral science has made it clear that the experience of purpose, like all facets of human experience, is likely to be highly context-dependent. The New Paths to Purpose RFP accordingly seeks to develop a new, broad, and actionable paradigm for understanding the experience and fulfillment of purpose in human life—one that deeply explores the considerable benefits humans may access by wisely managing situational and contextual forces around them. To do this, the initiative is designed to bring together an expansive, vibrant, and multidisciplinary community of behavioral scientists to address the following core question: How might individuals actively shape—rather than merely inhabit—their environments, and thus become more purposeful, powerful creators of their destiny?

The full Request for Proposals for this grant competition, including details on submission guidelines, can be found at: <http://www.newpathstopurpose.org/rfp>. If, after reading the full instructions on the RFP website, you have any further questions, please email them to purpose@chicagobooth.edu.

The deadline for Letters of Intent (LOIs) is September 21, 2012, 5:00PM Central Standard Time.

Dharm P. S. Bhawuk

 [Comment by Dharm Bhawuk](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 29]

Namaste Louise:

You may want to share the grant announcement with our network.

NOTE THE OBJECTIVE:

"How might individuals actively shape—rather than merely inhabit—their environments, and thus become more purposeful, powerful creators of their destiny?"

I HOPE YOU SEE HOW CULTURE SHAPES EVERYTHING WE DO, INCLUDING objective research :) Notice how purpose and power is getting used in the same breath. Also notice how being creator is valued, even when a word like destiny is appropriated. Kwok Leung and Michael Bond's Social Axiom Study, of which I am a part, uses items that are similarly action oriented, and when I pointed this out to Michael, he said, "Darned, Dharm. Our culture never leaves us, does it." Also notice in the RFP how inhabiting our environment is put down by the word "merely." As if "being" is of less value than "doing."

Have a wonderful week.

Bhawuk

 [Comment by Michael Bond](#) by Louise S. [2012, Aug 29]

wonderful to hear from Dharm!

and thanks for sharing this grant announcement. I note the typical either-or logic undergirding its animating challenge, however:

"How might individuals actively shape (rather than merely inhabit) their environments, and thus become more purposeful, powerful creators of their destiny?"

and the implied trade-off between destiny and active shaping.

the social axioms project that you mentioned, Dharm, showed that individuals in over 40 countries see Fate Control [destiny?] and Reward for Application [individual agency] as orthogonal or separate constructs. so, a given individual crafts a personal blend between these two axes of belief about how the world works in guiding his or her behavior. of course, persons from different cultures have different average profiles, and the American profile is more the trade-off pattern than the Chinese yin-yang blending of both.

Darn, Dharm, do the good folks at New Paths to Purpose realize how culturally grounded their proposal is?! perhaps they should ask for a culturally nuanced study of how folks from different epistemological traditions blend conceptions of destiny and agency to live a meaningful life, and not presume that meaning arises out of asserting yourself against the flow of contextual force. after all, wasn't it Sun Tzu who counseled,

There are roads which must not be followed,
armies which must not be attacked,
towns which must not be besieged,
positions which must not be contested,
commands of the sovereign which must not be obeyed.

Sun Tzu, The Art of War, Bk. 8, V. 3 (L. Giles, trans.)

that was good advice by my judgment 2500 years ago, and probably works still,
albeit differently in different cultural contexts.
researchable?

michael