

Can alcohol release the 'beast within' in spiritual people

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Often, research findings reflect the scientist's and the public's expectations. Sometimes, they come close. Other times, research results simply astound everyone.

Case in point is the recent research of Professor Peter R. Giancola of the psychology department of the University of Kentucky College of Arts and Sciences. He, and his former [graduate student](#), Aaron Duke, have found an unexpected relation between spiritual beliefs, violence and [alcohol consumption](#).

"Oversimplifying—in many cases the more religious someone is, the more aggressive they will become after [drinking alcohol](#)," Giancola said.

The researcher defined religiosity as someone who "finds meaning in the sacred," regardless of the doctrine they follow.

Pointing out that his findings are preliminary and require more study, Giancola said that he was originally trying to create a profile of risk factors to predict alcohol-related violence.

This preliminary study contained 520 subjects ranging in age from 21-35 from the Lexington and Central Kentucky region. After determining each individual's degree of spiritual belief, subjects received an alcohol or non-[alcohol beverage](#).

As would be expected, results of the study indicated that violence

decreased as spirituality increased in persons who received the non-alcohol beverage. However, quite unexpectedly, violence actually increased as spirituality increased in persons who received the alcohol beverage.

These counter-intuitive findings clearly require replication, Giancola said, however, they indicate that alcohol "releases the best within" in highly spiritual persons, though the reasons for this still remain unknown.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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