

# Psychology paper authors range from Dr. Phil to the Dalai Lama

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Professional psychologists are not the only experts contributing to psychology research, according to a new paper from Binghamton University and Emory University.

Steven Jay Lynn, distinguished professor of psychology and director of the Psychological Clinic at Binghamton University, and Scott O. Lilienfeld of Emory University examined 78 authors or co-authors that may be surprising to the psychology world. Their new paper focuses on these unconventional authors who contributed to esteemed books of [psychology research](#) that audiences might find surprising.

"The two of us are psychology trivia nerds, and we were just impressed by how widely psychological research had penetrated the wider culture," said Lynn.

These individuals come in the form of celebrities, relatives of celebrities, historical figures, or others from academia, politics, religion and pop culture. The premises of their papers range from psychological inquiry to public health, economics, law, neurosurgery and, for some, magic. Some notable figures include politician Ben Carson, actress Natalie Portman, religious figure the Dalai Lama, and even television medical superstar Dr. Phil.

Some of these figures even had a background in psychology before going on to other fields in which they are more recognized. For example, retired basketball legend Tim Duncan from the San Antonio Spurs

contributed to the work, "Aversive Interpersonal Behaviors" during his undergraduate career at Wake Forest University.

"I don't know if it's true, but years ago, I had heard that Tim had framed the first page of the chapter and hung it in his house," said Dr. Mark Leary who oversaw and edited Duncan's project. "I also heard that, when his teammates on the Spurs found out, some called him 'Dr. Duncan' for a while."

While these superstars are noted for their accomplishments in other worlds, the shock of these new findings were just as surprising to the authors. According to Lynn and Lilyfield, they measured the "surprisingness" against themselves and other colleagues with various exclamations of "Really?," "Huh!," or "You've got to be kidding."

"Doing psychology well is harder than it looks—that's certainly one of the takeaways," said Dr. Lynn.

The paper, "You'll Never Guess Who Wrote That: 78 Surprising Authors of Psychological Publications," was published in *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.

**More information:** S. O. Lilienfeld et al, You'll Never Guess Who Wrote That: 78 Surprising Authors of Psychological Publications, *Perspectives on Psychological Science* (2016). [DOI: 10.1177/1745691616663807](https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691616663807)

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