

Emily Nakkawita

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EDUCATION

Columbia University, New York, NY

Ph.D. in Psychology	Expected Spring 2025
M.Phil. in Psychology	2022
M.A. in Psychology	2020
Post-Baccalaureate Program in Psychology	2017 – 2018
Advisor: Dr. E. Tory Higgins	

Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Cum Laude	2008
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FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AWARDS, & GRANTS

Motivation Science Center Fellowship, Columbia University	2018 – 2025
Dean's Fellowship, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, Columbia University	2018 – 2023
Honorable Mention, NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program	2020
Student Grant, Association for Psychological Science	Spring 2020
Behavioral Research Lab Fellowship, Columbia Business School	Fall 2019 – Spring 2020
Graduate Student Advisory Council Travel Grant, Columbia University	2019
Department of Psychology Travel Award, Columbia University	2018, 2019
Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology	2018
Digital Lab Honor Roll Award, BBDO	2011
Dean's List, Georgetown University	All semesters 2004 – 2008

PUBLICATIONS

Higgins, E. T., & **Nakkawita, E.** (in press). Choices that feel right: Should we trust them? In A. J. Elliot (Ed.), *Advances in motivation science*. Elsevier.

Nakkawita, E., & Higgins, E. T. (in press). The meaning of multitasking: Why activity identification matters when engaging in multiple activities. In K. Fujita, A. Fishbach, & N. Liberman (Eds.), *The psychological quest for meaning*. Guilford.

Elliot, A. J., Higgins, E. T., & **Nakkawita, E.** (2025). The (absence of the) presence-absence distinction in motivation science. *Psychological Review*, 132(1), 154–172.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000508>

Nakkawita, E., & Higgins, E. T. (2024). Harnessing regulatory focus and regulatory fit to improve educational outcomes. *Motivation Science*, 10(3), 210–221.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/mot0000329>

Nakkawita, E., & Higgins, E. T. (2024). Marketplace solutions to motivational threats: Helping consumers with four distinct types of vulnerability. In A. Y. Lee (Ed.), *The vulnerable consumer* (Vol. 21, pp. 97–112). Emerald. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1548-643520240000021007>

Cornwell, J. F. M., **Nakkawita, E.**, Franks, B., & Higgins, E. T. (2023). Motivation and well-being across the lifespan: A cross-sectional examination. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 18(5), 688–694. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2022.2093787>

Higgins, E. T., **Nakkawita, E.** (2023). Wanting to feel effective in our goal pursuits for both outcomes and process. In M. Bong, J. Reeve, & S. Kim (Eds.), *Motivation science: Controversies and insights* (pp. 40–44). Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197662359.003.0007>

Nakkawita, E., & Heiphetz, L. A. (2023). Motivational priorities reflect beliefs about God's attributes. *Social Cognition*, 41(3), 239–273. <https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.2023.41.3.239>

Higgins, E. T., & **Nakkawita, E.** (2021). Motives working together: Value, truth, and control in goal selection and pursuit. In P. A. M. Van Lange, E. T. Higgins, & A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (3rd ed.). Guilford.

Higgins, E. T., **Nakkawita, E.** (2021). Self-discrepancy and regulatory focus. In O. Braddick (Ed.), *Oxford research encyclopedia of psychology*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.013.244>

Nakkawita, E., & Heiphetz, L. (2021). The cognitive science of religion: A case for the importance of adolescence. *Adolescent Research Review*, 6(3), 309–322.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-020-00145-y>

Higgins, E. T., **Nakkawita, E.**, & Cornwell, J. F. M. (2020). Beyond outcomes: How regulatory focus motivates consumer goal pursuit processes. *Consumer Psychology Review*, 3(1), 76–90. <https://doi.org/10.1002/arcp.1052>

Higgins, E. T., **Nakkawita, E.**, Rossignac-Milon, M., Pinelli, F., & Jun, Y. (2020). Making the right decision: Intensifying the worth of a chosen option. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 30(4), 712–732. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1194>

Nakkawita, E., Mathmann, F., & Higgins, E. T. (2020). Does your gain define my loss?: Socially-defined counterfactual loss and prevention-focused decision-making. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 160, 109926.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.109926>

Conley, M. A., & Nakkawita, E. (2019). Citizen protection: A capabilities and intentions framework. In A. Larsson & R. Teigland (Eds.), *The digital disruption of public services: An investigative study of the societal impact in Sweden and beyond* (pp. 171–199). Routledge.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

Nakkawita, E., Solomon, L. H., & Higgins, E. T. (2024). *When thinking about themselves and God, people believe truth matters more than control*. Manuscript under review.

SELECTED MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

Nakkawita, E., & Higgins, E. T. (2025). *How does it fit? Critical distinctions for operationalizing regulatory fit and non-fit*. Manuscript in preparation.

Avnet, A., Higgins, E. T., **Nakkawita, E.**, & Peleg, G. (2025). *Fit and non-fit: Going beyond the information given*. Manuscript in preparation.

PRESENTATIONS

⁺ Undergraduate mentee

Nakkawita, E., ⁺ Grueskin, E., & Higgins, E. T. (2024, May). *Motivational “birds of a feather”: Men (but not women) in romantic couples perceive themselves as more similar when their motives are alike* [Poster session]. Annual Convention of the Association for Psychological Science, San Francisco, CA.

Nakkawita, E., & Heiphetz, L. A. (2021, February). *Motivational priorities reflect beliefs about God’s attributes* [Poster session]. Motivation Science Pre-Conference at the 22nd Annual Convention of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Virtual Meeting.

⁺ Cesarini, D., **Nakkawita, E.**, & Higgins, E. T. (2021, February). *How does motivational relevance relate to moral judgments?* [Poster session]. 22nd Annual Convention of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Virtual Meeting.

Nakkawita, E., & Higgins, E. T. (2020, May). *Prevention vs. promotion motivate distinct goal pursuit activities* [Poster session]. 13th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Science of Motivation, Chicago, IL. (Conference canceled)

Nakkawita, E., & Higgins, E. T. (2020, February). *A framework of regulatory focus-specific goal pursuit processes* [Poster session]. 21st Annual Convention of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, New Orleans, LA.

Nakkawita, E., & Higgins, E. T. (2019, May). *Motivating the journey: Prevention vs. promotion goal pursuit processes* [Poster session]. 12th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Science of Motivation, Washington, DC.

Nakkawita, E., Cornwell, J. F. M., Franks, B., & Higgins, E. T. (2019, February). *It's about the journey: The unique role of process-related motives in predicting effectiveness* [Poster session]. 20th Annual Convention of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Portland, OR.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant

Social Psychology, Prof. E. T. Higgins, Columbia University	Fall 2024
The Science of Psychology, Prof. S. Giebl, Columbia University	Spring 2024
Thinking and Decision Making, Prof. K. Fox-Glassman, Columbia University	Spring 2023
Social Psychology, Prof. K. Turetsky, Barnard College	Fall 2022
Intro. Statistics for Behavioral Scientists, Prof. K. Fox-Glassman, Columbia University	Fall 2021
Motivation Science, Prof. E. T. Higgins, Columbia Business School	Spring 2021
Social Psychology, Prof. E. T. Higgins, Columbia University	Fall 2020
Evolution of Cognition, Prof. H. Terrace, Columbia University	Spring 2020
Introduction to Personality Psychology, Prof. S. Oishi, Columbia University	Spring 2019
Mathematics Summer School Program, Marian Catholic High School	Summers 2004 – 2005

Guest Lecturer

Motivation Science, <i>The Meaning of Multitasking: Why Activity Identification Matters</i>	Spr. 2025
Social Psychology, <i>If It Feels Right, It Is Right (Really?)</i>	Fall 2024
Thinking and Decision Making, <i>Individual Differences in Decision Making II</i>	Spring 2023
Social Psychology, <i>Motivation: What Drives Us?</i>	Fall 2022
Social Psychology, <i>Engagement Strength and Regulatory Fit</i>	Fall 2020
Introduction to Personality Psychology, <i>Regulatory Focus and Regulatory Mode</i>	Spring 2019

PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING

Courses

Teaching Development Program	2019 – Present
Innovative Teaching Summer Institute	Summer 2019
Columbia University Center for Teaching and Learning	
Teaching Practicum	Fall 2018
Columbia University Psychology Department	

Workshops (Columbia University Center for Teaching and Learning)

Being a Teacher vs. a Person Who Teaches	Fall 2020
Grading and Feedback	Fall 2019
Active Learning	Fall 2019
Backward Design and Learning Objectives	Fall 2019
Creating Inclusive Learning Environments	Fall 2019
How to Design a Course	Spring 2019
Become a Good Mentor	Fall 2018

MENTORING EXPERIENCE

Columbia Undergraduate Honors and Supervised Independent Research Students Advised

Deborah Cesarini	Adam Krauss
Anna Franco	Petra Cui San Poon
Emma Grueskin	Martha Wyatt-Luth
Geraldine Gustave	

Columbia Undergraduate and Post-Baccalaureate Research Assistants Advised

Jason Bowen	Holly Liu
Don Lavelle	Maretta Sonn
Jin Hyung (Kate) Lim	Mo Zhou

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND MEMBERSHIPS

Ad-Hoc Reviewing for Journals

Motivation and Emotion
Motivation Science

University Service and Leadership

“The Psychology PhD” Podcast Co-Creator, Columbia Univ. Psychology Dept.	2021 – Present
R/Python Workshop Instructor, Columbia Psychology Scientific Computing	2018 – 2021
Psychological Methods Support, Columbia University Psychology Department	2020 – 2021
Undergraduate Holistic Academic Mentor, Women in Science at Columbia	2020
Teaching Assistant Liaison, Columbia University Psychology Department	2019 – 2020

Professional Memberships

Student Member, Society for the Science of Motivation	2019 – Present
Graduate Student Affiliate, Association for Psychological Science	2019 – Present
Member, Psi Chi Honor Society, Columbia University Chapter	2018 – Present
Student Member, Society for Personality and Social Psychology	2017 – Present
Student Affiliate, American Psychological Association	2017 – Present
Member, International Positive Psychology Association	2015 – Present

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Research Experience

Higgins Lab, Columbia University	2017 – Present
PI: Prof. E. Tory Higgins	
Graduate (Ph.D.) Student Researcher, August 2018 – Present	
Research Assistant, January 2017 – August 2018	

Social and Moral Cognition Lab, Columbia University

2017 – Present

PI: Prof. Larisa Heiphetz

Graduate (Ph.D.) Student Researcher, August 2018 – Present

Research Assistant, May 2017 – August 2017

Industry Experience**Morgan Stanley**

New York, NY

Vice President, Integrated Campaign Director, November 2015 – December 2016

Oversaw firm-wide strategy, planning, and buying for \$25MM national paid media campaign, with a focus on client acquisition and consumer engagement. Transformed advertising approach by implementing a significant shift to digital channels to maximize campaign efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance to a modern audience. Led campaign measurement program and test-and-learn agenda.

Framestore

New York, NY

Engagement Director, May 2014 – November 2015

Key member of team responsible for launching the company's direct-to-brand creative services offering via the Framestore Campaigns department. Pitched and acted as primary client contact for the development of video, virtual reality, and augmented reality campaigns. Secured annual retainer for Magic Leap, the department's first client.

IPG Media Lab

New York, NY

Engagement Director, June – Sep. 2013; Engagement Manager, June 2012 – June 2013

Consulted with senior agency partners across the Interpublic portfolio on digital, social, and experiential campaign strategies for clients including Johnson & Johnson, JetBlue, Chrysler, and iHeartMedia. Led "Lab Days" for C-suite client executives; synthesized marketplace research into presentations tailored to each client's business.

BBDO

New York, NY

Account Manager, February 2011 – May 2012

Managed strategic recommendations, creative development, and integrated production for Johnson & Johnson's Baby and Desitin brands. Launched Facebook presence for Johnson's Baby. Led teams to build brand experiences rooted in marketplace insights that were validated through qualitative and quantitative research.

Night Agency

New York, NY

Account Supervisor, October 2010 – February 2011; Acc't Executive, May – October 2010

Spearheaded development of digital and experiential campaigns for key clients including Keds sneakers, Hanes Women's apparel, and Dial For Men personal care products.

Manhattan Marketing Ensemble New York, NY

Account Executive, June 2009 – May 2010; Ass’t Account Executive, June 2008 – June 2009

Managed marketing campaigns and led tactical execution of consumer research for Palmer’s and Nathan’s Famous. Spearheaded digital efforts including Palmer’s website redesign and Nathan’s Famous’ Facebook presence. Developed surveys on brand perceptions and product usage; managed data collection; led data analysis; and created reports for clients.

Coaching Experience

The Welcome Table at St. Francis Xavier

New York, NY

Ambassador Program Co-Founder and Weekly Volunteer, April 2009 – Present

Co-founded the Ambassador project at the Welcome Table at St. Francis Xavier meal service in October 2012, establishing a team dedicated to guest support following several years of weekly volunteering. When acting as Team Leader, lead a group of volunteers who engage in coaching conversations and offer companionship to 500+ Welcome Table guests each week. [Currently on hiatus during Covid-19 pandemic.]

Pure Plenty

New York, NY

Founder and Professional Coach, October 2013 – July 2018

Established Pure Plenty coaching practice and programs to facilitate clients’ personal and professional growth. Conducted one-on-one remote and in-person coaching sessions with private clients to support them in articulating goals, developing strategic plans for goal pursuit, encouraging aligned action, and creating systems to ensure accountability. Practice was closed in 2018 to avoid any conflicts of interest with academic research.