Dr. Smith's national opinion survey of spiritual transformation will bridge the gulf between studies using representative and generalizable national samples and those with small, unrepresentative samples and case studies. It will be conducted as a module of the 2004 General Social Survey and will feature a nationally representative sample to examine the phenomena of spiritual transformation. "We will learn about the profile and distribution of spiritual transformations, their frequency, and how they impact people's lives."

His full-probability, in-person interview with a target of 1500 respondents will bridge the gulf between 1) studies of spiritual transformation using representative and generalizable national samples, with only limited and closed-ended measures, and 2) those with small, unrepresentative samples and case studies (often based on self-selection), that collect rich, insightful, open-ended narratives of religious experiences.

The study will use the highest quality, national sample to:

- Collect data that generalizes to all adult Americans,
- Utilize carefully developed and pre-tested items to measure people's personal spiritual experiences,
- Capture reports of the events, and capture in-depth reports of the causes, nature, and consequences of the spiritual transformations.

"By collecting a sufficient and nationally representative sample of such spiritual experiences, our survey will help us better understand the nature of these religious experiences. We will learn whether the experiences recorded by rich, but unrepresentative, collections are typical or atypical. For example, we will gain some sense of the relative importance of what Lewis Rambo lists as the main motifs of conversion: intellectual, mystical, experimental, affective, revivalist, and coercive."

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