

Primals Inventories
Administration & Scoring Instructions
Prepared January, 2019
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Purpose of this Document

I prepared this document so that researchers of any background can measure primals for research purposes. Though my permission is not necessary to use my scales, please do reach out anyway. I would love to hear about what you're exploring and connect you with other researchers and resources as I can.

Definition of *Primals*

Primals, also called *primal world beliefs*, are an individual's most basic beliefs about the general character of the world as a whole.

The Three Primals Inventories

In the first scientific effort to identify all the major primal world beliefs humans hold, we (2019) identified twenty-two *tertiary* primals concerning specific qualities about the world, such as how abundant or interconnected it is. Most variance reflected by tertiary primals can be summarized by three overarching *secondary* primals called *Safe*, *Enticing*, and *Alive*. In turn, these "big three" primals feed into one *primary* umbrella primal about whether the world is a fundamentally good or bad place, called *Good*. Three Primals Inventories, therefore, focus on different levels:

- The 6 item Primals Inventory (PI-6) measures *Good* only.
- The 18 item Primals Inventory (PI-18) measures *Good*, *Safe*, *Enticing*, and *Alive*.
- The full 99 item Primals Inventory (PI-99) measures all 26 primals.

Which scale should I use?

It depends. The PI-99 is preferable, but the PI-18 is typically the best balance of brevity and granularity. You can also mix and match subscales. Feel free to reach out for advice.

Citation

Any discussion of primals should reference our (2019) paper. If using the PI-18 and PI-6, please note these are preliminary versions only and cite the unpublished manuscript that is also listed:

- Clifton, J. D. W., Baker, J. D., Park, C. L., Yaden, D. B., Clifton, A. B. W., Terini, P., Miller, J. L., Zeng, G., Giorgi S., Schwartz, H. A., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2019). Primal world beliefs. *Psychological Assessment*, 31(1), 82-99.
- Clifton, J. D. W. (2019). Briefer measures of Good, Safe, Enticing, and Alive. Unpublished manuscript.

Participant Instructions

Instructions are the same for all Primals Inventories and should appear at the top of the page. Please bold the bolded phrase as indicated. Do not italicize.

Below are very general statements about the world—not the world we wish we lived in, but the actual world as it is now. Please share your sense of agreement

or disagreement. When in doubt, go with what initially feels true of the real world. There are no wrong answers. There's no need to overthink.

The full PI-18 and PI-6 should appear on one page. If administering the PI-99 items over multiple pages, we recommend evenly distributing items over 3 pages just as the scale was originally validated and using the same instructions that we used on each page. Instructions on the top of the second page were as follows:

Good work!

Remember, when in doubt, go with what initially feels most accurate to the real world. You can be totally honest."

Instructions on the third page were as follows:

You are doing great. Keep up the good work!

Response Options

Response options for each item should be on a six point 0-5 scale: (5) Strongly agree, (4) Agree, (3) Slightly agree, (2) Slightly disagree, (1) Disagree, and (0) Strongly disagree. Numbers should not be viewable by study participants but all six response options labels should be viewable. I typically administer response options horizontally below each item with "Strongly agree" on the left and "Strongly disagree" on the right. All items should be forced response to ensure no missing data.

Attention Checks

Here are the three attention checks we used to validate the PI-99. When checks are appropriate, I recommend using one and, if one is used, I recommend the first, for 100 items total.

(1) Please mark this statement "slightly disagree."

(2) If you are doing your best to complete this survey honestly, please strongly agree with this statement.

(3) Please slightly agree with this statement.

Item Order

All items (and attention checks) should be administered in a different random order for each participant. If this is not possible, items should be randomly intermixed and then administered in that same random order across participants.

Copyright Notice

The following copyright notice should make an appearance at some point, probably at the bottom of pages that have PI items on them:

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Example Format

Here is a screen shot of how I format items and instructions on Qualtrics.

Below are very general statements about the world—not the world we wish we lived in, but the actual world as it is now. Please share your sense of agreement or disagreement. When in doubt, go with what initially **feels true of the real world**. There are no wrong answers. There's no need to overthink.

Everything happens for a reason and on purpose.

Strongly Agree Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Most situations in life need to be improved, not accepted.

Strongly Agree Agree Slightly Agree Slightly Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

PI-6 Items

All 6 items in the PI-6 are provided in the table below. The asterisk* indicates one of 3 reverse-scored items (of course, make sure to delete the asterisks; respondents should not see them). Suggested item labels are the ones I used in my own code. I created them by combining the first letter of the associated primal (*Good*), the first letter of it's opposite (*bad*), a number, and an "x" appears when that item will need to be reverse scored later.

Items	Suggested Label
<i>Good</i> (vs. bad; 6 items)	
Most things in the world are good.	gb1
In life, there's way more beauty than ugliness.	gb2
Most things have a habit of getting worse.*	gb3x
On the whole, the world is an uncomfortable and unpleasant place.*	gb4x
Good things in the world outweigh the bad things.	gb5
On the whole, the world is a bad place.*	gb6x

PI-6 SAS Code

*To reverse-score 3 items;

gb3xr=5-gb3x;

gb4xr=5-gb4x;

gb6xr=5-gb6x;

*To compute scores on the primary primal;

$Good = (gb1 + gb2 + gb3xr + gb4xr + gb5 + gb6xr)/6;$

PI-18 Items

All 18 items in the PI-18 are provided in the table below. The column with an "X" indicates that the item is also used to compute *Good*.

Items	Suggested Label	<i>Good</i> (15 items)
<i>Safe</i> (vs. dangerous; 6 items)		

Items	Suggested Label	Good (15 items)
I tend to see the world as pretty safe.	sd1	X
On the whole, the world is a dangerous place.*	sd2x	X
Most things and situations are harmless and totally safe.	sd3	X
Most things in the world are good.	sd4	X
Most things have a habit of getting worse.*	sd5x	X
Instead of being cooperative, the world is a cut-throat and competitive place.*	sd6x	X
<i>Enticing</i> (vs. dull 7 items)		
No matter where we are or what the topic might be, the world is fascinating.	ed1	X
No matter where we are, incredible beauty is always around us.	ed2	X
The world is a somewhat dull place where plenty of things are not that interesting.*	ed3x	X
In life, there's way more beauty than ugliness.	ed4	X
Most things in life are kind of boring.*	ed5x	X
While some things are worth checking out or exploring further, most things probably aren't worth the effort.*	ed6x	X
The world is an abundant place with tons and tons to offer.	ed7	X
<i>Alive</i> (vs. mechanical; 5 items)		
Everything happens for a reason and on purpose.	am1	.
What happens in the world is meant to happen.	am2	.
Events seem to lack any cosmic or bigger purpose.*	am3x	.
The universe needs me for something important.	am4	X
It often feels like events are happening in order to help me in some way.	am5	X

PI-18 SAS Code

*To reverse-score 7 items;

sd2xr=5-sd2x; sd5xr=5-sd5x; ed3xr=5-ed3x; ed5xr=5-ed5x; ed6xr=5-ed6x;
am3xr=5-am3x;

*To compute scores for secondary primals;

Safe = (sd1 + sd2xr + sd3 + sd4 + sd5xr + sd6xr)/6;
Ending = (ed1 + ed2 + ed3xr + ed4 + ed5xr + ed6xr + ed7)/7;
Alive = (am1 + am2 + am3xr + am4 + am5)/5;

*To compute scores for the primary primal;

$$Good = (sd1 + sd2xr + sd3 + sd4 + sd5xr + sd6xr + ed1 + ed2 + ed3xr + ed4 + ed5xr + ed6xr + ed7 + am4 + am5) / 15;$$

PI-99 Items

All 99 items in the PI-99 are provided in the table below. Each is grouped by tertiary primal, which are listed in alphabetical order for your convenience. Columns with an “X” indicates that that item is also used to compute *Good*, *Safe*, *Enticing*, or *Alive*. As above, * indicates one of 39 reverse-scored items. Also, ° indicates one of three items that are not used to measure any of the tertiary primals. Suggested item labels are the ones I used in my own code.

Items	Suggested Label	<i>Good</i> 71 items	<i>Safe</i> 29 items	<i>Enticing</i> 28 items	<i>Alive</i> 14 items
<i>Abundant</i> (vs. barren; 4 items)					
The world is an abundant place.	ab1	X	.	X	.
The world feels like a barren place with few opportunities.*	ab2x	X	.	X	.
Life overflows with opportunity and abundance.	ab3	X	.	X	.
The world is an abundant place with tons and tons to offer.	ab4	X	.	X	.
<i>Acceptable</i> (vs. unacceptable; 4 items)					
The world needs to be continually improved rather than accepted.*	au1x	.	.	.	.
Most situations in life need to be improved, not accepted.*	au2x	.	.	.	.
Rather than accepting things as they are, the world needs to be improved as much as possible.*	au3x	.	.	.	.
It's usually better to accept a situation than try to change it.	au4	.	.	.	.
<i>Beautiful</i> (vs. ugly; 4 items)					
Though some things are incredibly beautiful, they're few and far between.*	bu1x	X	.	X	.
Nearly everything in the world is beautiful.	bu2	X	.	X	.
In life, there's way more beauty than ugliness.	bu3	X	.	X	.
There is beauty everywhere, no matter where we look.	bu4	X	.	X	.
<i>Changing</i> (vs. static; 5 items)					
Everything feels like it's shifting and changing.	cs1	.	.	.	.

Items	Suggested Label	<i>Good</i> 71 items	<i>Safe</i> 29 items	<i>Enticing</i> 28 items	<i>Alive</i> 14 items
I feel like everything changes all the time.	cs2	.	.	.	.
Everything feels like a whirl of constant change.	cs3	.	.	.	.
The world is a place where most things stay pretty much the same.*	cs4x	.	.	.	.
Everything feels like it's constantly moving, changing, and up in the air.	cs5	.	.	.	.
<i>Cooperative</i> (vs. competitive; 4 items)					
Instead of being cooperative, life is a brutal contest where you got to do whatever it takes to survive.*	cc1x	X	X	.	.
For all life—from the smallest organisms, to plants, animals, and for people too—everything is a cut-throat competition.*	cc2x	X	X	.	.
Instead of being cooperative, the world is a cutthroat and competitive place.*	cc3x	X	X	.	.
The world runs on trust and cooperation way more than suspicion and competition.	cc4	X	X	.	.
<i>Funny</i> (vs. humorless; 4 items)					
The world is hilarious; if we aren't laughing, we aren't paying attention.	fh1	X	.	X	.
There's humor in everything.	fh2	X	.	X	.
While some things are humorous, most of the time the world is not that funny.*	fh3x	X	.	.	.
Laughing a ton makes sense because life is hilarious and humor is everywhere.	fh4	X	.	X	.
<i>Harmless</i> (vs. threatening; 5 items)					
Real danger is everywhere; even if we don't notice it.*	ht1x	X	X	.	.
Most things and situations are harmless and totally safe.	ht2	X	X	.	.
I tend to see the world as pretty safe.	ht3	X	X	.	.
On the whole, the world is a dangerous place.*	ht4x	X	X	.	.
On the whole, the world is a safe place.	ht5	X	X	.	.

Items	Suggested Label	Good 71 items	Safe 29 items	Enticing 28 items	Alive 14 items
<i>Hierarchical</i> (vs. nonhierarchical; 5 items)					
Most things in the world could be ranked in order of importance.	hn1	.	.	.	.
Humans, animals, plants, and pretty much everything else can be organized by how important or good they are.	hn2	.	.	.	.
Most things can be organized into hierarchies, rankings, or pecking orders that reflect true differences among things.	hn3	.	.	.	.
Most things aren't better or worse. It's hard to organize the world into hierarchies, rankings, or pecking orders that reflect true differences.*	hn4x	.	.	.	.
Things are rarely equal. Most plants and animals, and even people, are better or worse than one another.	hn5	.	.	.	.
<i>Improvable</i> (vs. too hard to improve; 5 items)					
It's possible to significantly improve basically anything encountered in life.	it1	X	.	.	.
In most situations, making things way better is absolutely possible.	it2	X	.	X	.
Most things and situations are responsive, workable, and totally possible to improve.	it3	X	.	X	.
Most situations seem really difficult if not impossible to improve.*	it4x	X	.	.	.
No matter who you are, you can significantly improve the world you live in.	it5	X	.	X	.
<i>Intentional</i> (vs. unintentional; 5 items)					
Events happen according to a broader purpose.	iu1	.	.	.	X
What happens in the world is meant to happen.	iu2	.	.	.	X
Events seem to lack any cosmic or bigger purpose.*	iu3x	.	.	.	X
The universe doesn't care if events happen one way or another.*	iu4x	.	.	.	X
Everything happens for a reason and on purpose.‡	iu5	.	.	.	X
<i>Interactive</i> (vs. indifferent; 5 items)					

Items	Suggested Label	<i>Good</i> 71 items	<i>Safe</i> 29 items	<i>Enticing</i> 28 items	<i>Alive</i> 14 items
Whatever is happening around me often feels related to me or something I've done.	ii1	.	.	.	X
When unsure why something is happening, I often suspect it's got something to do with me.	ii2	.	.	.	.
Much of what happens around me feels like it's because of me or related to me somehow.	ii3	.	.	.	X
My first instinct about events happening around me is that they're unrelated to me or anything I've done.*	ii4x	.	.	.	X
My first instinct about things happening around me is that they have to do with me or something I've done.	ii5	.	.	.	X
<i>Interconnected</i> (vs. atomistic; 4 items)					
Every single thing is connected to everything else.	ia1	.	.	.	.
The world is a place where everything is completely interconnected.	ia2	.	.	.	.
Though things can appear separate and independent, they really aren't. Instead, all is one.	ia3	.	.	.	.
Most things are basically unconnected and independent from each other.*	ia4x	.	.	.	.
<i>Interesting</i> (vs. boring; 4 items)					
Most things in life are kind of boring.*	ib1x	X	.	X	.
While some things are interesting, most things are pretty dull.*	ib2x	X	.	X	.
The world is a somewhat dull place where plenty of things are not that interesting.*	ib3x	X	.	X	.
It feels like interesting and exciting things surround us all the time.	ib4	X	.	X	.
<i>Just</i> (vs. unjust; 5 items)					
On the whole, the world is a place where we get what we deserve.	ju1	X	.	.	.
The world is a place where we rarely deserve what we get.*	ju2x	X	X	.	.

Items	Suggested Label	<i>Good</i> 71 items	<i>Safe</i> 29 items	<i>Enticing</i> 28 items	<i>Alive</i> 14 items
Life will find ways to reward those who do good and punish those who do bad.	ju3	X	.	.	X
The world is a place where working hard and being nice pays off.	ju4	X	X	.	.
If someone is generous and kind, the world will be kind back.	ju5	X	X	.	.
<i>Meaningful</i> (vs. meaningless; 4 items)					
Nothing really matters all that much.*	mm1x	X	.	X	.
Most things are pointless and meaningless.*	mm2x	X	.	X	.
The world is a place where things just don't matter.*	mm3x	X	.	X	.
The world is a place where most everything matters.	mm4	X	.	X	.
<i>Needs Me</i> (vs. doesn't need me; 4 items)					
The universe needs me for something important.	nd1	X	.	.	X
The world needs me and my efforts.	nd2	X	.	.	X
Life has an important part for me to play.	nd3	X	.	.	X
It feels like the world doesn't really need me for anything.*	nd4x	X	.	.	X
<i>Pleasurable</i> (vs. miserable; 5 items)					
Life offers more pain than pleasure.*	pm1x	X	X	.	.
Life in this world is usually pain and suffering.*	pm2x	X	X	.	.
On the whole, the world is a good place.	pm3	X	X	.	.
Most things in the world are good.	pm4	X	X	.	.
Life offers way more pleasure than pain.	pm5	X	X	.	.
<i>Progressing</i> (vs. declining; 4 items)					
On the whole, the world is getting worse.*	pd1x	X	X	.	.
It feels like the world is going downhill.*	pd2x	X	X	.	.
Though the world has problems, on the whole things are definitely improving.	pd3	X	X	.	.
It feels like the world is getting better and better.	pd4	X	X	.	.

Items	Suggested Label	Good 71 items	Safe 29 items	Enticing 28 items	Alive 14 items
<i>Regenerative</i> (vs. degenerative; 4 items)					
Over time, most situations naturally tend to get worse, not better.*	rd1x	X	X	.	.
The usual tendency of most things and situations is to get better, not worse.	rd2	X	X	.	.
Though sometimes situations get worse, usually they get better.	rd3	X	X	.	.
Most things have a habit of getting worse.*	rd4x	X	X	.	.
<i>Stable</i> (vs. fragile; 4 items)					
The world is a place where things are fragile and easily ruined.*	sf1x	X	X	.	.
Most things and situations are delicate and easily destroyed.*	sf2x	X	X	.	.
Most situations are delicate. Though they may be fine now, things could easily unravel.*	sf3x	X	X	.	.
It takes a lot for things to fall apart.	sf4	X	X	.	.
<i>Understandable</i> (vs. too hard to understand; 4 items)					
Most everything is easy enough to understand.	ut1	X	.	.	.
The world is easy enough to understand.	ut2	X	.	.	.
Lots of things in the world are too confusing and difficult to understand.*	ut3x	X	.	.	.
The world is a confusing place where many skills and subjects are too hard to figure out.*	ut4x	X	.	.	.
<i>Worth Exploring</i> (vs. not worth exploring; 4 items)					
Unfamiliar things and places are usually worth trying or checking out.	wn1	X	.	X	.
I feel everything is worth trying, learning about, or exploring further.	wn2	X	.	X	.
Everything deserves to be explored.	wn3	X	.	X	.
To be honest, though some things are worth trying and exploring, most things aren't.*	wn4x	X	.	X	.
On the whole, the world is an uncomfortable and unpleasant place.* ^o	g1x	X	.	.	.
No matter where we are or what the topic might be, the world is fascinating. ^o	e1	X	.	X	.

Items	Suggested Label	Good 71 items	Safe 29 items	Enticing 28 items	Alive 14 items
No matter where we are, incredible beauty is always around us. ^o	e2	X	.	X	.

PI-99 SAS Code

*To reverse-score 39 items;

ab2xr=5-ab2x; au1xr=5-au1x; au2xr=5-au2x; au3xr=5-au3x; bu1xr=5-bu1x;
 cs4xr=5-cs4x; cc1xr=5-cc1x; cc2xr=5-cc2x; cc3xr=5-cc3x; fh3xr=5-fh3x;
 ht1xr=5-ht1x; ht4xr=5-ht4x; hn4xr=5-hn4x; it4xr=5-it4x; iu3xr=5-iu3x; iu4xr=5-
 iu4x; ii4xr=5-ii4x; ia4xr=5-ia4x; ib1xr=5-ib1x; ib2xr=5-ib2x; ib3xr=5-ib3x;
 ju2xr=5-ju2x; mm1xr=5-mm1x; mm2xr=5-mm2x; mm3xr=5-mm3x; nd4xr=5-
 nd4x; pm1xr=5-pm1x; pm2xr=5-pm2x; pd1xr=5-pd1x; pd2xr=5-pd2x; rd1xr=5-
 rd1x; rd4xr=5-rd4x; sf1xr=5-sf1x; sf2xr=5-sf2x; sf3xr=5-sf3x; ut3xr=5-ut3x;
 ut4xr=5-ut4x; wn4xr=5-wn4x; gl1xr=5-gl1x;

*To compute scores for tertiary primals;

Abundant = (ab1 + ab2xr + ab3 + ab4) / 4;
Acceptable = (au1xr + au2xr + au3xr + au4) / 4;
Beautiful = (bu1xr + bu2 + bu3 + bu4) / 4;
Changing = (cs1 + cs2 + cs3 + cs4xr + cs5) / 5;
Cooperative = (cc1xr + cc2xr + cc3xr + cc4) / 4;
Funny = (fh1 + fh2 + fh3xr + fh4) / 4;
Harmless = (ht1xr + ht2 + ht3 + ht4xr + ht5) / 5;
Hierarchical = (hn1 + hn2 + hn3 + hn4xr + hn5) / 5;
Improvable = (it1 + it2 + it3 + it4xr + it5) / 5;
Intentional = (iu1 + iu2 + iu3 + iu4xr + iu5) / 5;
Interactive = (ii1 + ii2 + ii3 + ii4xr + ii5) / 5;
Interconnected = (ia1 + ia2 + ia3 + ia4xr) / 4;
Interesting = (ib1xr + ib2xr + ib3xr + ib4) / 4;
Just = (ju1 + ju2xr + ju3 + ju4 + ju5) / 5;
Meaningful = (mm1xr + mm2xr + mm3xr + mm4) / 4;
Needs Me = (nd1 + nd2 + nd3 + nd4xr) / 4;
Pleasurable = (pm1xr + pm2xr + pm3 + pm4 + pm5) / 5;
Progressing = (pd1xr + pd2xr + pd3 + pd4) / 4;
Regenerative = (rd1xr + rd2 + rd3 + rd4xr) / 4;
Stable = (sf1xr + sf2xr + sf3xr + sf4) / 4;
Understandable = (ut1 + ut2 + ut3xr + ut4xr) / 4;
Worth Exploring = (wn1 + wn2 + wn3 + wn4xr) / 4;

*To compute scores for secondary primals;

Safe = (cc1xr + cc2xr + cc3xr + cc4 + ht1xr + ht2 + ht3 + ht4xr + ht5 + ju2xr +
 ju4 + ju5 + pm1xr + pm2xr + pm3 + pm4 + pm5 + pd1xr + pd2xr + pd3 +
 pd4 + rd1xr + rd2 + rd3 + rd4xr + sf1xr + sf2xr + sf3xr + sf4) / 29;
Enticing = (ab1 + ab2xr + ab3 + ab4 + bu1xr + bu2 + bu3 + bu4 + fh1 + fh2 + fh4
 + it2 + it3 + it5 + ib1xr + ib2xr + ib3xr + ib4 + mm1xr + mm2xr + mm3xr
 + mm4 + wn1 + wn2 + wn3 + wn4xr + e1 + e2) / 28;

$$Alive = (iu1 + iu2 + iu3xr + iu4 + iu5 + ii1 + ii3 + ii4xr + ii5 + ju3 + nd1 + nd2 + nd3 + nd4xr) / 14;$$

*To compute scores for the primary primal;

$$Good = (ab1 + ab2xr + ab3 + ab4 + bu1xr + bu2 + bu3 + bu4 + cc1xr + cc2xr + cc3xr + cc4 + fh1 + fh2 + fh3xr + fh4 + ht1xr + ht2 + ht3 + ht4xr + ht5 + it1 + it2 + it3 + it4xr + It5 + ib1xr + ib2xr + ib3xr + ib4 + ju1 + ju2xr + ju3 + ju4 + ju5 + mm1xr + mm2xr + mm3xr + mm4 + nd1 + nd2 + nd3 + nd4xr + pm1xr + pm2xr + pm3 + pm4 + pm5 + pd1xr + pd2xr + pd3 + pd4 + rd1xr + rd2 + rd3 + rd4xr + sf1xr + sf2xr + sf3xr + sf4 + ut1 + ut2 + ut3xr + ut4xr + wn1 + wn2 + wn3 + wn4xr + g1xr + e1 + e2) / 71;$$

Computing Scores

The first step to computing scores is excluding from the analysis participants who failed any attention checks. The second step is reverse-scoring the items noted above with an asterisk (39 items for the PI-99, 7 for the PI-18, and 3 for the PI-6). As illustrated by the SAS code provided, this can be done by subtracting each response from 5 so that 5s become 0s, 4s become 1s, and 3s become 2s, 2s become 3s, 1s become 4s, and 5s become 0s. The third step to computing scores for each primal is to simply average item responses in each subscale, also as shown by my SAS code. All final scores should be on a 0-5 scale where 5 is scoring high on that primal.

A Comment on Ipsatization

Scores computed as suggested above will perform slightly different than our (2019) scores. This is because we ipsatized data to aid factor interpretation. Ipsatization theoretically removes error variance associated with agreement bias. We also found it slightly increases standardized α and correlations with other variables (in the range .01 to .02). However, we do not recommend ipsatization because it adds a step that some may find confusing and hinders some types of analyses. Furthermore, in our data ipsatized and non-ipsatized scores always correlated with each other $> .97$. For those interested in ipsatizing anyway, please refer to page 279 in the supplemental materials for our (2019) paper *Primal World Beliefs*.

Interpreting Scores

Primals are thought to be important because beliefs about a situation are known to strongly influence one's thoughts and actions while one is in that situation. If that applies to primals, then primals theoretically influence a vast array of personality and wellbeing variables, which we also now know are highly correlated with primals. For more information on the PI-99 and how to interpret scores, please refer to [our \(2019\) paper](#) as well as [the extensive supplemental materials](#). When appropriate, study participants and other members of the general public can be directed to this website: www.myprimals.com.