

*ABSTRACTS FOR LISTED 2007-2008 EMPIRICAL PUBLICATIONS*

*(only First Author Listed unless multiple articles by same first author)*

*Note: In press abstracts not included*

***Allemand***

Given the positive individual and relationship benefits associated with interpersonal forgiveness, the present study examines the association of trait forgiveness and relationship satisfaction with episodic forgiveness. One hundred and eighty participants in romantic relationships answered questions about forgiving the most serious transgression in their relationship. Both trait forgiveness and relationship satisfaction were related to forgiveness of the transgression. For participants in the process of forgiving, relationship satisfaction moderated the link between trait forgiveness and episodic forgiveness. At relatively higher levels of relationship satisfaction, trait forgiveness and episodic forgiveness were positively related whereas they were negatively related at lower levels of relationship satisfaction. Results are discussed in terms of the roles that trait forgiveness and relationship satisfaction play in regard to episodic forgiveness in romantic relationships.

***Anderson***

Through qualitative research based on interviews, I describe how psychoanalytic practitioners perceive forgiveness, a complex subject with cultural, religious and political associations. They see it as important, and sometimes at the heart of the psychoanalytic endeavor. Analytic thinking has enriched what is essentially a concept determined by religions and cultures. The development of the capacity to forgive requires consciousness and empathy, for both self and other, and the need for appropriate metabolizing of aggression.

***Bono***

In two studies, the authors investigated the associations between interpersonal forgiveness and psychological well-being. Cross-sectional and prospective multilevel analyses demonstrated that increases in forgiveness (measured as fluctuations in individuals' avoidance, revenge, and benevolence motivations toward their transgressors) were related to within-persons increases in psychological well-being (measured as more satisfaction with life, more positive mood, less negative mood, and fewer physical symptoms). Moreover, forgiveness was more strongly linked to well-being for people who reported being closer and more committed to their partners before the transgression and for people who reported that their partners apologized and made amends for the transgression. Evidence for the reverse causal model, that increases in well-being were related to increases in forgiveness, was also found. However, changes in feelings of closeness toward the partner appeared to account for the associations of forgiveness with well-being, but not vice versa.

### ***Brown***

Two studies investigated the associations between religious fundamentalism (RF) and aspects of dispositional forgiveness: pro-forgiveness attitudes and the tendency to forgive others. In Study 1, a direct self-report measure of RF was significantly associated with pro-forgiveness attitudes, but not with the tendency to forgive. In Study 2, we conceptually replicated these results by combining a measure of religiosity and a measure of need for structure, a cognitive style variable related to rigid, categorical thinking. A significant interaction between religiosity and need for structure revealed that the positive association between religiosity and pro-forgiveness attitudes was higher among respondents who were also high in need for structure. As expected, this pattern did not occur with the tendency to forgive, which was positively related to religiosity but negatively related to need for structure.

### ***Burnette***

Integrating theories of attachment and forgiveness, we predicted that secure attachment reduces angry rumination and promotes forgiveness. To examine this prediction, in Study 1 (n = 213), participants completed the Experience in Close Relationships Scale (ECR; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) and the Trait Forgiveness Scale (TFS; Berry, Worthington, O'Connor, Parrott, & Wade, 2005). Individuals who were classified as securely attached displayed greater dispositional forgiveness than did insecurely attached individuals. In Study 2 (n = 218) we included the Dissipation-Rumination Scale (DRS; Caprara, 1986). Results from Study 2 replicated the association between attachment security and greater dispositional forgiveness and confirmed the mediating role of angry rumination in the attachment-forgiveness relation.

### ***Cehajic***

The present study examines the effects of contact and common-ingroup identification on intergroup forgiveness and outgroup behavioral tendencies. A sample of Bosnian Muslims (N=180) were asked to report their readiness to forgive the misdeeds committed by Bosnian Serbs during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A path analysis of the presumed antecedents and consequences of forgiveness revealed that frequent and good quality contact with members from the perpetrator group predicted forgiveness (positively) and desire for social distance (negatively). Moreover, the positive relationship between contact and forgiveness was mediated by empathy and trust towards the outgroup and by perceived outgroup heterogeneity. Common-ingroup identification was also found to be positively associated with forgiveness and negatively with social distance towards the outgroup. Finally, intergroup forgiveness also predicted social distance from the outgroup. The theoretical and applied implications of these findings are discussed.

### *Cardi*

The present study examined whether self-esteem would moderate women's affect after being exposed to brief instructional interventions tapping into two dimensions of forgiveness: an interpersonal dimension focusing on forgiving the offender, and an intrapersonal dimension focusing on letting go of one's negative affect toward the offender. The positive and negative affect of 79 women with a history of victimization was assessed after they listened to instructions for either granting forgiveness, letting go of their negative affect, or relaxation (control). Results indicated differential effects of the instructions on emotions directed toward themselves versus toward the offender. Women had more negative emotions about themselves when they received the granting forgiveness instructions, but they had greater positive emotions toward their offenders. Women's responses were moderated by self-esteem in that there was no differential effect of the instructions among women low in self-esteem, but women high in self-esteem had a relatively positive response to the letting-go instructions and a generally negative reaction to the traditional forgiveness instructions.

### *Cehajic*

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### *Cosgrove*

Although mental health professionals have attempted to specify the meaning of forgiveness, lack of consensus exists. Despite the lack of consensus over the meaning of forgiveness, there is agreement that forgiving is not forgetting or pardoning. However, the relationship between forgiving and forgetting has been undertheorized, and as a result, this relationship has not been empirically investigated. In this paper, we suggest that it would be fruitful to assess the meaning systems individuals associate with the definition of forgiveness. Focusing on the lived experience of individuals may help researchers and counselors avoid unhelpful dichotomizations such as "authentic vs. inauthentic" forgiveness. Implications for both research and mental health counseling are discussed.

### ***Day***

In this paper we suggest that the effectiveness of many offender rehabilitation programs may be further enhanced by the inclusion of interventions that build on existing motivation to change. Taking the example of anger management interventions delivered within the context of violent offender rehabilitation, we propose that the emphasis on positive personal change implicit in therapies designed to promote forgiveness may hold some promise. Such therapies may be useful in so far as they facilitate the development of perspective-taking skills, and assist in the therapeutic management of shame and guilt in ways that are likely to be engaging for violent offenders.

### ***Exline***

Why do people choose to apologize or withhold apology, and what are the consequences of these decisions? We addressed these questions in two within-participants studies of undergraduates. Participants consistently reported more regret about non-apology than apology. Regrets about apology were linked with mutual grudges, protests of innocence, unsafe relationships, and apologies seen as insincere, premature, or fear-based. Regrets about non-apology were linked with persistent remorse, self-punishing attitudes, and seeing the offended party as innocent of wrongdoing. Theoretical and clinical implications are discussed.

### ***Exline, Baumeister, Zell, Kraft, & Witvliet***

People are more forgiving toward transgressors if they see themselves as capable of committing similar offenses, as demonstrated in 7 studies. Methods included hypothetical scenarios, actual recalled offenses, individual and group processes, and correlational and experimental designs. Three factors mediated the link between personal capability and forgiveness: seeing the other's offense as less severe, greater empathic understanding, and perceiving oneself as similar to the transgressor. In terms of predicting forgiveness, it was important that people's own offenses were similar to the target offense in terms of both severity and type. The personal capability effect was independent of other established predictors of forgiveness and was more pronounced among men than women.

### ***Fincham & Beach***

To examine potential causal relations between forgiveness and marital quality a sample of married couples (N=91) provided data regarding forgiveness and marital quality on two occasions separated by a 12-month interval. Structural equation modeling was used to examine direction of effects. For women, paths emerged from forgiveness to marital quality and vice versa. For men, the direction of effect was from marital quality to forgiveness. The concurrent association between the two constructs mediated the longitudinal relationship between them for wives but not for husbands. These results are discussed in relation to an emerging body of theory and research on the role of forgiveness in marriage.

### ***Fincham, Beach, & Davila***

Does forgiveness predict later conflict resolution in married couples? Twelve-month follow-up data on conflict resolution were collected from the couples studied by F. D. Fincham, S. R. Beach, and J. Davila (see record 2004-11293-007), who had provided earlier reports of forgiveness and conflict resolution. For wives, the positive dimension of forgiveness or benevolence predicted husbands' later reports of better conflict resolution controlling for initial levels of conflict resolution. This finding was independent of wives' marital satisfaction and the degree of hurt engendered by husbands' transgressions. For husbands, the only predictor of wives' reports of later conflict resolution was initial level of conflict resolution. The findings are discussed in terms of the direction of effect between forgiveness and conflict resolution and of the mechanisms that might link them.

### ***Finkel***

Two studies examined how destiny beliefs (that potential relationships are or are not "meant to be") interact with state attachment anxiety to predict forgiveness tendencies. In Study 1, participants experienced an experimental manipulation of attachment anxiety (vs. security) before indicating the degree to which they would forgive a series of hypothetical partner offenses. In Study 2, participants reported every 2 weeks for 6 months (14 waves in total) on offenses enacted by their partner and indicated the degree to which they forgave the partner, both concurrently and 2 weeks later. Consistent with predictions, results revealed Destiny Beliefs  $\times$  State Attachment Anxiety interaction effects: Strong (relative to weak) destiny beliefs predicted reduced forgiveness tendencies for individuals experiencing state attachment anxiety, but such beliefs were not associated with forgiveness for individuals experiencing state attachment security. Results from Study 2 suggest that this interaction effect was significantly mediated through trust in the partner.

### ***Friedburg***

The current study investigated the relationship between trait forgiveness and cardiovascular reactivity (CVR) and recovery in 99 normotensive participants (mean age = 33.8). Cardiovascular parameters were obtained at 2-minute intervals during a 10-minute baseline period and a 20-minute recovery period, and at 1-minute intervals during a 4-minute anger recall task and a 4-minute serial subtraction task without harassment. Participants filled out a self-report measure of forgiveness prior to the laboratory procedure. Although forgiveness was not related to CVR, higher levels of trait forgiveness were predictive of lower diastolic blood pressure (DBP) at baseline ( $p < .02$ ) and faster DBP recovery ( $p < .003$ ). Findings suggest that forgiveness may be related to overall reductions in blood pressure levels and may aid in cardiovascular recovery from stress. The results also provide preliminary evidence that forgiveness may impact cardiovascular health not through a myocardial or vascular pathway, but through another mechanism.

### ***Friesen***

Four studies employing a prototype approach tested the convergent and discriminant validity of a lay forgiveness representation. In Study 1, participants nominated a wide range of forgiveness features. In Study 2, participants rated the centrality of forgiveness features, which created a reliable graded structure from central to peripheral features. Study 3 tested the convergent validity of this lay forgiveness representation while controlling for several confounding variables. In Study 4, the discriminant validity of this lay forgiveness representation was tested through a categorization procedure. The findings replicate and extend prior research on forgiveness (Kearns & Fincham, 2004), and support the psychological reality of a lay forgiveness representation distinct from other victim responses.

### ***Green***

Building on attribution and interdependence theories, two experiments tested the hypothesis that close friends of victims (third parties) are less forgiving than the victims themselves (first parties). In Experiment 1, individuals imagined a scenario in which either their romantic partner or the romantic partner of a close friend committed the identical relationship offense. Third parties were less forgiving than first parties, a phenomenon we termed the *third-party forgiveness effect*. This effect was mediated by attributions about the perpetrator's intentions and responsibility for the offense. In Experiment 2, first and third parties reported an actual offense and their subsequent unforgiving motivations. The third-party forgiveness effect was replicated and was mediated by commitment to the perpetrator. Perpetrator apology or amends to the victim increased third-party forgiveness. Future third-party research can expand interpersonal forgiveness research beyond the victim-perpetrator dyad.

### ***Greenberg***

This study compared the effectiveness of emotion-focused therapy (EFT) involving gestalt empty-chair dialogue in the treatment of individuals who were emotionally injured by a significant other with therapy in a psychoeducation group designed to deal with these injuries. In addition, this study examined aspects of the emotional process of forgiveness in resolving interpersonal injuries and investigated the relationship between letting go of distressing feelings and forgiveness. A total of 46 clients assessed as having unresolved, interpersonal, emotional injuries were randomly assigned to an individual therapy treatment of EFT or a psychoeducation group. Clients were assessed at pretreatment, posttreatment, and 3-month follow-up on measures of forgiveness, letting go, depression, global symptoms, and key target complaints. Results indicated that clients in EFT using empty-chair dialogue showed significantly more improvement than the psychoeducation treatment on all measures of forgiveness and letting go, as well as global symptoms and key target complaints.

### ***Gobodo-Madikizela***

In this paper I explore the concept of forgiveness as a response to gross human rights violations. I present a conceptual examination of the effects of massive trauma in relation to what I refer to as the 'unfinished business' of trauma. Using a psychoanalytic framework, I consider the process of 'bearing witness' about trauma and examine how this process opens up the possibility of reciprocal expressions of empathy between victim and perpetrator. I then argue that, in this context of trauma testimony and witnessing, empathy is essential for the development of remorse on the part of perpetrators, and of forgiveness on the part of victims. Using a case study from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) I clarify the relationship between empathy and forgiveness, and show how the restorative model of the TRC can open up an ethical space and create the possibility of transformation for victims, perpetrators and bystanders. In my conclusion I suggest that forgiveness in politics is the only action that holds promise for the repair of brokenness in post-conflict societies, particularly if, as in South Africa, victims have to live together with perpetrators and beneficiaries in the same country.

### ***Hall***

This study examined the temporal course of self-forgiveness using 8 waves of data collected from 148 participants. Self-forgiveness increased linearly overtime, and fluctuations in 6 time-varying covariates were related to changes in self-forgiveness beyond those accounted for by the self-forgiveness trajectory. Decreases in guilt, perceived transgression severity, and conciliatory behavior toward a higher power were associated with increases in self-forgiveness. Increases in perceived forgiveness from the victim and a higher power and conciliatory behavior toward the victim were also related to increases in self-forgiveness. These findings suggest that self-forgiveness is a dynamic process associated with multiple factors and lend preliminary support to J.H. Hall and F.D. Fincham's (2005) theoretical model of self-forgiveness.

### ***Karremans***

Hitherto, the literature on forgiveness has almost exclusively focused on the role of deliberative processes (e.g., attribution processes) in determining forgiveness. However, in the present article, we argue that in the context of close relationships, the inclination to forgive can be relatively automatically evoked in response to an offense. Four studies provide evidence relevant to this general hypothesis. Studies 1 and 2 demonstrate that the subliminal presentation of close others (versus non-close others or a control word) induces a relatively strong inclination to forgive various offenses. Study 3 provides insight into the cognitive processes that underlie the closeness-forgiveness link, demonstrating that thinking of (a transgression of) a close other (compared to a non-close other) leads to enhanced accessibility of the construct of forgiveness. Finally, Study 4 demonstrates that forgiving responses toward a close offender are less dependent on cognitive resources than are forgiving responses toward a non-close offender, suggesting that, in close relationships, the inclination to forgive arises in a relatively effortless, habitual manner. Implications for theorizing on how people forgive are being discussed.

### ***Koutsos***

This study examined a multi-factorial model of forgiveness in which personality of the offended party, disposition to forgive, and context-specific factors were examined as predictors of forgiveness in a specific situation. A community sample of adults (N = 128) was recruited from Australia and New Zealand. Regression analyses indicated that individuals scoring higher on agreeableness and spirituality, and lower on neuroticism, reported a greater disposition to forgive. Disposition to forgive mediated the relationship between individuals' agreeableness and their reported forgiveness in a specific situation. Factors that predicted unique variance in forgiveness of a specific offence were the offended party's disposition to forgive, the value they placed on the relationship with the transgressor, positive offender actions (e.g., listening, apologising, providing compensation), and expecting the transgressor to repeat the offence. The findings support the idea that interpersonal forgiveness involves the interplay of factors that are both intrinsic and extrinsic to individuals.

### ***Lawler-Row***

Research has revealed that forgiveness may have beneficial effects for the forgiver's health. The present research explored whether reductions in anger underlie such effects, or whether forgiveness has beneficial health effects above and beyond the effects of decreasing anger. State and trait forgiveness were examined, along with styles of anger expression, for their relationship to physiological responses during recalled betrayal, and to self-reported health indices. State and trait forgiveness were negatively associated with anger-out; however, with one exception, no other styles of anger expression were linked with forgiveness. Both forgiveness and anger-out were associated with systolic blood pressure, heart rate and rate-pressure product. Partial correlations revealed that trait forgiveness accounted for significant variance in mean systolic blood pressure and rate-pressure product, and state forgiveness predicted mean heart rate, even after gender and anger-out had been controlled. On the other hand, anger-out fully mediated the trait forgiveness–heart rate and state forgiveness–rate pressure product effects. Trait forgiveness was significantly associated with fewer medications and less alcohol use, lower blood pressure and rate pressure product; state forgiveness was significantly associated with lower heart rate and fewer physical symptoms. Neither of these sets of findings were the result of decreased levels of anger-out being associated with forgiveness. These findings have important theoretical implications regarding the forgiveness–health link, suggesting that the benefits of forgiveness extend beyond the dissipation of anger.

### ***Legaree***

This article is a critical review of how forgiveness is conceptualized in the family therapy, counseling, and clinical psychology literature. A systematic analysis of themes in a fairly comprehensive set of texts was carried out. Three main dimensions emerged along which therapist authors' viewpoints can be located: essentiality, intentionality, and benevolence. Therapy practices and values that correspond with positions along these dimensions are presented. The analysis reveals that greater exploration is needed regarding how forgiveness is related to diversity (e.g., gender, culture, religion, etc.), marginalization, and relations of power. Our objective is to provide a conceptual map for clinicians so that they might locate their own thinking about forgiveness and be better equipped to work sensitively with the forgiveness views and values of their clients.

### ***Little***

The health of an organization's leader has profound implications not only for the leader, but also for the organization itself and for its members. This study focused on three indicators (positive affect, engagement, forgiveness behaviors) of stress, the positive stress response, and three indicators (negative affect, burnout, revenge behavior) of distress, the negative stress response, in relation to the health of pastors, whose jobs closely parallel those of leaders in all types of organizations. Results indicated that both positive affect and revenge behavior were significantly related to health. A post-hoc analysis indicated that work-family conflict was negatively related to revenge behavior, while family-work conflict was positively related to revenge behavior, and that engagement was negatively related to revenge behavior. These results are discussed in terms of their implications for future studies of leader health, and their practical applications for promoting leader health while preventing distress.

### ***Lucken***

In the United States, over 600,000 offenders rejoin society annually, though little has been done to facilitate their transition from the prison to the community. Offender reentry into the workplace has emerged as a particular concern, given that many statutes prohibit public employment for ex-offenders and create obstacles to private-sector employment through occupational licensing requirements. These mandates may explicitly reject ex-offenders, or require “good moral character” or job/relationship tests that all but eliminate meaningful employment options. Several states are reconsidering the implications of these prohibitions, but a clear framework for assessing the validity of exclusionary occupational mandates is often lacking. This article proposes that the bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ) defense found in employment discrimination law provides a helpful framework for guiding these reform efforts.

### ***Philpot***

Despite the increased incidence of intergroup apology in public life, very little empirical attention has been paid to the questions of whether intergroup apologies work and if so, why. In a series of experiments, Australians read scenarios in which Australian interests had been harmed by an outgroup. Participants were then told that the outgroup had either apologized or had not apologized for the offense. Although the presence of an apology helped promote perceptions that the outgroup was remorseful, and although participants were more satisfied with an apology than with no apology, the presence of the apology failed to promote forgiveness for the offending group. This was the case regardless of whether the effectiveness of apology was measured cross-sectionally (Experiment 1) or longitudinally (Experiment 2). It was also the case when the apology was accompanied by victims advocating forgiveness (Experiment 3) and was independent of the emotionality of the apology (Experiment 4). In contrast, individuals who apologized for intergroup atrocities were personally forgiven more than those who did not apologize (Experiment 4). Theoretical and applied implications are discussed.

### ***Pratt***

Adults' level of Eriksonian generativity in midlife has been shown to predict variations in parenting, but there has been less research on its relation to inter generational processes in the three-generational family. As part of a larger study, a sample of 35 Canadian mothers and fathers described a particular, salient child-rearing problem with grandparents when their first-born children were 8 years old. Descriptions were rated for severity of the problem, anger/irritation, optimism about solution, and forgiveness of the grandparent's behavior. Generativity data were collected by a standard questionnaire (the Loyola Generativity Scale of McAdams; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Results showed few gender differences, though mothers tended to be angrier than fathers with the grandparents. More mature parents were more forgiving than younger parents and saw problems as less serious, as predicted. Finally, parent level of generativity predicted maternal and paternal forgiveness of grandparent behaviors, as well as paternal, but not maternal, optimism about problem outcomes. Parental generativity may thus serve to encourage greater forgiveness and optimism among the generations of the family.

### ***Neto***

Recent evidence indicates that personality plays a role in the study of forgiveness, but the literature has been limited. This study sought to determine whether gratitude accounted for a significant portion of the variance beyond that of personality in the study of dispositional forgiveness (enduring resentment, sensitivity to circumstances, and overall propensity to forgive). One hundred and fifty-two Portuguese college students (51% females and 49% males, mean = 21.10 years) participated in the study. The results confirmed that personality, particularly agreeableness and neuroticism correlate with enduring resentment and overall tendency to forgive. Additionally, results using multiple regression models indicated that gratitude explained a significant amount of variance of overall propensity to forgive.

### ***Maio***

Testing the idea that the process of forgiveness is intrinsically different across diverse relationships, this study examined the role of forgiveness in different family relationships. In 2 laboratory sessions 1 year apart, 114 families (each including 2 parents and 1 child) completed a new measure of family forgiveness and many individual-level, relationship-level, and family-level variables that have been previously linked with forgiveness. After validating the measure of family forgiveness in cross-sectional analyses, investigators performed longitudinal analyses to examine the role of forgiveness in each family relationship over the 1-year interval. Results indicated many important positive consequences of forgiveness on individual traits, aspects of each family relationship, and general family environment. However, there were also important asymmetries in associates of forgiveness across parent-child and parent-parent relationships, demonstrating the relationship-bound nature of forgiveness.

### ***Maltby***

The present study investigated forgiveness in a traditional cognitive model of stress appraisal and coping and in a more recent model that includes the construct of low control stressors. One-hundred sixty six men and 168 women completed measures of forgiveness, primary stress appraisals, and coping strategies. For men, forgiveness was found to be positively associated with the use of challenge appraisals, and negatively associated with the use of loss appraisals and emotion-focused coping. For women, forgiveness was found to be positively associated with emotion-focused coping and acceptance, and negatively associated with avoidance. The results for women indicate that when forgiveness situations are conceptualized as low-control stressors, we are able to explain the relationships between forgiveness, appraisal, and coping. The results for men are broadly in line with a more traditional model of coping, which does not consider the construct of low control. Crucial differences in the ways that men and women appraise and cope with situations involving forgiveness are discussed.

### ***McCullough***

In 3 studies, the authors investigated whether within-persons increases in rumination about an interpersonal transgression were associated with within-persons reductions in forgiveness. Results supported this hypothesis. The association of transient increases in rumination with transient reductions in forgiveness appeared to be mediated by anger, but not fear, toward the transgressor. The association of rumination and forgiveness was not confounded by daily fluctuations in positive affect and negative affect, and it was not moderated by trait levels of positive affectivity, negative affectivity, or perceived hurtfulness of the transgression. Cross-lagged associations of rumination and forgiveness in Study 3 more consistently supported the proposition that increased rumination precedes reductions in forgiveness than the proposition that increased forgiveness precedes reductions in rumination.

### ***McNulty***

The current longitudinal study examined the consequences of spouses' tendencies to forgive their partners over the first 2 years of 72 new marriages. Though positive main effects between forgiveness and marital outcomes emerged cross-sectionally, spouses' tendencies to forgive their partners interacted with the frequency of those partners' negative verbal behaviors to predict changes in marital outcomes longitudinally. Specifically, whereas spouses married to partners who rarely behaved negatively tended to remain more satisfied over time to the extent that they were more forgiving, spouses married to partners who frequently behaved negatively tended to experience steeper declines in satisfaction to the extent that they were more forgiving. Similar patterns emerged for changes in the severity of husbands' problems, such that husbands married to wives who frequently behaved negatively reported sharper increases in problem severity to the extent that they were more forgiving but reported more stable problem severity to the extent that they were less forgiving. These findings question whether all spouses should benefit from forgiveness interventions and thus highlight the need for further research on the most appropriate targets for such interventions.

### ***Mullet***

Experiment 1 compared the cognitive processes involved in blame and forgiveness judgments under identical experimental conditions. Experiment 2 was a replication of Experiment 1 with 4 judgment scales: willingness to prosecute, willingness to avenge, resentment level, and willingness to make up. Participants were presented with 32 scenarios in which a doctor made a medical error. These situations contained 5 items: the degree of proximity with the doctor (e.g., a family doctor known since childhood), the degree of negligence, the severity of consequences, apologies or contrition, and cancellation of consequences. Functional cognitive analysis grouped judgments into 2 categories: blame-like judgments (blame, prosecution, and revenge) and forgiveness-like judgments (resentment, forgiveness, and reconciliation). Blame-like judgments were characterized by additive integration rules, with negligence followed by apologies as the 2 main cues. Forgiveness-like judgments were characterized by an interactive integration rule, with apologies followed by negligence as the 2 main cues.

### ***Oman***

The authors evaluated the effects on stress, rumination, forgiveness, and hope of two 8-week, 90-min/wk training programs for college undergraduates in meditation-based stress-management tools. **Methods:** After a pretest, the authors randomly allocated college undergraduates to training in mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR;  $n = 15$ ), Easwaran's Eight-Point Program (EPP;  $n = 14$ ), or wait-list control ( $n = 15$ ). The authors gathered pretest, posttest, and 8-week follow-up data on self-report outcome measures. **Results:** The authors observed no post-treatment differences between MBSR and EPP or between posttest and 8-week follow-up ( $p > .10$ ). Compared with controls, treated participants ( $n = 29$ ) demonstrated significant benefits for stress ( $p < .05$ , Cohen's  $d = -.45$ ) and forgiveness ( $p < .05$ ,  $d = .34$ ) and marginal benefits for rumination ( $p < .10$ ,  $d = -.34$ ). **Conclusions:** Evidence suggests that meditation-based stress-management practices reduce stress and enhance forgiveness among college undergraduates. Such programs merit further study as potential health-promotion tools for college populations.

### ***Orathinkal***

The current study primarily investigates the effect of age, gender, education, employment status, number of children, and number of years in marriage on forgiveness of first-married and remarried adults. When corrected for marital status ( $p < .005$ ) and gender ( $p < .002$ ), there is a significant main effect of number of children on forgiveness. There are also significant main effects of gender on forgiveness when corrected for education ( $p < .04$ ), number of children ( $p < .003$ ), and length of marriage ( $p < .01$ ). Women's forgiveness is found to be significantly higher than men ( $p < .005$ , one-tailed,  $d = .20$ ). Number of children ( $r = .092$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and educational attainment of women ( $r = .098$ ,  $p < .05$ ) also indicated a significant positive association with forgiveness.

***Orathinkal, Vansteenwegen, & Burggraeve (2008, April)***

This cross-sectional study investigated the perception and motivation of forgiveness among 785 heterosexually married adults from the Flanders region in Belgium. A descriptive analysis showed that, in general, the respondents have a rather positive perception of forgiveness. In the second phase of the study, a t-test showed evidence of a significant difference between the positive perception of forgiveness of the first-married and remarried adults. But on a gender level, there was no difference either in the positive or in the negative scales. This study has shown that the general forgiveness has significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) positive correlation with the perception of forgiveness.

***Paz***

The authors assessed forgiveness among Chinese ( $n = 738$ ) and Western European ( $n = 810$ ) participants using the Forgiveness Questionnaire (E. Mullet et al., 2003). They found that between the 2 samples, (a) the overall level of dispositional forgiveness was similar, (b) lasting resentment was higher among the Chinese than among the Western Europeans, and (c) sensitivity to the circumstances of the offense was higher among the Chinese than among the Western Europeans. These results contrast with what researchers have observed in previous studies in which forgiveness has been shown to be systematically higher in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures. The authors suggest that there are possibly many other differences across cultures, namely in religion, that may impact views of forgiveness.

***Person***

All relationships are subject to hurts, some unintentional, some intentional. If unaddressed, these hurts fester and destroy relationships. The primary mode of resolution for such difficulties is forgiveness, sometimes freely proffered, sometimes in response to being asked for an apology. In contrast to forgiveness, the psychoanalytic literature has long focused on discussions of guilt. Perhaps the subject of forgiveness seemed more integral to a religious dialogue than to a psychological one. Forgiving or being forgiven has different meanings for different people. Some, priding themselves as being virtuous victims of an aggressor, forgive too easily, only to discover that the aggressor reinstates the abuse. Forgiveness may then prove less useful than struggling to find a way to restore moral order to their lives.

### ***Recine***

This paper is a report of a concept analysis of forgiveness. Background. Worldwide interest in and funding for forgiveness research has brought about a body of knowledge from many disciplines that could be clinically useful to nursing. At this time, nurse scholars are beginning to challenge one another to focus on this important area of inquiry. To date, however, most scholarship on forgiveness has been conducted in related disciplines, rather than in nursing. Conceptual and theoretical work is needed in nursing to promote knowledge development in this area. Method: The CINAHL, Medline and PsycInfo databases were searched for papers published between 1990 and 2007 using the keywords, forgiveness, forgive, or reconciliation in the title or abstract. The non-linear evolutionary process of concept analysis was used to identify the concept of interest, its origins, realm, attributes and context, characteristics, and implications. Forgiveness was also explored from an international multi-cultural perspective. An exemplar is included to illuminate the concept. A total of 34 scholarly works from a variety of disciplines were included in the analysis. Findings: A definition of forgiveness emerged from the analysis, as well as a multicultural understanding of the concept. Three important attributes of forgiveness are that it is the relinquishing of a negative response, replacing the negative response with a benevolent response, and a process that occurs over time. Multi-cultural attributes centre on group harmony, re-establishing harmonious connections between people, and the morality of considering others as worthy of love and understanding. Conclusion: A multi-cultural understanding of forgiveness may provide the impetus for further theory development and research in nursing, and could be used to educate nurses on beginning interventions in this area.

### ***Risen***

Do people distinguish between sincere and insincere apologies? Because targets and observers face different constraints, we hypothesized that observers would differentiate between spontaneous and coerced apologies but that targets would not. In Studies 1 and 2 participants either received or observed a spontaneous apology, a coerced apology, or no apology, following a staged offense, and the predicted target-observer difference emerged. Studies 3-5 provided evidence in support of 3 mechanisms that contribute to this target-observer difference. Studies 3 and 4 indicate that this difference is due, in part, to a motivation to be seen positively by others and a motivation to feel good about oneself. Study 5 suggests that social scripts constrain the responses of targets more than those of observers.

### ***Robb***

Forgiving, long encouraged by practitioners of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), is shown to be an elegant antidote to anger requiring recognition of two things. First, what happened was bad, or wrong. Second, the author of the bad or wrong occurrence is responsible for having done it. After reviewing some basic REBT points, an analysis of self-forgiveness underlines the importance of receiving as well as issuing forgiveness and the relationship of forgiving to depression and guilt. The importance of reconciling when forgiving self, the world-in-general and, for believers, omnipresent supernatural beings is presented. Reconciliation as finding enjoyment with that which also blocks, or has blocked, the fulfillment of our desires is also discussed.

### ***Roberts***

Mistakes happen. What happens after a mistake can be as, or even more, important to a patient's ultimate outcome and satisfaction with care. This article discusses how to decide if an error has been made in your practice and how to offer an apology when one is warranted. An apology acknowledges responsibility and reflects remorse. It should be offered when an error has occurred and harm or potential harm has resulted. After deciding that an apology should be offered, it is essential to do it well. A badly done apology can make things worse for both the patient and the professional. An apology puts the health care professional in the unfamiliar and vulnerable position of being dependent on the patient for something that only the patient can provide: forgiveness. Thus, it represents a shift in power and a kind of role reversal.

### ***Strelan***

The relationship between belief in a just world (BJW) and forgiveness was examined in 275 participants. Personal BJW was positively related, and unjust world beliefs negatively related, to forgiveness of others. Personal and general BJW were each positively related to self-forgiveness. Gratitude mediated the relationships between personal BJW and forgiveness of others, and unjust world beliefs and forgiveness of others. Self-esteem mediated the relationships between personal BJW and self-forgiveness, and general BJW and self-forgiveness. It appears that BJW reflects a general disposition to respond to transgressions in a prosocial and adaptive manner, suggesting that the relationship between justice and forgiveness may not be as incompatible as what a first glance suggests. That is, people who are motivated by a concern for justice may also be more likely to possess a forgiving disposition.

### ***Stubbs***

The virtues claimed for restorative justice include its emotional engagement with crime and the opportunities afforded to participants by its discursive character. Yet these issues are rarely explored from a perspective that is attentive to gendered or other asymmetrical forms of social relations. This article explores key issues that remain under-developed in the restorative justice literature from a feminist perspective, taking domestic violence as a focus. Central to this analysis are questions of victims' interests and safety, expectations about the victim's role and the appeal to apology and forgiveness in much of the restorative justice literature. It is argued that the challenge of taking gendered harms seriously may require an approach that differs from common restorative justice practices such as the development of hybrid models that draw from both conventional criminal justice and restorative justice.

### ***Sutton***

We examined the relationship of gender, forgiveness, and spirituality to restoration attitudes expressed toward pastors who committed a transgression. In Study 1, participants' restoration responses favored the opposite gender. In Study 2, men and women responded differently depending on the offense. Dispositional forgiveness was significantly associated with pastoral restoration following offenses of infidelity, anger, child abuse, and substance abuse. Measures of spirituality were primarily associated with forgiveness but explained little of the variance in restoration attitudes.

### ***Tam***

Although prejudice researchers have mainly focused their attention on changing attitudes toward outgroups, other outcome variables may also be important. In post-conflict reconciliation, intergroup forgiveness may play a crucial role in helping groups in conflict put the atrocities of the past behind them (Cairns, Tam, Hewstone, & Niens, 2005). Two studies showed that both the specific intergroup emotion of anger and inhumanization (the attribution of more human emotions to the ingroup than to the outgroup) predicted decreased intergroup forgiveness in Northern Ireland. Results further revealed intergroup contact as a potential means of reducing anger toward the outgroup and improving attitudes toward them. This research integrated prior interpersonal theory with intergroup literature to examine the concept of intergroup forgiveness and its predictors. Results are discussed in terms of their implications for reconciliation in conflict societies.

### ***Thomas***

We examined the effects of apology and gender on willingness to forgive or restore clergy following a sexual offense. In Study 1, men were more restoring than women were. Men were more forgiving of a female pastor who did not apologize, and women were more forgiving of a male pastor who did not apologize. In Study 2, we examined the effect of three features of apology (admission of guilt, excuse-making, and responsibility-taking), as well as influence of participant gender, on forgiveness. Women were more forgiving of a male pastor who took responsibility, and men were more forgiving of, a male pastor who did not take responsibility. We concluded with suggestions for research and practice.

### ***Tripp***

Once a working relationship is damaged through an act of injustice, how do the victim and offender repair their relationship? What causes the victim to let go of the anger and resentment and then reconcile with the offender? We propose a theory that the likelihood of forgiveness and reconciliation is greatly enhanced, and revenge and avoidance greatly decreased, if justice is first served. That is, forgiveness follows justice; without justice, forgiveness is much less likely. Justice may be served one of three ways: (1) by the victim evening the score; (2) by the organization punishing the offender; or (3) by the offender repenting. We recommend that managers establish a procedurally just climate so that victims of offense seek distributive justice through formal channels rather than seeking it themselves through revenge.

### ***Tsang***

We examined victim and offender correlates of forgiveness for intimate partner violence. Participants were from couples (132 women, 75 men) in which males were convicted of intimate partner violence and court-ordered into an intervention program. In women, empathy and general religiousness positively related to forgiveness, but attributions of blame were unrelated to forgiveness. Several dispositional variables in men were associated with forgiveness in women. Men who were more dominant were more likely to be forgiven, but men with more psychological problems were less likely to be forgiven. Many offender effects were mediated by women's state empathy.

### ***Wade, Johnson, & Meyer***

A new area in psychotherapy practice and research has arisen addressing therapeutic interventions to explicitly promote forgiveness. There is wide variation in the response to this new area including enthusiastic acceptance, wary openness, and vigorous opposition. Unfortunately, these reactions are not often based on a thorough understanding of the empirical literature and result in concerns about using forgiveness interventions in therapy that may or may not be warranted. The authors identify these potential concerns, framing them as concerns about the impact on clients, concerns related to therapist skill or knowledge, and concerns about the effect on the therapy process. The authors address these concerns with a review of the relevant research on forgiveness in therapy. Based on this review, the authors conclude that some skepticism of the new "forgiveness interventions" is warranted, although serious consideration needs to be given to these interventions at appropriate times.

### ***Wallace***

Benefits of forgiveness have been well documented, but past research has not directly addressed the crucial question of whether forgiveness deters or invites repeat transgressions. Our research indicates that expressing forgiveness typically discourages future offenses. In Study 1, participants playing a form of the prisoner's dilemma game were more likely to repeat their transgressions against unforgiving victims than forgiving victims, especially when victims had no chance to retaliate. In response to a hypothetical scenario presented in Study 2, participants reported that they would be less likely to risk offending someone for a second time if that person had forgiven their first offense. In Study 3, participants' autobiographical recollections of their prior transgressions revealed that receiving forgiveness predicted higher repentance motivation.

### ***Whol, Deshea, Wahkinney***

Although considerable empirical attention has recently focused on forgiveness, less work has been done on examining self-forgiveness. A major stumbling block for self-forgiveness research has been the lack of a measure to assess self-forgiveness for specific transgressions. This article reports the development of the State Self-Forgiveness Scales and the test of a model of self-forgiveness' relation to psychological well-being in the context of the unwanted end of a romantic relationship. In Study 1, factor analysis revealed a 2-factor structure to the self-forgiveness data. Study 2 found that self-blame predicted depressive affect to the extent that participants forgave the self. The implications of state self-forgiveness for both basic research and therapy are discussed.

### ***Williamson***

Three studies examined the subjective experience of forgiveness. Studies 1 and 2 revealed the affective, cognitive, and behavioral consequences of transgressions, and revealed that the forgiveness experience comprises relief from psychological pain, increased empathy and positive regard for offenders, the actualization of religious values, the discovery of new meaning, and movement toward reconciliation with offenders. Study 3, an experiment, revealed that those who have forgiven experience more of these benefits of forgiveness than those who have yet to forgive or than those who reflect on their experiences prior to forgiveness. Study 3 also demonstrated the differential impact of offense severity, victim-offender closeness, and victim religiosity on the five underlying dimensions of the forgiveness experience. Implications of the forgiveness experience for counseling and therapy are also discussed.

### ***Witvliet***

This experiment assessed the emotional self-reports and physiology of justice outcomes and forgiveness responses to a common crime, using a three Justice (retributive, restorative, no justice)  $\times$  2 Forgiveness (forgiveness, none) repeated-measures design. Participants (27 males, 29 females) imagined their residence was burglarized, followed by six counterbalanced justice-forgiveness outcomes. Imagery of justice--especially restorative--and forgiveness each reduced unforgiving motivations and negative emotion (anger, fear), and increased prosocial and positive emotion (empathy, gratitude). Imagery of granting forgiveness (versus not) was associated with less heart rate reactivity and better recovery; less negative emotion expression at the brow (corrugator EMG); and less aroused expression at the eye (lower orbicularis oculi EMG when justice was absent). When forgiveness was not imagined, justice-physiology effects emerged: signs of cardiovascular stress (rate pressure products) were lower for retributive versus no justice; and sympathetic nervous system responding (skin conductance) was calmer for restorative versus retributive justice.

### ***Worthington, Witvliet, Pietrini, & Miller***

The extant data linking forgiveness to health and well-being point to the role of emotional forgiveness, particularly when it becomes a pattern in dispositional forgiveness. Both are important antagonists to the negative affect of unforgiveness and agonists for positive affect. One key distinction emerging in the literature is between decisional and emotional forgiveness. Decisional forgiveness is a behavioral intention to resist an unforgiving stance and to respond differently toward a transgressor. Emotional forgiveness is the replacement of negative unforgiving emotions with positive other-oriented emotions. Emotional forgiveness involves psychophysiological changes, and it has more direct health and well-being consequences. While some benefits of forgiveness and forgivingness emerge merely because they reduce unforgiveness, some benefits appear to be more forgiveness specific. We review research on peripheral and central nervous system correlates of forgiveness, as well as existing interventions to promote forgiveness within divergent health settings. Finally, we propose a research agenda.

***Worthington et al., 2007***

Although the concept of forgiveness has strong roots in religion and spirituality, most empirical research on forgiveness, both basic and applied, has not incorporated these references. Recent investigations have shown that tailoring group forgiveness interventions to include religion and spirituality can be effective for increasing feelings of forgiveness and decreasing feelings of unforgiveness for religious and spiritual people. In the present article, we summarize a five-step psychoeducational model to promote forgiveness. We describe exercises for each step. We identify central guidelines for adapting an evidence-based secular forgiveness intervention for use in a spiritual or religious community: (1) use the essence of the secular program, (2) make modifications that precisely fit the specific spiritual or religious community, and (3) test the adapted model for effectiveness. We conclude by describing a case study in which the five-step psychoeducational model to promote forgiveness was adapted for use within a Christian community.

***Ysseldyk***

It was argued in the present investigation that dispositional forgiveness and vengeance would be differentially related to components of rumination, and thus the mediating role of rumination in their relations with psychological health would also vary. Male and female undergraduates (N = 183) completed questionnaires assessing predispositions toward forgiveness, vengefulness, rumination, depressive affect, and life satisfaction. Regression analyses revealed that higher forgiveness and lower vengefulness were associated with greater psychological health (lower depressive affect; higher life satisfaction). Moreover, the relations between forgiveness (but not vengefulness) and psychological health were partially mediated by the decreased propensity of high forgivers to endorse ruminative brooding. These findings suggest that, although forgiveness and vengeance may be related, their impacts on psychological health reflect distinct ruminative tendencies.