

THE THERAPEUTIC ROLE OF FORGIVENESS IN SEX THERAPY

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CLINICAL
SEXOLOGISTS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

IN

CLINICAL SEXOLOGY

BY

**AWILDA IRIS DESRUISSEAU
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA**

MAY 2007

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This dissertation submitted by Awilda Iris Desruisseaux has been read and approved by three committee members of the American Academy of Clinical Sexologists.

The final copies have been examined by the Dissertation Committee and the signatures which appear here verify the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given the final approval with reference to content, form and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signature

Date

Anagloria Mora, Ph. D., LMHC
Committee Chair

Arlene Krieger, Ph. D.
Committee Member

James O. Walker, Ph. D.
Committee Member

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

An undertaking such as a dissertation is not completed without the support of many people. This dissertation would not have been possible without God, who gives me the strength to go on regardless of the circumstances.

My first debt of gratitude must go to my loving husband Michel, for his continued offering of his love, support, and guidance with his remarkable intelligence and most respectable perseverance in playing the piano playing during the writing endless nights and making sure that I was laughing with your amazing jokes. I could not have made it without you, these moments have been priceless. Our children Kerianne and Jordan for their love, hugs, kisses, support, words of encouragement and understanding in dealing with all the challenges I have faced. Nothing in a simple paragraph can express the love I have for the three of you. Special thanks to my parents for their prayers and words of encouragement. To my four dear brothers that continually encouraged me when we spoke by phone and Melvo for the books and suggestions.

Dr. William Granzig who patiently provided encouragement and advice necessary for me to proceed through the doctoral program and complete my dissertation. Special thanks to my committee, Dr. Anagloria Mora for going beyond her duty in helping me with this dissertation, reading and copiously commenting on earlier drafts. I have benefited enormously from her exquisite writing skills. Dr. Arlene Krieger for your guidance and helpful suggestions. Dr. Walker for his teaching skills and support. Without the help of all of you this dissertation would not have been possible.

VITA

Awilda Iris Desruisseaux was born in Chicago, Illinois. In 1985 she attended the Interamerican University and received her Associate degree in Nurse with Magna Cum Laude. She continued her education in a Christian Bible College and in 1996 received a Bachelor's in Christian Education/Counseling with honors. Her Master's in Social Work with Summa Cum Laude was completed in 2003 at the Barry University in the Palm Beach Garden, Florida. She is a doctoral candidate (PhD) in Sexology at the American Academy of Clinical Sexologists in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Awilda is a Family Development Coordinator for the Comprehensive Services at the Health Care District in the Palm Beach County and is currently registered as an intern for Social Work licensure.

ABSTRACT

As it is described by title of this dissertation, the focus of the paper is to evaluate various aspects of forgiveness in sex therapy. The areas covered are history, religion (Pentecostal) and psychological facets. This dissertation is on the importance of forgiveness as narrated. The concept of forgiveness is justified for sex therapy and substantiated by research work, study, and living examples of our lives. In a verse, “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgives you” (Colossians 3:13). Healing from sexual abuse is a long-term, and in some cases, a life-long process. Many individuals live as model Church members while hiding ugly scars. Others are eager to help a loved one who is in need of healing. For the purpose of this research, I am going to address all of the readers as though you were all victims of abuse.

Abuse is far riper than we used to think. I could spend most of my time just relating incidents of abuse that have been shared with me by my friends. I could tell you horror stories that might seem incredible—incidents of brutal rape, incest, or ritual and satanic abuse. But I’m not going to tell you those horror stories; I’ll spare you the ugly details, even though I am allured to share them. I am tempted because I want to validate the pain that has been inflicted on anyone within the sound of my voice. I want the world to know how horrible it was, how unfair it was, and how deserving victims are of special care.

Victims of abuse crave validation—perhaps even more than reparation. In therapy sessions, the patients keep on crying just for their pain to be acknowledged. That need for acknowledgment makes sexual abuse particularly devastating, because it happens in secret and victims often bear their suffering alone. Let’s compare for a moment the grieving of a woman

who lost her husband through death with the grieving of a woman who was sexually abused. For this analogy I will refer to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's (1969) five stages of the grieving process: Denial, anger, guilt and bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance and resolution.

Thus Friends and family are usually close at hand to help a widow face the reality of a death. They forgive the woman for being angry, reassure her that the death was not her fault, support her through her depression, and introduce her to a new kind of life without a husband—all of which helps her progress toward acceptance and resolution.

I don't wish to minimize the pain of the grieving widow. However, I would like to contrast her grieving process with that of a woman who has been sexually abused. The abuse victim will probably have a very different reaction from her family and friends (if, in fact, they are even aware of the abuse). Sexual abuse is ugly, and no one wants to confront it. The sexually abused woman is encouraged to stay in denial and to suppress her anger. With no validation for her pain, she will probably turn her anger inward which seems to be the acceptable way to experience her grief. In response to her guilt and depression, she either becomes a scapegoat for more guilt, or she is blamed for her negative attitude. How many times have you heard the expressions "Just put a smile on your face," or "Why can't you just forgive and forget?" She is stuck in the grieving process, and she likely will become either an aggressive complainer or a helpless dependent. She would struggle to validate her pain so that she can complete the grieving process. But instead of getting validation, she gets more stuck. People grow tired of her nagging complaining attitude, or they become irritated with her inability to think for herself. My view point is that the sexually abused victim should be dealt with politely and the natural ability of forgiveness should be enhanced to overcome the pain, suffering and tension.

Forgiveness is a gift, which we give to ourselves. Until we forgive the offender, we can't get rid of our own anger, bitterness, and depression. We cannot feel hope and optimism. "Your ability to forgive depends on how well you have processed your denial, anger, mourning & guilt" (Rugh Winter & Weil, 1994).

This dissertation is aimed at supporting the multidimensionality of "The Therapeutic Role of Forgiveness in Sex Therapy".

CONTENTS

Dissertation approval.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Vita.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Contents.....	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	
Sex Therapy: A historical review	
CHAPTER 3: DEFINING FORGIVENESS.....	
Forgiveness in Christianity	
Forgiveness as a gift.....	
CHAPTER 4: THEOLOGY OF FORGIVENESS.....	
Obstacles in Forgiveness	
Confession & Forgiveness	
CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY/DESIGN.....	
Instrumentation.....	
CHAPTER 6: FORGIVENESS IN SEX THERAPY: HOW TO BEGIN	
Theoretical Framework for Exoneration and forgiveness.....	
Therapeutic use of forgiveness in sex therapy ...	
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	
Selected Bibliography.....	

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this research, I my value base and influences this research has on the role of forgiveness in Sex Therapy. I believe we are made in God's image and therefore we can become more in tune with God's concept for us. We can change our lives, if that is what we want, regardless of our faith or religious beliefs. There is much written in the Bible about forgiveness. Jesus Christ for repeatedly released people from the sins (offenses) they had committed against others. In the parable of the paralyzed man, Jesus Christ says 'son, your sins are forgiven' (Mark 2:5). People at the time, were outraged by his words as God alone has the power to forgive. Knowing what they were thinking, Jesus Christ challenged them to consider what was easier, to say 'your sins are forgiven or take up your bed and walk' (Mar 2:9). The fact that he was God meant he could say both. Christianity is based on the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God – and is God – has authority to forgive sins, heal the sick and has unlimited understanding of human beings.

Sexual disease and problems are very closely linked with emotions in a person who has been sexually abused or emotionally hurt by betrayal. Such patients received injuries in two ways:

1. Physical Injury
2. Mental or emotional bruise

The physical injuries received are not as complicated as the mental or the emotional bruises. Physical wounds can be healed through medication; however, mental or emotional

injuries can not be treated through medicines. In such cases, the patient hurts deeply and in some cases, the wound become a life long process to heal. In this research I have reviewed the supporting data, sought possibilities to help those patients or victims who were sexually abused, hurt or confused about sexual relations. A great deal of modern therapists and authors that strongly argue that forgiveness plays significant role in such cases. However, before going further we need to see the aspects and true definition of forgiveness.

What *is* forgiveness? Forgiveness implies a change of heart. When we say, “I forgive you” we are saying “I have stopped being angry with you.” Forgiveness also conveys a change in the victim’s expectations. For example, he or she no longer seeks recriminations or tries to get even. Genuine forgiveness is a process, not a product. It takes time and is hard work. It is a voluntary act which gives meaning to the wound, disengages the offended from the offender, and frees the injured person from the ills of bitterness and resentment (Hope, 1987).

Forgiving involves accepting responsibility for how one feels, acts, and responds. For example, I am a personal witness of a family where an eighteen years old girl was sexually abused by her uncle. The impacts generated through this incident is that the girl now hates man; not just those who are her relatives, but also those who have nothing to do with her. In her view all men seek sexual satisfaction from women no matter if they are related or not thus, she is unable to trust any man or to have intercourse or ultimately find a life partner. In other words, her life has been spoiled because of that incident. She is sexually imbalanced with deep emotional wounds. How can we treat such case? Although such wounds take a long time to heal, they are not incurable.

Forgiveness is the process through which the injured person gains peace, freedom, self-acceptance, and release from self-pity. Through forgiveness, wounds are healed. It is a privilege

to forgive, because forgiveness really is for the benefit of the victim! It may be easier to forgive if the offender repents, but victims should not be dependent on the repentance of the offender in order to experience the freedom that comes with forgiveness (DiBlasio, 1988).

Forgiveness, as a psychological construct, has become a topic of increasing interest to researchers through the last several years. Information about Forgiveness is appearing in the psychological literature with greater frequency because of its increased research focus. In addition, it is achieving greater acceptance as a psychological construct. Freedman and Enright (1996) pointed out that although Forgiveness was formerly a topic of inquiry for theologians and philosophers, it is now becoming acceptable in counseling and psychology as well. The publication of Forgiveness -related articles in mainstream journals (Ferch, 1998; Freedman & et al., 1996; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997) further reveals the acceptance of Forgiveness in the fields of psychology and counseling.

Forgiveness has also recently appeared in the popular media, which portrays Forgiveness as a simplistic phenomenon. However, according to many psychological researchers, Forgiveness tends to be an effortful yet beneficial process that takes time. In other words, according to Forgiveness researchers, Forgiveness may be a more difficult process than that displayed in the media.

Forgiveness is multifaceted, has profound spiritual meaning, and it involves our social, psychological, and physical faculties. They are all connected like facets of the same diamond. The disciplines of theology and philosophy allow us to see the brilliance of particular facets; while the social and natural sciences illuminate others, and the arts and humanities shed light on still others. Despite their distinctness, these facets are ultimately connected. When we view them through complementary cross-disciplinary lenses, we can best see the brilliant unity and dazzling

complexity of the spiritual, social, psychological, and physical facets of forgiveness.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

SEX THERAPY: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The history of sex therapy as a discipline is relatively brief (Leiblum & et al., 1989). From the start of the twentieth century until the late 1960s, sexual dysfunction was typically treated within a psychoanalytic framework (Rosen & et al., 1988), as were most psychological problems (Comer, 1995). From such a psychoanalytic perspective, psychological and sexual problems were viewed as originating from unresolved conflicts dating back to childhood, particularly conflicts over problematic attachments and tension in relation to one's parents (Patterson & et al., 1996). Sexual problems were seen as symptoms of greater "core" psychopathology (Rosen & et al., 1988). As such, treatment consisted of long-term, individual psychotherapy to unmask the underlying (and often unconscious) intrapsychic conflicts that manifested themselves as disruption of "healthy" or "mature" sexual functioning. In contrast to this dominant perspective, some clinicians (e.g., Lazarus, 1971; Obler, 1973; Wolpe, 1958) explicitly applied behavioral principles in the treatment of sexual dysfunction, but such approaches were not the norm prior to the 1970s.

Sex therapy as it is known today, was essentially founded by Masters and Johnson (1970), whose published report on a "new" therapeutic approach to sexual problems revolutionized what health professionals saw as the appropriate treatment for such difficulties. In contrast to psychoanalytic approaches, the new sex therapy was relatively brief, problem

focused, directive, and behavioral with regard to technique. Rather than intrapsychic factors, Masters and Johnson (1970) emphasized social and cognitive causes of sexual dysfunction. Ultimately, the large majority of sexual difficulties were seen as arising from a sexually restrictive or religiously orthodox upbringing. Such a personal history appeared to result in decreased communication with sexual partners, a lack of accurate information about normal human sexual functioning, and subsequent anxiety and preoccupation over performance during sexual interactions. Accordingly, theirs was a learning model of sexual functioning, and the objectives of treatment consisted of effectively achieving alleviation of performance anxiety and re-educating clients regarding human sexuality (Leiblum & et al., 1989).

On the heels of Masters and Johnson, Helen Kaplan (1974 & 1979) introduced and elaborated her version of the new sex therapy. Potentially viewed as an integration of, or bridge between, the traditional psychoanalytic and more contemporary behavioral approaches, hers included an initial emphasis on immediate symptoms. If the direct approach to symptom treatment worked, the case was closed. If, however, the new behavioral techniques met with resistance, the therapist relied on psychodynamic theory, or consideration of deeper issues, to understand the possible intrapsychic and interpersonal roles the sexual dysfunction might be serving. In other words, more serious underlying causes of the sexual dysfunction were sought primarily within those cases not responding to direct intervention (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991).

The sex therapy, as elaborated by Masters and Johnson (1970), included short-term but intensive work with the couple (conjoint therapy). Detailed information about relevant human anatomy (structure) and physiology (functioning) was provided, as was more general counseling as needed. The therapists conducted their work as a male-female pair of cotherapists; hence,

traditional sex therapy involved four individuals (the cotherapists and the client couple).

Additionally, the intervention consisted of direct behavioral exercises, including prescription of nondemand pleasuring, or "sensate focus," wherein the objective was to (re)experience sexual pleasure in the absence of anxiety from perceptions of performance demand or excessive self-monitoring of sexual performance (spectatoring). Essentially, clients were aided and encouraged to (re)discover theirs and their partner's bodies and inherent potential for sexual pleasure. This was accomplished through a series of specific behavioral directives that resulted in pleasurable sensual and sexual experiences in the absence of anxiety. Accordingly, Masters and Johnson's approach was considered behavioral (Hawton, 1982; Rosen & et al., 1988).

As reported by Masters and Johnson (1970), the rates of success with the new sex therapy were remarkably high. Overall, it appeared that their failure rate was only 20% for all sexual dysfunctions combined. The result of Masters and Johnson's work was a set of specific sex-therapy techniques and a general enthusiasm within the clinical community about the promise of sex therapy to alleviate clients' sexual problems. Their approach was quickly embraced by a large proportion of health professionals, a phenomenon probably spurred by sociopolitical factors, such as a greater cultural emphasis on personal fulfillment and openness in discussing sexuality, as well as the incredible success rates they reported (Schover & et al., 1994).

Regardless of the reasons, Masters and Johnson set in motion a specific behavioral approach to the treatment of sexual dysfunction that was to have a profound impact on the new field known as sex therapy (Leiblum & Rosen, 1989). This behavioral approach was subsequently summarized and elaborated by others (e.g., Annon, 1974; Hawton, 1982; Jehu, 1979; Wincze & Carey, 1991; Zilbergeld, 1978) and extended to interventions such as directed

masturbation training (Barbach, 1975; LoPiccolo & et al., 1972; LoPiccolo & et al., 1986).

In the 25 years subsequent to Masters and Johnson (1970), several changes have taken place in sex therapy (Leiblum & et al., 1995; Rosen & et al., 1995; Schover & et al., 1994). Sex therapy in the 1970s was an outgrowth of an earlier cultural shift toward greater focus on increased sexual gratification and discussion of sexual issues. The typical client seeking sex therapy in the 1970s was relatively young and well educated and had come of age during the 1960s. Accordingly, anorgasmia in women and premature ejaculation in men were the prominent sexual dysfunctions presented to clinicians in the early days of contemporary sex therapy (Rosen & et al., 1995). The treatment model Masters and Johnson (1970) provided, including a brief, directive, problem-focused emphasis, was appropriate for many sex-therapy clients during the 1970s, many of whom simply needed to overcome ignorance and negative sexual attitudes (LoPiccolo, 1994). As a result, treatment outcome was generally positive, and a sense of optimism about the efficacy of sex therapy was evident among practitioners (e.g., Leiblum & et al., 1980; Zilbergeld & et al., 1984).

At the same time as the birth of contemporary sex therapy, there was a noticeable increase in mass media attention to issues of sexual enhancement (Leiblum & et al., 1995). To an unprecedented degree, articles in mainstream magazines broached such topics as orgasm, sexual satisfaction, and ways to achieve them. Similarly, self-help books aimed at improving sexual functioning and enjoyment became widely available. As a result of these cultural changes, many types of cases that early sex therapists saw became scarce during the 1980s (Schover & et al., 1994). That is, adults whose sexual difficulties could be addressed successfully from a direct, educational approach no longer sought sex therapists, as the needed assistance was forthcoming from the mass media (LoPiccolo, 1994). This change resulted in some researchers and clinicians

questioning the earlier success rates reported by Masters and Johnson (Zilbergeld & et al., 1980), and sex therapists collectively bemoaned, "Where have all the good cases gone?"

Over the past decade or so, the types of cases commonly seen in sex-therapy clinics have changed dramatically from the earliest days of contemporary sex therapy (Leiblum & et al., 1995; Rosen & et al., 1995). As the proportion of clients who simply needed education and direction dwindled, the proportion of clients with more pervasive and chronic sexual problems increased. Accordingly, instances of erectile failure (Rosen & et al., 1992), low sexual desire (Beck, 1995; Kaplan, 1979; Leiblum & et al., 1988), and compulsive sexual behavior (Coleman, 1991; Goodman, 1993) have become an increasing part of sex therapists' caseloads (Schover & et al., 1994). These problems present a greater challenge to clinicians and hence do not evidence the high rates of improvement found among the earlier reports on the success of sex therapy (Kilmann, Boland, Norton, Davidson, & et al., 1986; Rosen & et al., 1995).

Corresponding to the changing nature of the cases that sex therapists typically encounter, therapeutic approaches have changed as well. With increasing frequency, systemic approaches have been used to treat the more complex, relationship-bound sexual problems presented to sex therapists (e.g., Leiblum & et al., 1991; Rosen, Leiblum, & et al., 1994). Also, greater attention has been paid to the role of early sexual trauma in subsequent sexual dysfunction (Becker, 1989; Petrak, 1995; Wyatt, 1991). In general, a more complex, integrative, or "postmodern" approach to the conceptualization and treatment of sexual dysfunction has emerged (LoPiccolo, 1992, 1994; Rosen & et al., 1995). Currently, sex therapists appear to employ a broad range of treatment modalities, including bibliotherapy and group therapy (Hawton, 1992; Shah, 1996). At the same time, sex therapists have witnessed a marked medicalization of treatment for many sexual problems (Schover & et al., 1994; Tiefer, 1994).

During the 1970s, the majority of cases of sexual dysfunctions were viewed as psychogenic, but with increasing regularity, medical and physical causes of sexual dysfunction are being proposed. Although this shift appears due at least partly to advances in medicine (Schiavi & Seagraves, 1995), the growing popularity of physical/medical interventions in the treatment of sexual dysfunctions seems to be motivated also by professional and sociocultural issues. That is, pharmaceutical companies stand to profit from proliferation of such interventions. Further insurance companies are more likely to reimburse for interventions by urologists and gynecologists than from behavioral sex therapists. Lastly, because of social stigma over sexual dysfunctions, many Americans would prefer to be diagnosed with a medical disorder than a psychological one (Schover & et al., 1994).

The result of these realities is that physical/medical treatments have been at least tried with virtually all various sexual dysfunctions. (For reviews of the literature, see Beck, 1995; Rosen & et al., 1995; Schover & et al. 1994.) Starting primarily with a medical focus on the treatment of male erectile failure (Rosen & et al., 1992), medical treatments recently have been offered for sexual dysfunctions that traditionally had been seen as psychogenic, such as premature ejaculation (Althof, 1995; Assalian, 1988; Balon, 1996; Seagraves, Saran, Seagraves, & Maguire, 1993) and low sexual desire (Rosen, 1991; Rosen & Ashton, 1993; Schreiner-Engel, Schiavi, White, & Ghizzani, 1989).

After this brief review of the history of sex therapy, the original question remains "What is the therapeutic role of forgiveness in sex therapy?" One approach to answering that question is to consider the basic assumptions upon which current sex-therapy approaches.

CHAPTER 3

DEFINING FORGIVENESS

FORGIVENESS IN CHRISTIANITY

Thus far, forgiveness has been disclosed mainly in secular terms—in terms of values that can easily be embraced by secular readers even if those values have their origin at least partially in religious traditions.

Although forgiveness has been of interest and concern to theologians and philosophers for millennia, it is only recently that the fields of clinical, personality, and social psychology have discovered forgiveness as a human experience worthy of serious and sustained empirical research. Some of the impetus for this interest has come from several psychologists with committed Christian backgrounds who, aware of the centrality of forgiveness in Christian thought and the Christian ethos, have sought to introduce the study and appreciation of forgiveness into the discourse of secular psychology. They have done this in a scientifically sophisticated manner, aware that in order for their work to make a contribution to society in general, they cannot make explicit Christian theological assumptions the basis for their research and writing (Schiavi & Seagraves, 1995).

In the 1980s, a crime committed in New York City was widely publicized. Two men brutally raped a nun. But they didn't stop at rape. The assaulters also cut 27 crosses into her body with a nail file. Notwithstanding the public outrage, the rapists could not be charged for rape and aggravated assault but only for lesser crimes for which they received relatively light sentences.

This was so because the nun, claiming that she had no desire for revenge, refused to testify against the men. She hoped that her forgiving attitude would lead her attackers to become aware of and sensitive to the harm they had done (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991). Did the nun do what her Christian faith requires of Christian women who are raped and tortured? If you are a Christian woman, would you do the same if you were raped and tortured? If you are a Christian man and your wife, mother, sister, or daughter was a victim of such a crime, like the nun and not press charges? Do you feel that what the nun did was unethical because, though she might have personally been able to forgive those who assaulted her; from the societal point of view she had no right to do so? Jacoby (Jehu, 1979) argues that from a public perspective... this expression of religious compassion—"private forgiveness"... is troubling. Had the victim testified, her assailants would undoubtedly have received much longer prison terms.... As the sentence stands, one of the rapists could be released from prison in only five years. This, of course, is likely to pose a new danger to the community (DiBlasio, 1988).

Beyond the question of individual deterrence, there is also the matter of justice and retribution. It simply defies commonly understood standards of decency and justice that men who raped and tortured a woman for an hour-and-a-half—with nail files, broomsticks, crucifixes, candles—should receive anything less than the maximum sentences prescribed by law for the crimes they actually committed.... the victim herself was responsible, by virtue of her refusal to testify, for the relatively light penalty meted out to her attackers.

As a contrast to the nun's perspective, let us consider a second-century rabbinic text from the Mishnah. The Hebrew Bible prescribes capital punishment for certain sins and crimes, such as adultery and murder. According to the rabbinic interpretation of biblical law, in order for the death penalty to be inflicted, an elaborate set of due process procedures had to be implemented,

one of which was the requirement that there were two direct eyewitnesses to the crime. Hearsay or circumstantial or indirect evidence of any sort was not acceptable. The text describes what the Jewish court would say to witnesses who came to testify against the accused in a capital case, before they were permitted to officially give their testimony (Zilbergeld & Evans, 1980).

Jesus Christ's preaching of forgiveness is not a sudden and radical break from post biblical Jewish views. It can be found in some books of the Apocrypha and other intertestamental Jewish works. For example, we read in the Wisdom of Ben Sira (second century b.c.e.), "Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray" (Sir. 28:2). In The Testament of Gad, Joseph's brother Gad offers ethical instruction to his children before he dies. He had hated Joseph, but repented of that hatred and from his own experience learned how important it is to overcome hatred.

Love one another from the heart, therefore, and if anyone sins against you, speak to him in peace. Expel the venom of hatred, and do not harbor deceit in your heart. If anyone confesses and repents, forgive him.... Even if he denies it and acts disgracefully out of a sense of guilt, be quiet and do not become upset. For he who denies will repent and avoid offending you again.... But even if he is devoid of shame and persists in his wickedness, forgive him from the heart and leave vengeance to God (Masters and Johnson, 1970).

Whereas religious understandings are broad and evocative, scientific definitions are of necessity circumscribed and concrete. It is essential to distinguish forgiveness from other concepts. Forgiveness does not involve forgetting, ignoring, denying, overlooking, excusing, minimizing, tolerating, exonerating, or condoning. Further, it is distinct from reconciling, and it does not replace the role of justice. Rather, forgiveness involves a two-pronged response: releasing the negative feelings toward the offender, and enacting

merciful responses toward the wrongdoer (Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, McLernon, Niens, & Noor, 2004). As research related to forgiveness proliferates, it is likely to encounter other researchers who base forgiveness definitions solely on a set of conciliatory behaviors, an approach that leaves room for primate and cross-species studies. While we may learn much from animal studies (as we have about the psychophysiology of fear, for example), we need human research to understand the involvement and interaction of the spiritual, cognitive, emotional, overt behavioral, social, and physical dimensions of granting and receiving forgiveness. Indeed, even when we study humans, we will need multiple studies using multiple methodologies and clear definitions to best understand forgiveness. The forgiveness is so complex that it warrants a variety of investigations to assess the effects of single and repetitive offenses. The complexity extends to explore: the act of forgiveness and the trait of forgivingness, the experience of forgiveness from God, others, oneself, the psychological and physical correlates of forgiveness, and the ways that forgiving differs from reconciling, exonerating, or condoning. So far, the focus of empirical research on forgiveness and health has been on broad understandings of forgiveness and its embodiment across people with different faith commitments and experiences. Most of this research has focused on the perspective of the person granting forgiveness to other people.

I will now move to an explicit discussion of religion and explore how a religious perspective might influence one's views on forgiveness. What difference might one's religious beliefs make to one's views on forgiveness? Since I am only an amateur in the study of both religion and theology, I am not the ideal person to seek an answer to this question. However, I am going to have a stab at it anyway. There are, of course, many different religions and thus many different religious perspectives on forgiveness; and limitations of both space and my own

knowledge make it impossible for me to pursue more than one of them here. I will, therefore, generally limit myself to certain aspects of my own religious tradition: Christianity—the only religion about which I have more than superficial knowledge.

I do not apologize for this approach—and for two reasons. First, I am very doubtful that there is any such thing as a “religious perspective” that is not a perspective tied to some particular religion, and one who would try to talk too generally here risks breaking ties with traditions of deep and intelligent discussion and replacing them with the shallow slogans of New Age “spirituality.” Second, even many non-Christians are inclined to agree that Christianity has made forgiveness more central than any other religious tradition. For that reason, it might be expected that this tradition would have a rich—perhaps the richest—discussion of the topic.

Even if almost everyone would agree to the centrality of forgiveness in Christian ethics and its role in understanding love of neighbor; however, not everyone—not even all Christians—see Christian forgiveness in the same way. For example, as discussed earlier, some interpret Christianity as requiring unconditional forgiveness and others interpret it in such a way that repentance may be required for legitimate forgiveness. The interpretation that one adopts may, as argued in the previous chapter, have serious and potentially harmful consequences in such contexts as psychotherapy. So even the interpretation I will offer of Christian forgiveness cannot avoid being controversial even among Christians.

I will begin by exploring some central Christian teachings about vengeance and forgiveness that can, in large measure, be accepted in secular terms—accepted even by a nonbeliever. I will then explore some Christian teachings that can be accepted only in the context of Christian commitment. Consider, in addition to the parable of the unforgiving servant already discussed, these two passages from the New Testament: Romans 12:19 “Vengeance is mine; I

will repay, saith the Lord,” and John 8:7, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” Both passages suggest that we humans may be too limited to be reliable seekers of vengeance. We may not know enough to seek vengeance with accuracy, or we may not be good enough to seek vengeance without hypocrisy. Both passages suggest that vengeance-seeking may reveal an unvirtuous lack of humility on our parts—a failure to see how finite and fallible we actually are. This lack of humility can make us quite dangerous—a thought no doubt in Nietzsche's mind when he warned that we should “mistrust all in whom the impulse to punish is powerful” (Denton & Martin, 1998).

The passage from Romans suggests that God approves of vengeance—indeed claims it for himself (and thus must regard it as not inherently immoral)—but He believes that his creatures are too fallible to be entrusted with the task. One dramatic human fallibility is cognitive: a lack of relevant knowledge. What is the knowledge that we humans are supposed to lack? I would say it is this: knowledge of what I will call deep character. If we are to punish at all—and I see no reason to think that God thinks that all human punishment is wrong—we must be able to have reasonably reliable knowledge of such things as wrongful conduct and the mental states that are generally conceptualized as men's real (intention, for example). The seeking of vengeance, however, is often driven by more than the beliefs necessary for any system of crime control. It is often driven by the belief that the person by whom one has been harmed is rotten to the core—evil all the way down—and thus a legitimate target of hatred (DiBlasio, 1988).

But do we really know enough about any fellow human beings to be confident that they are so fully evil, and so fully responsible for their evil, that they are legitimate objects of hatred—a hatred that seeks to take delight in their suffering? In the movies, yes (one reason why we can so enjoy revenge films), but in real life probably not. Human beings are complex

concrete individuals, not cartoon or fictional characters of whom (with the help of the artist) we can have a God's-eye view. To think we can have such a view of actual people, moreover, is to live in a world of dangerous fantasy—a world that, as Nietzsche warned, may start with an expressed desire to give other people their just deserts but may end in our simply finding self-deceptive excuses for being cruel.

The writer William Trevor (1994) said this of the serial killer who is the central character of his novel *Felicia's Journey*: “Lost within a man who murdered was a soul like any other soul, purity itself it surely once had been” (p. 110-128). If one takes this perspective on another human being—no matter what that person has done—then hatred for that person becomes difficult if not impossible. With the abandonment of hatred comes the abandonment of any ability to take delight in that person's suffering. In the absence of that delight—actual or anticipated—revenge is useless, and vindictiveness is, at the end of the day, indeed without a point (Denton & et al., 1998; Romig & Veenstra, 1998).

But suppose we did not have the cognitive limitations just noted. Suppose we were in a position to have reliable knowledge of the depth of evil and responsibility and desert present in another. This would remove the epistemological problem noted in Rom. 12:19, but the problem of John 8:7 would remain: Perhaps we are ourselves too filled with inadequacy—or even evil—to seek revenge against others without hypocrisy. Suppose we follow Jesus Christ and examine the state of our own souls, our own sinful natures, before giving in to our vindictive impulses and casting the stones of revenge. If we do this, so Jesus Christ seems to assume, we will be overwhelmed by our own moral inadequacies and drop our stones.

Not so, claims Michael Moore in his well-known essay “The Moral Worth of Retribution.” Moore ridicules Jesus' caution as “pretty clumsy moral philosophy” and dismisses

its relevance when he writes: It is true that all of us are guilty of some immoralities, probably on a daily basis. Yet for most people reading this essay, the immoralities in question are things like manipulating others unfairly; not caring deeply enough about another's suffering; not being charitable for the limitations of others; convenient lies, and so forth. Few of us have raped and murdered a woman, drowned her three small children, and felt no remorse about it. (Moore, 1987, p. 188) Moore's point seems to be this: In the relevant sense most of us are without sin, and so we might as well feel free to pick up some stones and cast away.

Is this an adequate answer to Jesus Christ? I think not. The response is too shallow, for it fails to reflect the kind of serious moral introspection that Jesus Christ is attempting to provoke. The point is not to deny that many people lead lives that are both legally and morally correct. The point is rather, to force such people to face honestly the question of why they have lived in such a way. Is it (as they would no doubt like to think) because their inner characters manifest true integrity and are thus morally superior to those people whose behavior has been less exemplary? Or is it, at least in part, a matter of what John Rawls has called “luck on the natural and social lottery” (Rawls, 1996).

The retributivist Kant suggests in his *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*: their favored upbringing and social circumstances, or the fact that they have never been placed in situations where they have been similarly tempted, or simply their fear of being found out has had considerably more to do with their compliance with the rules of law and morality than they would like to admit. Perhaps if they imagined themselves possessed of Gyges' ring (a ring that, in the myth in book 2 of Plato's *Republic*, makes its wearer invisible), they might, if honest with themselves, have to admit that they would probably use the ring, not to perform anonymous acts of charity, but to perform some acts of considerable evil—acts comparable to the acts for which

they often seek the punishment of others. If they follow through honestly on this process of self-examination, they will have discovered the potential for evil within themselves and will have learned an important lesson in moral humility (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991).

The lessons in human limitations found in the foregoing scriptural passages could, of course, be embraced even by a totally secular person. Although the Christian insights serve to reinforce these facts about human fallibility, even an atheist could grant the value of those insights. This is not the case, however, with all Christian teachings having a bearing on forgiveness. Drawing in part on the insights of the theologian Marilyn Adams, let's explore four such teachings that will be found acceptable only within the context of actual Christian commitments. These Christian commitments should make one more open to forgiveness than those without such commitments.

1. We are commanded by God to forgive our enemies and those who wrong us. When (in Matthew 18:22) Jesus Christ is asked how many times we should forgive, he answers "seventy times seven"—which is, I assume, a way of saying "without end" In Luke, as previously noted, this demand is attached only to the repentant wrongdoer. One surely cannot be a sincere Christian and not respond "with fear and trembling" to the duties that flow from divine commands. This response is fear based, but it is not to be understood as fear of an un-virtuously slavish nature. As Peter Geach (2001) has argued, a fear of the Being who is the very ground of my own being—the one who creates and sustains me—is not like fearing Hitler or some other thug and can, indeed, be a part of love and respect.
2. Christianity, in its stress on the fallen nature of humanity, introduces a humbling perspective on one's self and one's personal concerns—attempting to counter our natural

tendencies of pride and narcissistic self-importance. According to this perspective, we are all deeply sinful and stand in constant need of forgiveness not just from other fellow humans, but primarily from God. This perspective does not seek to trivialize the wrongs that we suffer, but it does seek to blunt our very human tendency to magnify those wrongs out of all reasonable proportion. The tendency to see ourselves as morally pure while seeing those who wrong us as evil incarnate and the failure to see that no injury we suffer can be said to be totally undeserved. By breaking down a sharp us-them dichotomy, and by revealing our own suffering, even at the hands of others, as something considerably less than a cosmic injustice (one lesson of Job), such a view should make it easier to follow Auden's counsel to "love your crooked neighbor with your crooked heart" (Davenport, 1991; Moss, 1986; Ritzman, 1987).

3. All human beings, even those guilty of terrible wrongs, are to be seen as children of God, created in his image, and thus as precious. This vision is beautifully expressed by the writer William Trevor in the previously quoted passage from his novel *Felicia's Journey*, when he speaks with compassion and forgiveness even of the serial killer who is the central character of that novel and writes of him: "Lost within a man who murdered, there was a soul like any other soul, purity itself it surely once had been" (Coleman, 1998, p. 86). Viewing the wrongdoer in this way—as the child he once was—should make it difficult to hate him with the kind of abandon that would make forgiveness of him utterly impossible. It has been said that God loves even Satan because he loves all that he has created. Seeing ourselves as precious children of God may also make forgiveness of wrongdoing easier. Why? Because it may provide a basis for our own self-respect that is less vulnerable to mistreatment from others (Trevor, 1994).

4. Finally, Christianity teaches that the universe, for all its evil and hardship, is ultimately benign, created and sustained by a loving God and to be met with hope and trust rather than despair. On this view, the world may be falling; but, as Rilke wrote: “there is One who holds this falling with infinite softness in his hands” (Hargrave, 1994).

Like most Christians, I find it very difficult, at least on most days of the week, to embrace such a view of the universe with a full heart: emotionally as well as intellectually. The world simply presents too much visible evidence against this view that has provoked theologians from the Middle Ages to today to worry about the problem of evil. However, as Kierkegaard reminds us, Christian belief is supposed to be difficult. This is why it requires faith (Hargrave, 1994).

A Turkish officer raided and looted an Armenian home. He killed the aged parents and gave the daughters to the soldiers, keeping the eldest daughter for himself. Some time later she escaped and trained as a nurse. As time passed, she found herself nursing in a ward of Turkish officers. One night, by the light of a lantern, she saw the face of this officer. He was so gravely ill that without exceptional nursing he would die. The days passed, and he recovered. One day, the doctor stood by the bed with her and said to him, “But for her devotion to you, you would be dead.” He looked at her and said, “We have met before, haven't we?” “Yes,” she said, “we have met before.” “Why didn't you kill me?” he asked. She replied, “I am a follower of him who said ‘Love your enemies.’ I refer to this version of Christian forgiveness as radical forgiveness. Jones considers this a “shining example” of Christian piety (Schimmel, 2002, p. 65).

Many non-Christians (and Christians as well) would not consider the nurse's behavior to be noble or admirable. They might agree that she should have nursed the Turkish officer as she did, but not for the reason that she did. Her professional responsibilities as a nurse might override her moral right to allow him to die by refusing to administer to him. Why, however, is it noble to

love and take care of evil people?

To the degree that I can embrace the benign view of the universe, however, then I will not so easily think that the struggle against evil— even evil done to me—is my task alone, all up to me. If I think that I alone can and must make things right, then I risk taking on a kind of self-importance that makes forgiveness of others difficult if not impossible. Given a certain kind of faith, however, I can relax a bit the clinch fisted anger and resentment with which I try to sustain my self-respect and hold my world together all alone.

FORGIVENESS: AS A GIFT

A very different view of forgiveness is one that sees it not as a gift of overcoming resentment and forgoing the right to demand punishment in the case of an unremorseful offender; but as rather a gift to a remorseful one, or, as we shall see in Judaism, an obligation to a repentant offender.

Forgiveness is multidimensional in that it includes feelings, thoughts, and where possible, behaviors. Although some people report a sudden surge of forgiveness toward an offender, more commonly it is a process that takes time. It can involve vacillation between thoughts and feelings that are conducive to forgiving, and thoughts and feelings that either divert the victim from the forgiveness trajectory—such as repressing or denying the hurt—or that reignite hatred, resentment, or a desire for revenge, such as ruminating about the offense and the hurt it caused. It is also simplistic to think of someone as either forgiving or not forgiving a person. Each of the dimensions of forgiveness or non-forgiveness, the emotional, the cognitive, and the behavioral, can vary in intensity and in range. Anger, hatred, compassion, and love, though difficult to measure, are not all-or-nothing emotions (Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, McLernon, Niens, & et al., 2004; Boersma, 1989).

In addition, the circumstance in an individual experiences these feelings, or the stimuli that trigger them, can be few or many. One person's animosity toward an offender may be aroused by the mere thought of him; whereas another person's will be aroused only by seeing him or by being physically close to him. The process of forgiveness that these two people undergo will differ.

Some people assume that victims of injustice and injury are either vengeful or forgiving,

as if the only ways of reacting to or dealing with offenses are these polar opposites. In contrast to this, Worthington (1991) enumerates more than 20 ways by which people, while not forgiving an offender according to his own definition of forgiveness, may become less resentful or vengeful. He refers to these as ways of reducing unforgiveness without actually forgiving—although some people might think that they have forgiven the offender when they do these things. Since Worthington considers active forgiveness a highly desirable virtue, merely reducing unforgiveness is not, for him, as desirable as actual forgiving. However, from a non-Christian perspective, some of the methods he lists for dealing with one's anger and hatred in response to injustice may be considered more morally and psychologically desirable than forgiving a perpetrator, particularly an unrepentant one. Sometimes people get bored with the grudges they hold or they realize that the hurts haven't had a long-term adverse impact, so they ignore them (Davenport, 1991; Moss, 1986; Ritzman, 1987; Boersma, 1989).

People may use defense mechanisms such as denying that they were indeed hurt: “a black eye isn't such a tragedy”, or “money comes and money goes.” They may rationalize what the offender did, often because it is too painful to admit the full meaning of the offense. The husband, whose wife suddenly picked up and left him after years of what he had assumed was a loving marriage, may prefer to believe that she became emotionally disturbed rather than that she did not love him as he had always thought she did. Many abused women blame themselves for their husbands' violence, and young children in particular may blame themselves when a parent severely beats them or punishes them. Children's rational maybe: if my mother or father, who claims and seems to love me and who knows more about right and wrong than I do, sees fit to punish me so severely, then I must have done something wrong to deserve it. Thus they direct their anger against themselves rather than against their parent. This isn't forgiveness, since the

child doesn't acknowledge that an injustice was done to him. There is nothing the parent has done that needs to be forgiven. When the child matures, however, he might reassess his childhood experiences and develop hostility toward the parent whom he now perceives as having victimized him. Other people are submissive to pain and hurt, preferring to absorb it rather than to emotionally or behaviorally fight it. This lessens their "unforgiveness," even though they don't actually forgive Worthington (1991).

Now that we have considered several definitions of forgiveness, let us consider how forgiveness differs from related concepts. Sometimes we may forget the wrong that someone has done to us because of the passage of time, memory loss, or aging. We may become so involved in life activities that are more immediate than the hurt we once suffered that, without any decision either to forgive or to forget, the hurtful event fades from our consciousness. It is insignificant to our present life, and remembering the offense and its pain isn't worth the emotional effort that we would rather expend on what is important to us now. Atonement of a sin is similar to the secular legal concept of pardon. When God atones, he declares that he will not punish the sinner for his sin; usually the sinner must first perform or participate in a prescribed ritual. Atonement often means, in religious terms, that the sin is "washed away" or the stain of the sin is removed as if the sinner had never committed the sin. He can start anew, so to speak, with a clean spiritual slate. Atonement is similar to forgiveness in that God forgives humans or accepts their prayers or rituals as effecting atonement. Usually atonement is the divine response to a sinner's repentance. In secular discourse, we also speak of certain acts as atoning for sins or crimes, so that the criminal can be forgiven. A man who battered his wife to death, but after his release from prison devoted the remaining years of his life, at great personal sacrifice, to educating violence-prone men on how to control their violent impulses and to helping establish

shelters for abused women may be said to have atoned for his sin. However, this does not necessarily mean that his children, whose mother he killed, have forgiven him (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991).

Finally, although forgiveness can often lead to reconciliation between the offender and his victim, it need not necessarily do so. The victim, though willing to forgive in the sense of forgoing the right to punish the offender or to have others punish him, and in the sense of dissipating his hatred or anger toward the offender, might not want to reestablish any intimate or even close relationship with him. Christian understandings of forgiveness and, to a significant extent, Judaic ones as well, see reconciliation as an ultimate goal of forgiveness; indeed as an overriding human goal in general even though it may not be realizable in specific cases. A secular notion of forgiveness, which doesn't posit a utopian goal of universal harmony or assume that it is possible and desirable that all humans love one another, does not consider reconciliation to be the ultimate objective of forgiveness, although it is to be appreciated when it occurs. Just as forgiveness doesn't necessarily imply reconciliation, reconciliation doesn't necessarily imply or depend upon forgiveness. Given the difficulty of forgiving, it is good that it does not, or else there would be little reconciliation in human relationships. People and groups will often reconcile even after decades or centuries of enmity because it is pragmatic to do so. The American and the Japanese nations effected a political reconciliation after World War II. This resolution does not mean that Americans have forgiven the Japanese who bombed Pearl Harbor and who killed and tortured hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians in the war. Nor does it mean that the Japanese have forgiven President Truman and his advisers who ordered the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which from the Japanese perspective were not "legitimate" military actions, but horrible, racist-motivated crimes against a civilian population

(Carter & McGoldrick, 1999).

We have spoken of forgiveness as a process and also as a constellation of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors in response to injury. In addition to these senses of the concept, some psychologists, theologians, and philosophers refer to forgiveness as a relatively stable personality trait, disposition of character, or virtue. Several years ago, I met a spiritually beautiful woman, compassionate and loving. When I mentioned my interest in forgiveness, she shared with me her views about Christian love. These provide an additional rationale for loving and forgiving those who hurt us and others. One's capacity and ability to love, understand, and console another is not dependent upon the degree to which one's love is returned. If I could only love another human being to the degree that they returned my love, I would probably have given up loving people a long time ago. Jesus Christ understood this kind of love. He said if someone borrows your shirt, do not expect it to be returned (and he went further and said, "Give him your coat as well"). This may sound like a "one-way" street; one person continually trying to understand and love others and often receiving little or nothing in return. Ah, but the reward is not in receiving another's reciprocity—the reward is in the joy of loving itself.

Another point that she made was that much of our disappointment in others results from unrealistic expectations. If we were to realize and accept that people often hurt us because of their weaknesses, insecurities, and fears, it would be easier to forgive and love them. This woman believes, and has personally experienced, that being loving, compassionate, and forgiving, even to those who hurt us, is inherently pleasurable and joy-creating. Her argument is not explicitly theological or moral, but psychological and therapeutic, although there is a Christian value system underlying it. I wonder whether her effusive outpourings of love and understanding for human frailty and wrongdoing will help repair our broken world. I fear that

such a perspective might retard the ethical and moral improvement of people by being too understanding, too forgiving, too excusing of the wrongs that we do to one another.

Another reason for forgiving is that the offender who hurt us might have done so out of a good motive, even though what he said or did was misguided. The case of a depressed killer is an extreme example. However, much common, non-pathological examples can be given, such as those in which parents mistreat children whose inner worlds they often do not understand. I was amazed to learn of some of the resentments that my children feel toward me for certain things I did out of misguided love and concern for them, compounded by total lack of awareness of “where they were at” at critical times in their childhood years. I hope they will forgive me for these offenses.

When some humiliation that an offender has experienced has humbled him, or when, even in the absence of true remorse for what he has done, he grovels in the dust, begging mercy and forgiveness from us, we might be inclined to forgive. One reason that we want to punish him is that he has treated us as less worthy than himself; now that he is humbled, there is no need to be retributive. Similarly, when an offender has been broken by extreme suffering, our pity for him overcomes our anger, and we see no point in punishing him. We may feel that he is getting what he deserves, even if not because of any action of ours against him.

Sometimes we also forgive people who offend us because we remember the love we once had for them or the good that they did in the past. This is often the reason that we are willing to forgive family members or friends who have hurt us. We shouldn't judge people with whom we are close by only one or a few of their deeds. We need to take a broader perspective, looking at their total relationship with us. In balance, the good they have done for us might outweigh the wrongs we have suffered (Davenport, 1991; Moss, 1986; Ritzman, 1987).

Forgiveness prompted by the recollection of past good deeds is ascribed by the prophet Jeremiah to God, who had punished the ten tribes of Israel (symbolized by Ephraim) by exiling them from the Holy Land. When he saw the depths of Ephraim's suffering and recalled Israel's love and devotion to him in the early phase of their covenantal relationship (for which both father, son and husband—wife metaphors are used), his compassion and mercy were aroused. He also saw that Ephraim (Israel) was remorseful for his (her) sins although he (she) found it difficult to break away from them on his (her) own initiative. Perhaps Jesus Christ's dilemma is also our dilemma: even though we value and encourage love towards our fellow human beings, prompting us to forgive them when they wrong us, we also seem to respect the idea that the guilty deserve to pay in pain for the wrongs they cause others, a thought generally encased in an anger that drives out love. There does not seem to be any easy way to reconcile these two responses to wrongdoing, nor is it easy to give either response up. Yet they coexist uneasily within us.

The forgiver is someone in power who shows mercy toward an offender whom he could have put to death. There are no instances of a powerful offender requesting forgiveness from or being forgiven by a weak victim of his. Nor of requesting forgiveness of someone more or less powerful than the victim. These narratives enhance the reputation of the powerful party who pardons and acts mercifully toward an offender, who is in a temporary or a permanent position of weakness. The motives for the forgiveness differ in each case. Joseph seems to forgive out of brotherly affection, respect for his deceased father, and a belief that his brothers had been God's instrument for good, even though they had intended evil. We are not informed of Esau's motive for forgiving Jacob and reconciling with him. David does not kill Nabal because he is moved by the pleas of Nabal's wife, Abigail, who appealed to David's magnanimity and self-interest, and

whom he desires and indeed takes as a wife when Nabal later drops dead. There is no indication that he is in any way less resentful toward Nabal or loves his enemy. David spares Saul's life because of David's reverence for one anointed by God, because of his deep and loving friendship with Saul's son Jonathan—who would be pained were his father killed, and perhaps out of appreciation for the love that Saul had once shown him. In each of these cases, the forgiveness or mercy is not a “free gift of love.” It is grounded in self-interest or in natural emotions that are more powerful than the desire for revenge. The person who wants to nurture the virtue of forgivingness will always look upon offenders and himself with this attitude in mind (DiBlasio, 1988).

Another possible benefit of forgiveness is that, in the process of reflecting on the weaknesses of the offender, one might come to embrace the wisdom of the virtue of humility. One might find thinking along these lines: I should keep in mind the fundamental weakness of human nature. We all have a propensity to be selfish and to thereby hurt others. It isn't easy to be good, kind, caring, and sensitive. I must be humble and realize that I too am an imperfect person, even if not to the same degree as the person who offended me. I might behave in a similarly offensive way under some circumstances. “I should also bear in mind that someday I might be in a position in which I will have done wrong to another and will want to be treated with empathy and compassion by my victim. If, when I relate to an offender, I don't allow empathy and compassion to influence my reactions, then I should not expect others to act in that spirit toward me. I shall forgive so that I will be forgiven”. These are some of the ancillary benefits of forgiveness that might deepen the meaning of it for the one who forgives. What we would hope to see in this phase is that, not only will negative affect toward the offender be decreased, but the victim might even develop positive feelings toward him. For us, the ultimate goal of the

forgiveness process is the gift of love extended by the victim to the perpetrator. When the victim and the offender are in a close personal relationship, such as husband and wife, parent and child, or siblings, it would be desirable indeed if love would resurface or grow again. I don't think, however, that forgiveness itself suffices to nurture love, although it may clear away thistles and thorns that prevent its growth (Davenport, 1991; Moss, 1986; Ritzman, 1987).

Although I agree that in judging others we should be aware of our own moral weaknesses and of the innate moral weaknesses of all humans, which can make us more understanding and even merciful in judgment, I find Abba Moses' approach to be socially and morally dangerous, and even offensive. To advocate forgiving all offenders and all offenses because everyone commits some offenses blurs all distinctions between degrees of sin, evil, and crime.

CHAPTER 4

THEOLOGY OF FORGIVENESS

Some clients benefit by differentiating between letting go and forgiveness. Some have had the concept of forgiveness used repeatedly as a spiritual weapon. Others have heard, even from therapists, that forgiveness is a necessary step in healing. Yet, the definition of forgiveness is as controversial as any theological term. After intensive theological study, many have come to rely on Webster's first definition of forgiveness: "to excuse for a fault or offense; pardon." Contrary to current trends, we do not see forgiveness as being for ourselves. Neither do we see it as simply the process of letting go. Without repentance, many theologians insist that forgiveness is not in order. Others believe that forgiveness can only come from Above or from a person of equal power. (Scriptures refer largely to forgiving "a brother.") By contrast, healing will eventually necessitate letting go of the anger toward the unrepentant and the obsession to make unrealistic outcomes pre-requisites for healing (DiBlasio & Proctor, 1993; McCullough et al., 1998).

Forgiveness is an instrument for righting such wrongs. Over the course of my work, I have come to suspect that there are many more people than we can imagine waiting to hear the words "I forgive you" or "Please forgive me" so they can finally feel at peace with the people they have once loved. If a group of average people were asked the question, "When you review your life, what one thing about it still makes you feel bad?" The answer for many would probably involve forgiving. Some would feel bad because they had been unable to forgive another. Others because they had not been forgiven by a person for whom they had once cared.

Forgiveness is the method by which people in intimate relationships let each other "off the hook" for various acts of ruthlessness and unkindness. It is the figurative glue that holds together intimate bonds. But it is elusive. Forgiveness is among the most difficult of human undertakings; unfortunately, most of us have no idea how to forgive each other or even if we should attempt to do so (Cerney, 1988; Fitzgibbons, 1986; Freedman & Enright, 1996).

The literature on forgiving reiterates one enduring idea: that forgiveness is a transaction that takes place between two parties--the offended person and the offender. For a transaction to occur, both people must be present to participate, and both must be willing to do so. However, for many people who have been hurt by those they have loved, this is simply not the situation. Most people forgive alone, with little or no help from others. American life has made it possible for people to quickly sever their most intimate relationships and leave behind those closest to them after one has hurt the other. We are a mobile society. We are prideful and competitive. We dislike losers. Many of us believe that forgivers are wimps or that people who stick around to help someone they hurt pick up the pieces are fools (Flanigan, 1987; Freedman & Enright, 1996; Phillips & Osborne, 1989).

Nowadays, we are much less mutually dependent as individuals, couples, friends, neighbors, or communities. People move in and out of these human groups as often as they like. The wounded individual grapples alone, and the injurer can move on to other partnerships, carrying with him the baggage of past relationships. But this doesn't mean that people do not need to feel the peace that forgiveness brings. Instead, it means that it has gotten much harder to forgive. More often than not, forgiveness occurs not as part of a transaction with the injurer; but, as a result of a lonely process persistently and painfully pursued by a person who has been badly injured. A person ready to embark on the journey of forgiving an unforgivable injury is in for a

rocky voyage. In a way, forgiving is only for the brave. It is for those people who are willing to confront their pain, accept themselves as permanently changed, and make difficult choices. Countless individuals are satisfied to go on resenting and hating the people who wrong them. They stew in their own inner poisons and even contaminate those around them (Enright & Zell, 1989).

Forgivers are not content to be stuck in a quagmire. They reject the possibility that the rest of their lives will be determined by the unjust and injurious acts of another person. Instead, forgivers take risks to reshape their lives into something freed from past pain. The process of forgiving requires significant personal changes in both feelings and beliefs. Hence, some people may choose to quit short of finishing. Those who succeed in forgiving someone share two important benefits: One benefit is that at the end of the process, forgivers are liberated from hatred for their injurers, wishing the people who wrong them no harm. The other benefit is that once forgiveness is complete, forgivers develop new systems of beliefs about the causes of events in their lives. Their belief systems incorporate an understanding of intimate injuries. Once a person has gone through a process of forgiving the unforgivable, very little can ever seem unforgivable again. As so, forgiveness is a rational process, is a conversion of prior thought about oneself and others. Is a reevaluation about harm and vulnerability. The result is a re-conceptualization of the people fit into the larger scheme of things (Denton & Martin, 1998; Romig & Veenstra, 1998).

Forgiveness in response to apology, remorse, and restitution has psychological and social value for the offender and the victim. It can relieve the remorseful offender from guilt that is no longer necessary because it has served its function of self-transformation. It can give some closure to the victim and free him from consuming in painful anger and hatred, without a loss of

self-respect. In addition, the offender's apology and reparation provides the victim a sense of justice. Forgiveness in response to repentance encourages people to change for the better and brings harmony and reconciliation into ruptured human relationships. It opens up possibilities for the renewal of friendship, affection, and love. Within the family unit, it can keep families intact and committed to mutual help and support. Forgiveness can also have physical and emotional benefits (Hargrave & Sells, 1997).

Although forgiveness, in the absence of the offender's repentance might have some of the above benefits as well, its emotional and moral costs may outweigh its benefits. This is especially so when the offender is alive and capable of repenting, or at least apologizing and expressing remorse, but does not do so. Some people consider forgiveness in the absence of repentance to be a denigration of justice and a moral disservice to the intransigent offender. To give him a gift of love, notwithstanding his insistence on identifying with evil, is equivalent to not holding him responsible and accountable for what he has done, and thus to treat him as less than a morally autonomous human being. When the offender cannot repent because of death or some other reason, the question that faces his victim is whether to forgive or instead use other strategies for making his or her anger and resentment less burdensome (Leith & Baumeister, 1998).

Following are some strategies for helping us forgive when we want to, but are unable to get ourselves to do so. Many of these are practical applications of the ideas discussed earlier when considered reasons for forgiving. We will look at how psychologists and marital counselors are developing and testing programs to help people work through the process of forgiveness in a variety of situations of deep hurt and conflict. Some of these programs are, for me, too Christian in their approach, in that they deemphasize or ignore the role that an offender's

apology and repentance should play in encouraging victims to forgive. In addition these programs are too sanguine about our capacity to love our enemies. However, they do provide important psychological insights into forgiveness as well as tactics for forgiving, both of which are applicable in many situations. Of course, those of you who do believe that you should forgive those who hurt you deeply even if they do not feel any remorse will find the work of the Christian-oriented therapists indispensable in helping you implement your Christian beliefs in your personal lives.

Once we acknowledge our anger, we have to release it rather than ruminate on it, as we often do when we are hurt. A devoted mother and wife whose husband has abandoned her after years of what she thought was a mutually loving marriage, who is alone, lonely, and now economically vulnerable, often contrasts her plight with her former husband's current situation. While she lies lonely in her bed, weeping silently, she imagines him and his newly acquired younger secretary/lover cavorting joyously on the beaches of Bermuda before retiring to their suite in an upscale hotel. These ruminations and comparisons exacerbate her pain and can be obstacles to forgiving. Imagine that you have suffered a debilitating and permanent injury when struck by a car operated by a drunk driver who received a relatively light sentence. Over and over you agonize, where is justice? Is it fair that I can no longer work at my profession, but the man who incapacitated me can? Your father abused you sexually as a teenager, and you have had difficulty trusting men ever since. You see the anger every time you recall your father's stealthy approach to your bed. Your daughter was raped and murdered, and you have been in a deep depression ever since. The recurring thoughts and feelings of her suffering and your loss give you no rest and have deprived your life of all pleasure and meaning. The only sustained emotion you feel is a desire for vengeance. If you, at first, deny your pain and injury, the Uncovering

Phase helps you acknowledge it. It helps you become aware of how you are allowing yourself to engage in thoughts and nurture feelings that embitter and enrage you; and to realize that these responses to injury are self-defeating and self-hurting. They make you a victim twice over: once at the initial injury and its natural aftermath; and a second time in the shame, anger, pain, anxiety, and deep sadness that you allow to consume you. Moreover, these negative thoughts and feelings also prevent you from contemplating the possibility of forgiving the husband who cast you aside for another. Or, the hit-and-run driver who paralyzed you. The father who stole your innocence and your ability to love. The man who destroyed your precious child. Only after you are fully aware of how you were wronged, of how the wound cuts deep, and of the poisonous embrace of your anger, are you ready to consider an alternative way of dealing with it. You can now go on to the next phase, in which you will be called upon to make a conscious choice.

Currently, ambiguity exists with respect to a myriad of issues related to forgiveness, including definitional issues, measurement issues, how the process of forgiveness unfolds, and optimal intervention models for differing populations. Regarding the definition of forgiveness, areas of convergence include the beliefs that forgiveness is interpersonal and intra-psychic and that it is a choice. Forgiveness is not equated with forgetting, pardoning, condoning, excusing, conflict resolution, or denying the offense. Areas of disagreement include: the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation; whether forgiveness is a necessary component of personal growth and development; and whether one must feel love and compassion toward the offender in order to forgive.

OBSTACLES TO FORGIVENESS

In addition to assessing client readiness for forgiveness, counselors must also be aware of obstacles and risks that could affect the healing process. One such obstacle is the lack of modeling. Counselors, who are well versed in the use of forgiveness, can assess the comfort level of their clients through the use of forgiveness. Such exploration can provide both the counselor and the clients a relatively quick method for charting patterns of family hurt and healing and can serve to inform the direction of the healing process. It is easier to preach glibly the virtues and pragmatic value of forgiveness and reconciliation than it is truly to understand why, when, whom, and how to forgive. Forgiveness is a complex phenomenon. It is affected, by many factors such as: the nature and the extent of the injury we have suffered; our relationship with the person who has hurt us; our sense of self; whether or not the person whom we contemplate forgiving has expressed remorse for his deed or sought to repair the emotional, physical, or material damage he has wrought upon us. Mature forgiveness entails difficult emotional and intellectual work. It is a skill that needs to be cultivated, a virtue that needs to be acquired by self-training. When practiced thoughtlessly or simplistically, it is ineffective and counterproductive and can even be dangerous to oneself, to the person forgiven, and to society (Enright and the Human Development Study Group, 1996; Enright, Eastin, Golden, Sarinopoulos, & Freedman, 1992; McCullough & Worthington, 1994; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; Rhode, 1990).

I have been using the terms to forgive and forgiveness as if their meanings are self-evident and shared by everyone. However, this is far from the case. These words denote and connote different things to different people, both in popular usage and in sophisticated

theological and philosophical discourse. My first task, then, is to explain the varieties of meanings of “to forgive.” It is also necessary to distinguish “to forgive” from other terms that share some overlapping concepts and emotions with it. The differences between “to forgive” and the infinitives below, which I will explain after defining forgiveness, are morally, psychologically, and legally significant.

To be merciful; To pardon; To condone; To excuse; To justify; To exonerate; To forget; To atone; To reconcile (Denton & Martin, 1998; Romig & Veenstra, 1998).

In defining forgiveness, it is necessary to make a critical distinction between two types. One is internal, referring to a victim's feelings and attitudes toward the perpetrator, and does not necessarily require that the victim in any way interact with the perpetrator or inform him that he is forgiven. The second type of forgiveness is interpersonal in nature. It refers to something the victim does or says to the perpetrator, directly or indirectly. To forgive someone means to cease feeling angry or resentful over the transgression.... In this sense, it is even meaningful to speak of forgiving someone who is dead or absent or who, for other reasons, would have no way of knowing whether he or she has been forgiven. Forgiveness is a social action that happens between people. It is a step toward returning the relationship between them to the condition it had before the transgression. Forgiveness signifies that the victim will not seek further revenge or demand further reparations. Because forgiveness and anger are conceptually related, it is not surprising that misconceptions surrounding the understanding and proper expression of this emotion can adversely affect the forgiveness process. Fitzgibbons (1986) posited that such misconceptions include denial of anger, the belief that forgiving precludes the expression of anger, and the unarticulated assumption that the benefits of holding onto one's anger far outweigh the benefits of forgiving. (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Tangney, 1991,

1995; Tangney et al., 1999).

Forgiveness has only recently been subjected to scientific study (DiBlasio & Proctor, 1993; McCullough et al., 1997). Studies suggest that forgiving is effective in resolving feelings of anger, anxiety, and fear (Cerney, 1988; Fitzgibbons, 1986; Freedman & Enright, 1996). Intervention studies suggest that forgiveness can be helpful as a counseling tool with a wide range of populations, including incest survivors, substance abusers, and cancer patients (Flanigan, 1987; Freedman & et al., 1996; Phillips & Osborne, 1989). Researchers and counselors are increasingly interested in the topic--what forgiveness is, how the process unfolds, and how forgiveness can be used in the counseling process (Denton & et al., 1998; Romig & et al., 1998).

Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1991) defined forgiveness as a willingness to abandon one's right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior. Forgiveness also includes fostering undeserved compassion, generosity, and, perhaps, love toward the perpetrator. Forgiveness is interpersonal and intrapsychic. It takes place over time and involves choice. Forgiving is not to be equated with forgetting, pardoning, condoning, excusing, or denying the offense (Enright & Zell, 1989). Areas of disagreement include the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation (Freedman, 1998), whether forgiveness is a necessary component of personal growth (Hargrave & Sells, 1997), and whether one must feel love and compassion toward the offender in order to forgive (Denton & et al., 1998).

According to Tangney, Fee, Reinsmith, Boone, and Lee (1999), an individual's ability to forgive is dependent on contextual variables related to the specific transgression and to a more enduring general propensity to forgive. Propensity to forgive is dependent, in part, on cognitive and affective characteristics, such as an individual's moral emotional style. Shame, guilt, and

empathy have been identified as moral emotions that may inform forgiveness (Tangney et al., 1999). Studies have consistently suggested that empathy facilitates the process of forgiving (Enright and the Human Development Study Group, 1996; Enright, Eastin, Golden, Sarinopoulos, & Freedman, 1992; McCullough & Worthington, 1999; McCullough, Worthington, & et al., 1997; Rhode, 1990).

The role of shame and guilt in the process of forgiving has been relatively unexplored. To our knowledge, only Tangney et al., (1999) have addressed the relationship between forgiving, shame, and guilt and the distinction between the two constructs of shame and guilt. When shamed, an individual's focal concern is with the entire self. A negative behavior or failure is experienced as a reflection of a more global and enduring defect of the self. The shamed person feels worthless and powerless. In contrast, when an individual feels guilty, the focal concern is the behavior. According to Leith and Baumeister (1998) and Tangney (1994), guilt is associated with increased understanding of perspective taking, a trait that strengthens and maintains close relationships and serves adaptive functions.

Guilt depends on empathic awareness and response to someone's distress, as well as on awareness of being the cause of that distress (Tangney, 1991; Tangney et al., 1999). Shame-prone individuals are more likely to respond with a personal distress reaction, a reaction to pain that is incompatible with continued empathetic connection (Tangney, 1991). According to Leith and Baumeister (1998), defensive externalization or blame lessens the pain of shame in the short run by reducing the self-focus and negative affect associated with shame. The person who is shamed may withdraw or may react with a hostile, humiliated fury, reactions that do not provide opportunity for empathy.

Guilt-prone individuals, in contrast, adopt more proactive and constructive strategies for managing anger (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Tangney, 1991, 1995; Tangney et al., 1999). They are more likely to engage in constructive behaviors, such as non-hostile discussion with the target of their anger and in empathic connection (Tangney, 1994). According to Tangney et al. (1999), forgiveness of others is positively correlated with other-oriented empathy and an adaptive guilt-prone style. Individuals more inclined to forgive are less prone to problematic shame reactions and self-oriented empathic distress. The focus of this research was to gain further understanding regarding the correlates of forgiving: individual differences in proneness to shame, guilt, anger, and empathic responsiveness. The following hypotheses were proposed: 1. Forgiveness will correlate positively with guilt-proneness and negatively with shame-proneness. 2. Empathetic concern and perspective taking will correlate positively with forgiveness, and personal distress and fantasizing will correlate negatively with forgiveness. 3. Anger reduction will correlate positively with forgiveness. Initial levels of anger will not correlate positively with forgiveness. 4. It is hypothesized that the independent covariates (shame-proneness, guilt-proneness, anger, empathic responsiveness) will be associated with the dependent variable forgiveness for the total sample. 5. It is hypothesized that the independent covariates of forgiveness (shame-proneness, guilt-proneness, anger, and empathic responsiveness) will differ significantly for men and women (Tangney, Burggraf, Wagner, 1995; Tangney, 1995).

A full understanding of each other's feelings regarding the event or the events which are the subject of forgiveness is crucially important to reach full closure. For example, a couple came complaining of the wife's loss of interest in sex since the birth of their third child 18 months before. The husband had been in a yacht race when his wife went into labor and arrived

back just in time for the normal delivery. He could not comprehend her anger at him, which had lasted the full 18 months. He had apologized many times but was not really sure what he had done to offend her. This delivery had been the easiest of all three; both mother and child had come home early from the hospital. He had taken time off to be with them, so why was she still so angry with him that she would not allow sex? In the couples therapy, the therapist supported her to relive that episode, recalling how frightened she had been at being in a strange country, vulnerable, with two small children to care for and her baby due any time. Her anger was that he had even considered doing the race when she was in such a vulnerable position, especially when he could so easily have got out of it. He had not understood this before or appreciated her fear and vulnerability prior to the delivery (Tangney et al., 1999).

Forgiveness retains the concept of guilt, yet the forgiver forgoes the need to punish the guilty party. Although many would agree with this concept of forgiveness, we do not. We believe that exoneration and forgiveness can and do melt. Forgiveness is the process by which love and trust are reestablished in relationships. In order to reestablish love and trust, the concept of justice and balance are absolutely essential. This obligation toward justice makes responsibility a requirement of balanced relationships. Responsibility, then, requires that we acknowledge that irresponsibility or violations of justice took place. Guilt, in our view, is not so much something a person feels, as it is something that is done. Acknowledgment of guilt, therefore, is not a bad thing. Indeed, to acknowledge guilt is to make a move toward establishing justice. Exoneration is good, in that it lifts off the load of culpability of someone whom we blamed for violations. Doing so means that we see and acknowledge that this person was also subject to a legacy and a ledger of violations that contributed to the irresponsible behavior. Forgiveness, however, holds violators and the violated accountable to make loving and

trustworthy behavior in the future. Forgiveness replaces guilt with the possibility of giving, and replaces punishment with a responsible commitment to do no further damage (Tangney, Fee, Reinsmith, Boone, & Lee, 1999)

A common misconception about anger is that one's strength comes from anger. That anger is an emotion which is experienced only in the extreme, as manifested in yelling or violence; and that the absence of these blatant manifestations precludes the presence of anger. Anger is also frequently used to defend against feelings of inadequacy and fear (Sullivan, as cited in Fitzgibbons, 1986) and to protect oneself from becoming vulnerable in loving relationships because anger tends to keep others at a distance. Victims may be willing to forgive when they realize that this process does not mean that they must allow themselves to be vulnerable to an insensitive person (Fitzgibbons, 1986).

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Many priests saw the confessional as a way of counteracting un-Catholic teachings about sexuality such as that coming from physicians (Kohlberg & Power, 1981). The sinfulness of masturbation was emphasized over and over, but the penances were minor. Indeed, it was expected that we would engage in masturbation; but with it came the obligation to confess it...to bring it under the power of forgiveness from the priest. While our urges did not thereby diminish, the subsequent acts of masturbation were both "dirty" but also somehow "OK" in light of the fact that we expected to be forgiven again and again, thereby cleansed. We did not feel deterred from thinking and talking about sex, especially forced sex. We were consumed with talk of female anatomy and with viewing pornographic pictures as a stimulus to masturbation (Brink, 1985).

While there is nothing wrong with young boys thinking that masturbation is OK, what the confessional tended to do was to make us feel that all forms of sexual abuse should be viewed in the same way as masturbation. It was no more sinful, or so it seemed to us, to bring oneself to sexual climax; than it was to pressure and even to force a girl to bring her to climax. Both were clearly sinful and forbidden, but both would be forgiven, again and again. Most significantly, both were things considered by many as uncontrollable. Further, the best that one could hope for was that its frequency was kept to a minimum. It was in this way that the Catholic confessional both repressed and legitimated abusive sexual behavior among males, and it was in this way that the Catholic confessional gave us a sense of our masculinity as something both sinful and not fully controllable by our own wills (Brink, 1985).

It may be objected that the Catholic Church has maintained a hierarchical ordering of sins, and that rape was considered one of the worst of the sins one could commit. According to

this objection, it is a mistake to indict the Church for conflating minor sexual sins with major ones. Our response is to point out that we are not trying to indict the Catholic Church at all. Nor is it our goal to impugn the motives of those church leaders who have constructed and reconstructed the confessional. Rather, we are interested in the way that the confessional worked, in practice, and the effects it had on male sexual socialization. For whatever reason, in our experience, and the experience of many men we have talked to, the confessional conveyed the message that all sexual sins were both expected and easily forgiven (Brink, 1985).

The confessional is seemingly paradoxical from the perspective of moral legitimation. On the one hand, certain sexual practices such as masturbation or sexual violence are condemned in the confessional. On the other hand, male sexual aggression is seen as nearly irresistible and in a sense legitimated through the confessional. The paradox may be dissolved when we realize that very few institutions directly sanction the moral transgressions of dominant groups. Sociobiological justifications of men who rape, or Neo-classical economic justifications of the mistreatment of workers, can be cited as examples of direct sanctioning of the acts of dominant groups. But these are exceptions to the rule, since they provide non-moral legitimation of coercive practices of members of dominant groups. These legitimations are non-moral to the extent that they justify practices by appealing to ineluctable causal mechanisms or to unalterable social or natural facts. Generally, harm is morally condemned, and Catholic official morality is no exception here: rape is portrayed as a serious and mortal sin. Yet condemnation and ultimate forgiveness are expected by many men based on their first encounters with the confessional (and similar practices in other religions) as boys. In the confessional, sexual transgressions by men and boys are legitimated in that they are regarded as both inevitable and forgivable. Sexual aggression is so expected that often a boy first hears about it from priests who inform the boys of

this possible sin that they should confess. Once sexual aggression is confessed, the priest offers forgiveness and acceptance back into the moral community, without the severity of penance attached to other transgressions (Geach, 2001).

As a point of contrast consider the sin of stealing. The sin is not forgiven until restitution is made: this is part of the "firm resolution of amendment" that the priest requires (Brink, 1985). By offering forgiveness for coercive sexual behavior without the moral equivalent of restitution or even apology, confessing this transgression does not require moral transformation. In the sense we use the term; moral transformation demands more than contrition or even the reaffirmation of a prohibition. It requires changing the very identity into which the confession helps to socialize the male adolescent. In sexual transgressions, nothing similar to restitution, such as a public declaration of shame or a firm resolve to change one's attitudes and behavior in the future, is required for forgiveness (Kohlberg & et al., 1981). Forgiveness for sexual transgressions is offered without a demand for moral transformation. This makes it quite likely that the sexual sin will be repeated, and it indicates that sexual sins are less important than other sins, such as those violating property rights. The penance for sexual sins remains a matter between the sinner and his conscience. Whereas penance for property sins takes on a more public character, due to the requirement of restitution. Because no restitution is called for, sexual transgressions can be forgiven in ways that other sins are not, and this sets the stage for boys to feel permitted to engage in a wider scope of sexual sins, in some cases including rape (Kohlberg & et al., 1981).

In describing the betrayal experience, the perpetrators and the aggrieved generally agree on some key dimensions. For example, they agree that confession by the perpetrator is the most common way in which the aggrieved discover betrayal. Also, that being upset is the most

common reaction by the aggrieved; and that the relationship is terminated in a majority of cases. (Roscoe, Cavanaugh, & Kennedy, 1988). Clearly, as evidenced by the emotional reactions reported, and by the number of couples who chose to terminate the relationship, infidelity is a major distressing event in the lives of youth. This finding stands in contrast to that reported by (Roscoe et al., 1988), who asked youth about responses to hypothetical betrayal. He found a more rational approach. More youth in his sample expected that they would be calm and reasonable in discussing betrayal, with a focus on finding out the reason for the betrayal, working toward improving the relationship, and forgiveness. In contrast, this study reports both the perpetrators and the aggrieved describe considerably more pain and emotion than rationality and calmness in confronting an actual betrayal. Despite some general agreement, the aggrieved and the perpetrators differed significantly in their reports of the details surrounding the discovery of betrayal. For example, both the perpetrators and the aggrieved were likely to see themselves as more instrumental than their partner in shaping events in the aftermath of the betrayal. Thus, there appears to be a self-protective and self-enhancing action bias on the part of informants, with each member of the dyad likely to overestimate his or her own role in dealing with the betrayal. This may give a sense of control, if not of the original situation, and then at least of its aftermath (Roscoe et al., 1988). The development of intimacy and trust during adolescence is a challenging task. Balancing these tasks with the exploration of one's identity places further strains on adolescents (Roscoe et al., 1988). The data presented here paint a picture in which males and females alike often betray their romantic partners, leading to guilt because they do not condone such behavior, but also, for many, leading to feelings of happiness and excitement as their interpersonal horizons and their insight regarding their own identity expand. Meanwhile,

many youth experience betrayal by a partner and suffer negative emotions, which force them to reevaluate the relationship (Roscoe et al., 1988).

The relations between betrayal behavior and the conflicting challenges of intimacy and identity development remain speculative because the present study does not examine intimacy or identity directly. Nevertheless, this study provides a valuable first look at the complex implications of sexual betrayal during adolescence and suggests a number of areas that warrant further investigation. Future studies might examine the empirical relations between intimacy, identity, and betrayal. In addition, a study examining the attitudes of both parties in relationships involving betrayal would provide further insight regarding the similarities and differences between the ways that the perpetrator and the aggrieved describe the circumstances surrounding such events. Also, additional research might examine ways in which responses to incidents of betrayal evolve with age or with experience.

Finally, a study placing greater emphasis on the nature and quality of relationships would help to distinguish between those transgressions that occur in otherwise committed relationships and those that occur in relationships that are less serious or are already faltering. It is hoped that by performing a preliminary investigation of adolescent sexual betrayal, from the perspectives of the perpetrator as well as the aggrieved, we have illuminated the basic features of this topic's landscape sufficiently to provide a starting point for more detailed explorations of this ubiquitous, emotionally charged phenomenon (Roscoe et al., 1988).

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY/DESIGN

This study will not be in a position to introduce primary data because it aims to review existing literature. An integrative literature review will therefore be the appropriate methodology to answer the research questions posed. An integrative literature review appears as an independent work. It is therefore different to a literature review that serves as an introduction to reports of new primary data.

Therefore a case study review was the instrument for this dissertation. Additional data was collected and reviewed to support the case study. A different aspect of forgiveness and its therapeutic role was analyzed.

Instrumentation

This research explored forgiving and its relationship to adaptive moral emotional processes: proneness to shame, guilt, anger, and empathic responsiveness. Gender differences associated with forgiving were analyzed. Participants were 148 graduate students enrolled in programs affiliated with the Graduate College of Education in a large northeastern urban university. Ten were excluded from the analysis either because of insufficient validity on the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (2 respondents) or failure to complete validity questions (8 respondents). The mean age of participants was 34 ($SD = 12$); 19% were male and 81% were female. Twenty percent were Protestant; 51% were Catholic; 7% were Jewish; 7% were agnostic, atheist, or identified no religious affiliation; and 3% were Muslim. The religious

affiliations of the remaining 13% were either unknown or the participants identified with another religious affiliation.

Participants were instructed by their professors to complete and return the instruments at the next class meeting. They were advised that the purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of factors that facilitate and impede forgiveness. The voluntary and confidential nature of the study was emphasized. Nearly 50% of potential participants (270) declined to participate, 15% of whom were male, a percentage consistent with overall male representation (18%). Respondents completed the following measures.

Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI; Subkoviak, Enright, Wu, Gassin, Freedman, Olson, & Sarinopoulos, 1995). This is a 60-item Likert scale designed to assess the degree to which an individual forgives his or her offender. The scale contains six measures of degree of forgiveness. Three measures assess the presence of Negative Affect, Negative Behavior, and Negative Cognition, and three measures assess the presence of Positive Affect, Positive Behavior, and Positive Cognition. The instrument also contains a general forgiveness question that requests the respondent to rate the degree of forgiveness toward the offender on a 5-point scale (1 = no forgiveness, 5 = complete forgiveness (Subkoviak et al., 1995). Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency coefficients for the EFI total score is .98 (Subkoviak et al., 1995). Test-retest reliability for the EFI total score is .86 (Subkoviak et al., 1995). Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency coefficients for this study was .98, a finding consistent with Subkoviak et al. Given the reliability and validity of the EFI, Worthington, Sandage, and Berry (2000) recommended its use.

Participants were asked to describe in writing an event that hurt them deeply and to rate the event on a scale ranging from 1 to 10 (participants were instructed that the event must

warrant a minimal score of 7, with 10 indicating the greatest degree of hurt). Participants based their responses to the EFI questions on the event that they had chosen to recount. Two forgiveness scores were generated from the EFI: (a) an Overall Forgiveness score derived from the respondent's reported level of forgiveness toward the offender (based on the response, ranging from 1 to 5, to the general forgiveness question discussed previously) and (b) a Total Forgiveness score derived from the mean of the six positive and six negative components of forgiveness. Total Behavior, Affect, and Cognition scores were derived from the sum of the positive subscale scores and the reverse-scored negative subscale scores and then averaged, yielding an average of the total component scores. Given that assessment of forgiveness is in its infancy and that the Enright Forgiveness scale is relatively time consuming to administer, analysis included both Total Forgiveness and Overall Forgiveness to determine the feasibility of a shorter alternative method of assessment.

The Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1994). This is a 28-item Likert measure constructed to assess four dimensions of empathy. The Perspective Taking subscale assesses the ability to take another person's perspective in day-to-day, real-life situations. The Fantasy subscale assesses the ability to identify with the feelings of a fictional character. The Empathic Concern subscale assesses the degree to which the individual experiences feelings of concern and compassion. The Personal Distress subscale assesses the degree to which the individual experiences discomfort or fear when confronted with another's distress (self-oriented). Davis (1980, 1983) provided evidence for the validity and reliability of this measure. Cronbach alphas range from .69 to .82. Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency coefficients for this sample was .77.

The Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA; Tangney, 1991). This test assesses affective,

cognitive, and behavioral responses associated with shame and guilt. It consists of day-to-day life scenarios followed by responses designed to assess shame-proneness, guilt-proneness, externalization, detachment-unconcern, alpha pride (pride in self), and beta pride (pride in specific behavior). The respondent is asked to indicate how likely it would be (on a 5-point scale) that he or she would respond in a given manner to 15 scenarios (10 negative and 5 positive). Test--retest reliability ranged from .85 to .74 for Shame and Guilt respectively. Validity and reliability of the instrument have been well documented (Tangney, 1991, 1994; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992). Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency coefficient for this sample was .80.

Anger was assessed using the following five questions (10-point scale):

1. In your angriest moment regarding this hurtful event, how angry were (are) you?
2. How angry are you currently regarding this hurtful event?
3. How much do you currently feel like getting even with the person?
4. How harmful or beneficial was the incident for you?
5. How harmful was the incident for the perpetrator?

Anger reduction was computed by assessing the difference between the current anger level and the anger level during the angriest moment of the event, expressed as a proportion ($Q1 - Q2/Q1$). Anger reduction was expressed as a percentage (i.e., multiplied by 100).

It was hypothesized a positive relationship between guilt-proneness and forgiveness and a negative relationship between shame-proneness and forgiveness. Pearson's product-moment correlations of the test of self-conscious affect (TOSCA) subscale scores and Enright Overall Forgiveness and Total Forgiveness scores revealed that guilt-proneness was only related to Total Forgiveness ($r = .205, p = .016$). None of the remaining subscales on the TOSCA correlated

significantly with the Enright Total Forgiveness scores or with the Overall Forgiveness score.

CHAPTER 6

FORGIVENESS IN SEX THERAPY: HOW TO BEGIN

Therapeutic use of forgiveness in sex therapy requires an evaluation of the potential participant's readiness for seeking forgiveness, granting forgiveness, repentance, and at times, atonement. Although forgiveness has been demonstrated as an effective technique for healing, it may not be appropriate for every client. It is, therefore, essential for counselors who are skilled in the therapeutic use of forgiveness to accurately assess their clients in terms of both openness and readiness. The following recommendations operationalize such readiness in terms of religion, development, and timing (Kohlberg & Power, 1981).

The therapeutic use of Forgiveness in sex therapy is complicated by the ambivalent emotions felt toward significant others, and the love—hate relationships with them. For example, it is often the case that sexually abusive fathers violate their daughters for the first time when they reach puberty or early adolescence. Until that time they may have been loving, nurturing fathers who established strong emotional ties with their daughters. An adult woman whose father began to sexually abuse her after her early childhood years, and continued to be protective and affectionate toward her while having an incestuous relationship, might be torn between the love developed for her father when she was a child, and the deep anger she now experiences as an adult. How does she disentangle her emotions? Does he deserve to be forgiven? Must she forever submerge her love to her hate?

Forgiving can sometimes be therapeutic. If your anger and resentment are debilitating to you, and if there is no way you can assuage them by bringing the offender to justice, it is in your

own self-interest to remove them. Certain forgiveness strategies can be helpful, as we shall later see. Many people feel a deep sense of relief when a long-standing anger is dissipated and they are free at last from the perpetrator's control over their emotions. When you hold on to an anger that consumes you without satisfying you in any way, you are, in effect, allowing the individual who hurt you to injure you continuously. Often, anger and a desire for revenge or for justice so dominate a victim's consciousness that they prevent her from pursuing a satisfying and constructive life. To dissipate anger and hatred through forgiveness allows you to resume an emotionally healthier life. In these therapeutic uses of forgiveness, you are not necessarily forgiving the offender in a moral sense, but are using a forgiveness strategy to help you overcome anger that is detrimental to your well-being and to that of others whom your anger affects adversely, such as close family members. There are, of course, many strategies for dissipating anger—not all of which involve forgiveness—and they may serve the therapeutic purposes equally well (Boszormenyi-Nagy, & Krasner, 1986).

Because forgiveness, repentance, and atonement are derived largely from religious traditions, counselors should evaluate the potential usefulness of these processes on the basis of each client's religious background (DiBlasio, 1988). Spirituality may enhance the power of forgiveness for some. For others, religious concepts and terminology may have negative meanings, thus impeding or preventing clients' constructive responses to the forgiveness sessions.

The case of Eric and his mother (**see page ...**) will illustrate the need for developmental sensitivity in healing intergenerational pain. As a construct, forgiveness has gained the interest of researchers from the disciplines of philosophy, theology, psychology, and the human services. Placed within the context of moral development, forgiveness is understood

as related to, yet distinguished from, Kohlberg's moral principle of justice (Kohlberg & Power, 1981).

Forgiveness is a forswearing of justice. A forgiver knows that a wrongdoer has no right to compassion, but it is given nonetheless (Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991). Developmental studies (Enright, Gassin, & Wu, 1992; Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1991) have shown a relationship between justice and forgiveness stages because of the common, underlying social perspective-taking skills that are required at each stage. Such research informs counselors that forgiveness as a therapeutic intervention assumes developmental readiness in terms of cognitive, affective, and social role-taking abilities. The forgiveness session is generally appropriate when clients have sufficient ego capacities to empathize with their partner or significant other, demonstrate remorseful attitudes, and turn away from hurtful behavior (Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990). Although there are noteworthy exceptions, the forgiveness session may be contraindicated during periods when defensive posturing is strong, such as cases with persistent denial, projection, or displacement. In such instances, therapeutic work may be a prerequisite to arriving at a level where genuine forgiveness might occur (Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990).

After an assessment has been made of clients' readiness, on the basis of religion and development, it is important for counselors to introduce the importance of forgiveness at an appropriate time in the therapeutic relationship. The model advanced by Worthington and DiBlasio (1990) is representative of a body of thinking that suggests a more structured approach to incorporating forgiveness in therapy, often within a gradual three-stage plan: early preparation, the week before the session, and the forgiveness sessions. One benefit of such model is their emphasis on setting the stage. That is, preparing the clients for the work of forgiving. One

potential criticism of such models is their seemingly tight structured approach, an approach suggesting that forgiveness is an act that can be accomplished within one, two, or three sessions.

In the model presented in this article and illustrated in the case example of Eric, **(refer to page ...)** I attempted to conceptualize forgiveness as a thematic process that might not be accomplished in a limited number of sessions. Rather, forgiveness is the name given to a shared dynamic that involves insight, understanding, compensation, and, possibly, reconciliation (Worthington & et al., 1990).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EXONERATION AND FORGIVENESS

Hargrave (1994) developed a theoretical framework of forgiveness for use in a therapeutic setting. Using this framework, the work of forgiveness in families fits into the two broad categories of exoneration and forgiveness. Researchers see exoneration and forgiveness as related concepts, and neither is inherently better than the other. Exoneration is the effort of a person who has experienced injustice or hurt to remove culpability from the person who caused the hurt. Instead of subjecting the wrongdoer to endless condemnation, the exonerating person learns how patterns of family injustice developed and understands and appreciates the wrongdoer's situation, options, efforts, and limits. Through insight and understanding, a person who has experienced a great injustice from a family member is able to do the work of exoneration (Hargrave, 1994).

Forgiveness differs from exoneration in that forgiveness requires some specific action regarding the responsibility for the injustice that caused the hurt. Forgiveness involves the victimized person's discernment that there are legitimate reasons to believe that the wrongdoer accepts responsibility for the injustice and hurt he or she caused and promises to refrain from further injustice. Forgiveness is accomplished when the wrongdoer holds himself or herself responsible, and the one who is victimized no longer has to hold the wrongdoer responsible for the injustice. In this approach, this restoration of trust becomes the basis for reestablishing the relationship. The first step in forgiving is to allow the wrongdoer to own and proclaim responsibility. Then the wrongdoer, by being trustworthy in significant ways in the future and overtly addressing his or her responsibility for the injustice between parties, can compensate for past injustices. Thus, forgiveness is accomplished by providing an opportunity for compensation

and by overt forgiving. The work of forgiveness is accomplished through four stations, each of which is discussed in subsequent sections (Hargrave, 1994).

Case Example

"Eric," age 15 arrived at his counselor's office one afternoon angry and embarrassed. He is a 10th grader referred to counseling for recent atypical behavior, including: poor grades, fighting, and disrespecting a teacher who, until recently, he had admired. When asked about his parents' reaction to his behavior, Eric retorted, "All that's at home is my mom, and she is sexually involved with one of her friends and all her attention and affection has been dedicated to her boyfriend she doesn't even know I am alive." (Simon, 1998)

Eric had been one of the more popular members of his class. Not only had he received academic awards, but he was also involved in school activities, including student council, soccer, and the school newspaper. Frequently depicted by adults as "well-rounded," Eric knew that he was well liked by others and that he had the potential to be accepted and succeed at a good university.

When asked about his home life, Eric stated that he was the only child in a single-parent home. Eric said that he never knew his father, who abandoned Eric's mother when she became pregnant at the age of 19. Eric was aware that his mother's childhood had been difficult and that she and her older brother had been raised by an alcoholic father and a mother who did not address her husband's alcoholism. He understood that his mother worked two jobs and had always worked very hard to give Eric a comfortable life. However, because of her work schedule and then engagements with her boyfriend, she had frequently not been at home or had been unavailable to attend his soccer games or a recent school ceremony, during which Eric had received an award. When he was younger, Eric had been supervised by his grandparents, with

whom he remained very close. As he grew older, visits with his grandparents were less frequent, and he had often been alone at the end of a school day. During the month before he presented for therapy, Eric's disappointment and hurt had been compounded by his mother's decision to date a man whom she had met at work. I used Eric's case as the basis for exploring and describing the therapeutic forgiveness process.

The Four Stations of Forgiveness

Hargrave's (1994) model has four stations in the work of forgiveness. These stations should not be understood as stages, with one preceding another. The stations are intertwined, and people move between stations during the course of a relationship. The first two stations, insight and understanding, are considered to be the work of exoneration. Whereas the last two stations, opportunity for compensation and the overt act of forgiving, are considered to be the work of forgiveness.

Station 1: Insight

Insight, the first station of forgiveness, allows a person to understand the family dynamics or other phenomena that have caused the relational damage. When individuals are damaged or violated in an unjust manner in their families, family dynamics can perpetuate the hurt, even when no additional violation occurs. The individual rightfully feels at risk in a system where he or she has been hurt before and where nothing has changed.

When these dynamics are understood, the individual can use and rely on the insight to stop or block the relational damage from occurring in the future. Although trust is not restored to a relationship between a victim and victimizer, in this station, insight can minimize drain on remaining trust resources in the relationship. Thus, although insight might not lead to the healing of a relationship, it does offer the possibility of stopping additional relational damage (Murray, 2002).

Applications to Eric's Case

As previously noted, the goal of insight is to identify family dynamics that have caused damage. The counselor worked with Eric to increase his awareness of the patterns that had been a part of his family. Toward that goal, the counselor increased Eric's insight by assisting him in recognizing his anger and in making the connection between his present behaviors and the hurt he experienced as a result of his home life. It was important for the counselor to help Eric recognize that his anger was directed not specifically at his mother; but at the poor relational choices she made at a very young age; choices that presently were affecting his life. In addition, the counselor helped Eric assume responsibility for his recent behaviors and acknowledge that his behavior was not helpful either to himself or to his mother.

Station 2: Understanding

In the second station of forgiveness, understanding, the focus is on removing the culpability of the individual who unjustly caused the hurt. If the client understands the wrongdoer's limitations, development, efforts, and intent, the client can identify with the person. This identification can help the client acknowledge the fallibility of every human being. When the victim understands the family member who has unjustly used or manipulated him or her, the victim acknowledges that, if placed in the same contextual situation and with the understanding of the wrongdoer's position, limitations, and development, the victim might behave in the same way as the wrongdoer had. This understanding can stabilize the relative position of victim and wrongdoer. An understanding victim, even one who has experienced extreme injustice, can

minimize his or her need to blame and the need for a superior moral or righteous position. A wrongdoer who is understood, no matter how awful the act of abuse, may feel less defensive and less subservient. Although the process will not remove the responsibility of the wrongful act from the wrongdoer, understanding can promote exoneration and can remove condemnation and blame. As the victim understands the injustices and other harms in the wrongdoer's past, identification with the turmoil and pain of the wrongdoer does not suddenly make the injustice right or make the wrongdoer trustworthy. However, in this relational ethics dimension, understanding allows the client to begin answering the question of why someone who was trusted to love had damaged the relationship (Murray, 2002).

Application to Eric's Case

The work of understanding required Eric to move from the intellect of Station 1, insight, to the heart of understanding. Although he was not asked to condone or even agree with his mother's choices, Eric was asked to see how unhealthy patterns can be passed on from generation to generation and also to consider the choices his mother would make to have meaning in her life. The work of exoneration required the counselor to assist Eric in understanding his mother's history, including her upbringing, her relationship with her parents, her relational choices, and the maturity with which she had accepted the consequences of her decisions. Exoneration also required Eric to understand the developmental tasks at different life stages being that the need for adult companionship was as an appropriate need of his divorced mother, as so was his need to individuate or define a sense of self (Carter & McGoldrick, 1999).

The work of understanding required Eric to direct his anger to the impact of past poor decisions rather than to developmentally appropriate choices. Understanding also allowed Eric to realistically assess both his mother's life and his own life as either a pattern or as a recent phenomenon. It was important for Eric to assume responsibility for his part in the lack of time he and his mother spent together. The goal of this station was not for Eric to agree with all of his mother's decisions, but for him to work at making sense of them and, in the process, remove or reduce the sting the memory engendered (Carter & et al., 1999).

Station 3: Providing an Opportunity for Compensation

In Hargrave's (1994) model, the potential of forgiveness for healing relationships is bought at a very high price. The work of forgiving invites the victim to reenter the relationship with the very people who hurt him or her unjustly... a risky and difficult path to negotiate. A victim who moves from exonerating a wrongdoer to the process of forgiving risks increased vulnerability. He or she may be violated again, potentially making the pain worse.

Unfortunately, there is no way to know whether the future relationship will be a healing one or one that continues to be destructive. However, counselor and client can evaluate, based on three criteria, the potential process of forgiving and healing in the relationship. First, the victim can judge whether he or she is willing to have the injustice addressed and the pain healed. If the victim's life is chaotic and unstable and he or she is filled with anger and rage against the one who caused the hurt, he or she may be unwilling to accept the wrongdoer's offer of love and trust. Second, the victim can judge whether the continuation or healing of the relationship is necessary or important. Third, the victim can make some evaluation of the readiness of the

wrongdoer, who unjustly and destructively damaged him or her, to love and treat the historical victim in a trustworthy manner from a specific point in the relationship and into the future.

The third station involves providing the opportunity for compensation. Here, the work of forgiveness can be accomplished if the victim allows the wrongdoer to rebuild love and trust in the relationship by engaging in consistent, loving, and trustworthy actions. As the wrongdoer demonstrates that he or she is now able to give and receive in a balanced and fair relationship, the vulnerable and trusting victim may be willing to give the victimizer a chance. Allowing for compensation means that the victim is willing to accept a payment plan from the wrongdoer. Most often, in this model, payment consists of opportunities or tests of trustworthiness for the violator. Although the plan may be explicit, most often it is a criterion that is set forth only in the mind of the victim (Hargrave, 1994).

Application to Eric's Case

Implicit in providing opportunity for compensation is allowing time for healing to take place. Although his hurt was real, the previous station, understanding, allowed Eric to distinguish between intentional and unintentional hurts that were inflicted on him by his mother or others. Unintended hurts included those that resulted from his mother's poor life choices. In the model that I present, the counselor assisted Eric in articulating his pain at that time and his future fears regarding his mother's life situation and apparent unavailability. Through role playing with the counselor, Eric prepared to share with his mother the insight and understanding he gained as well as his wish for better use of their time together. Eric could also share his understanding of his mother's need for adult relationships, his own responsibility in making choices that affected their

family time, and his desire to work with his mother in a real way to create opportunities to spend time together.

Station 4: The Overt Act of Forgiving

The fourth station of forgiveness is the overt act of forgiving. This station is unique in the work of forgiveness because attention is focused on one point in time when there has been an interaction between the innocent victim of family violation and the perpetrator of the violation. Overtly bringing up the subject of forgiving between two people can be the culmination of extensive time and groundwork that have been dedicated to establishing a baseline of love and trust, allowing a direct discussion of the damage that the violation caused. At other times, the overt act of forgiving can serve as a means for reconstructing the elements of love and trust. In either case, direct confrontation of family pain that is the result of personal violation can be one of the moments in the family's history that can facilitate acts of compassion, courage, and commitment between family members.

In discussing the violation and forgiveness openly, both the innocent person and the wrongdoer can come to an agreement that they will have the freedom to relate to one another in a new way--unhindered by the damaged past and its implications for obligations and entitlement in the relationship. The overt act of forgiving does not necessarily mean that there will be no backwash of emotional turmoil, for example, defensiveness or anger. The overt act of forgiveness may merely be a means for family members to learn to address and work out past hurts. Furthermore, the time at which the pain is addressed and forgiveness is considered can

dictate a new form of relationship for victim and victimizer, with the overt act of forgiveness representing a new covenant or contract in the balance of give-and-take.

In the fourth station, the responsibility and accountability for the relational damage is not forgotten or obliterated. Justice demands compensation or restitution; therefore, prior violations must be addressed. Nevertheless, the act of forgiveness can change the status of relational ethics between victim and wrongdoer because accountability and responsibility for the damage are transferred. If both parties come to an agreement on the violation and the wrongdoer acknowledges his or her responsibility and apologizes, the forgiver no longer has to hold the forgiven wrongdoer responsible or accountable for the injustice. The forgiven person holds himself or herself responsible. This overt forgiveness can have tremendous healing power both for individuals and for the relationship.

Application to Eric's Case

Nearly 1 month after Eric's first session with his counselor, a positive, energetic sophomore arrived at the same office door announcing that life at home was great. Eric disclosed that he and his mother "cleared the air," meaning that they had shared with each other their respective experiences of their small family unit. Eric indicated that he was comfortable sharing with his mother his anger and hurts, as well as his role in their unhealthy family dyad. He also understood the sexual needs of his mother. He was also humbled to hear his mother, in a non-defensive way, acknowledge his pain as well as her struggles as a single parent. What became clear to Eric were her sorrow and her new awareness that in her effort to provide for her son's future life she was missing his present life. Together, Eric and his mother spent much of the

evening considering possible strategies for improving the amount and quality of their time together while respecting their mutual developmental needs.

THE THERAPEUTIC USE OF FORGIVENESS IN SEX THERAPY

Forgiveness is conceptualized as a 4-station process that is used to break unhealthy developmental and relational patterns and to promote healing. These stations can help the client gain insight and understand the sexual problems; sexual disease; sexual behavior; to provide an opportunity for compensation; and to empower the client to act on the forgiveness (Davenport, 1991; Moss, 1986; Ritzman, 1987)

At the end of what has been known as the first century of sex research, we can say with some degree of confidence that human sexuality remains an enigma. There are many who would have it remain as such. The contrast between the absurdity of human sexual expression (in the existential sense), and the rational dignity that we like to bestow upon ourselves is part of our saving grace. The last thing I want to see happen is for sex to become well ordered and rational. But I do want to see this potentially positive and interpersonally important (if absurd) aspect of the human condition managed responsibly, both at an individual and a social level.

In one way or another, many of the more important problems affecting the human race are related to sex. Paradoxically, encompassing both mortality and morbidity associated with sexually transmitted disease and overpopulation. The relationships between men and women, which are at a fundamental level are related to sex, present some of the greatest challenges for human societies. A large proportion of women world wide continue to suffer from lack of control over their reproductive health and lives in sexually stratified cultures. The need for sexual science is as great today as it has ever been.

Not everyone believes that humans have intrinsic worth forever, irrespective of their behavior, and that the intrinsic worth notion will not facilitate their forgiving someone

whom they feel has behaved in an egregiously evil way. Moreover, at some point, it becomes logically difficult to disconnect and differentiate the sin from the sinner, especially when the sinner is a chronic one. Sins do not have an independent existence—they are things done by people. The occasional sin done by an essentially good person may be considered an aberration—the sin doesn't really reflect the character of the person who did it. But when the sinner repeats the sin again and again, why should we not have negative feelings? We cannot imagine a judicial system or any social system that punishes crimes without punishing criminals, and there are times when it might not be possible or desirable to hate the sin without hating the sinner as well (DiBlasio, 1988).

Be that as it may, if you have successfully been able to reframe your view of the offender, and find empathy and compassion for him, you might be willing to absorb your pain rather than pass it on to him with punitive words or actions. Your willingness to forgo your right to punish him will also save innocent others from the negative consequences of a sustained and exacerbated conflict. If couples would learn the art of forgiveness, many more marriages would be saved and the traumatizing effects on children of seeing their parents at war, or vengeful and bitter divorces, would be avoided. Your willingness to forgive will be a gift to your spouse and to your children as well. This will only be the case if the forgiveness is not pseudo-forgiveness, one in which you don't fully acknowledge the reality of your hurt and honestly work through your emotions and the deliberate choice you make to give up what is your due. If your forgiveness is only lip service, or even God service, but doesn't truly deal with your anger and your sense of having been treated unjustly, the anger will resurface, or find its way into your feelings and actions by some side door or, even worse, via the dank cellar of repressed resentment. It is, of course, sometimes desirable to restrain yourself from expressing your anger

and taking punitive action, even if you don't forgive. But if you choose that course of action, do not confuse it with forgiveness, which involves much more than just restraint (Hope, 1987).

These confusing thoughts are applicable in many other situations of conflict and hurt. The father who hasn't spoken to his once beloved children (whose loss of love he laments every day as he awakes in painful emptiness). The children who harbor resentment toward their father, and guilt for feeling that way about him. The grandchildren who have no grandfather to visit, to dote on them and spoil them as grandfathers do. Could that father, son, or daughter decide to reframe their view of one another? To use an empathic lens? To imagine the costs of bearing grudges? To try the path of forgiveness and reconciliation? We are not talking here about sexual abuse, rape, or murder, but much lesser offenses—insensitivities, ingratitude, narcissistic preoccupation with self and even simple misperceptions of one another's intentions. Are the anger and resentment generated by these offenses and the retention of the grudges really worth the price of destroying three generations of family love? It would be helpful if either father or children were willing to apologize to the other and ask for forgiveness. Better yet, would be a situation in which both parties apologized and requested forgiveness. But even if neither were willing to acknowledge that they were at least partially wrong in the conflict, perhaps one or both could still forgive.

Let us assume it was the father who was willing to take the initiative to forgive. He should not say to his children, "I forgive you," since that would probably offend them even more, because it implies that they have done something wrong, which they aren't willing to acknowledge. What he should do, after going through all of the necessary steps in the phases described, is to call or write to his children, and say that he loves them dearly and wants them back in his life. Perhaps he can invite them to dinner. If they accept the invitation, he should ask them if they would bring along pictures of the grandchildren. At dinner he should give them the

chance to talk about their children, which parents often love to do. He could inquire about his children's work and suggest that if he can be helpful in any way he wants them to call on him. Gestures of love and overtures of reconciliation often have dramatic healing effects. Note that the father is not being asked to say to them that he was wrong, since he doesn't believe that he was. He is not groveling or demeaning himself, because he hasn't denied to himself that justice is with him. Even if the children or an outside observer might view what he does as a weakness, it really is a manifestation of emotional and spiritual fortitude. The negative consequence it might have, if indeed the children had wronged him as he believes, is that it could reinforce their false belief that they were in the right, and thus prevent them from facing up honestly to their misdeeds. It could be an obstacle to their repentance. On the other hand, if the father's gift of forgiveness succeeds in reestablishing the relationship, then with the dissipation of anger, the resumption of communication, and the renewal of love, the children might be more open to critical self-analysis. They might reassess their role in the original conflict, assume some responsibility for it, and perhaps even go so far as to express to their father their remorse. If this is how the process ultimately unfolded, it would be an example of how forgiveness of an offender prior to his repentance can encourage him to eventually repent (Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990).

Since forgiveness is a multistage process—influenced by many factors that can extend over a long period of time, with advances, retreats, and diversions it should not be through as an all-or-none affair, in which you forgive or you don't. As pointed out earlier, there are degrees of forgiveness, and some forgiveness is better than none, as long as the “some” is part of the proper process and not a “false” forgiveness. To use a metaphor: Imagine you are in a Hellish place of offensive stench and searing blazes and you set forth on a journey whose destination is an

Eden of fragrances and temperate climates. The further along your path, the less painful and foul do the fire and odors become and, at some point, you begin to discern faint wafts of perfume and gentle, refreshing breezes. The journey of forgiveness can be like this. Even though you haven't reached the Eden of love and reconciliation, you still might have moved far away from the Hell of resentment and rage.

When you have successfully emerged from the narrow focus on your pain and anger, and have practiced strategies of reframing, empathy, and compassion, new vistas of experience might open up for you. Perhaps you will now be able to look for some meaning in your suffering that you weren't able to consider until now. For example, were it not for the fact that you were mugged and thrust into the judicial process; you might not have become aware of the plight of the marginalized in our society. I surely don't recommend that the best way to become sensitized to the pain and despair of many who turn to crime is to go out and proclaim, "Please mug me so that I can learn." However, once you have suffered, you might turn that experience into a valuable one. The very process of forgiving can teach you that you have spiritual and psychological powers of which you were never aware. These can now be harnessed to other aspects of your life. Again, an analogy: Imagine that someone threatened to harm you if you didn't run the Boston marathon, a challenge you never would have considered on your own. Out of fear of being punished, you force yourself to do so. It is excruciatingly painful for you but, to your own amazement, you actually cross the finish line. Lo and behold, you now know that you have within you the power and stamina to run a marathon. You might decide to run it again the following year, not under threat, but proudly and voluntarily. One benefit of completing the difficult journey of forgiveness is the self-knowledge you will acquire that you can overcome powerful negative emotions and are capable of great self-restraint. I had a good friend who used

to run the marathon. I asked what he got out of it besides exercise. He said that it revealed to him that he was capable of successfully undertaking great challenges in life that he would otherwise have avoided. The challenge of forgiveness might do this for you (Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990).

Another possible benefit of forgiveness is that, in the process of reflecting on the weaknesses of the offender, you might come to embrace the wisdom of the virtue of humility. You might find yourself thinking along these lines: “I should keep in mind the fundamental weakness of human nature. We all have a propensity to be selfish and to thereby hurt others. It isn't easy to be good, kind, caring, and sensitive. I must be humble and realize that I too am an imperfect person, even if not to the same degree as the person who offended me. I might behave in a similarly offensive way under some circumstances. “I should also bear in mind that someday I might be in a position in which I will have done wrong to another and will want to be treated with empathy and compassion by my victim. If, when I relate to an offender, I don't allow empathy and compassion to influence my reactions, then I should not expect others to act in that spirit toward me. I shall forgive so that I will be forgiven. The ultimate goal of the forgiveness process is the gift of love extended by the victim to the perpetrator. When the victim and the offender are in a close personal relationship, such as husband and wife, parent and child, or siblings, it would be desirable indeed if love would resurface or grow again. I don't think, however, that forgiveness itself suffices to nurture love, although it may clear away thistles and thorns that prevent its growth. Other processes need to be involved in reinstating or creating love, and these should follow upon both repentance and forgiveness in family dynamics. When the victim and offender had no prior relationship, or when love was not an element of their relationship (e.g., employer—employee), I don't see why love should be expected or desired,

since I don't think everyone can love everyone, and we needn't try to do so. Everyone should treat everyone else with fairness, dignity, respect, and justice, and often, with compassion. But these behaviors are not love.

If you fear that by forgiving you will appear weak, in the sense of making the offender more prone to take advantage of or attack you again, then you can forgive without letting him know that you have done so, or by taking precautionary measures to protect yourself if you can. Just as you would protect yourself against a wild, vicious dog without hating the dog, so too should you protect yourself from a person who is dangerous but who you really don't want to hate. Forgiveness does not override the right and obligation to self-defense. It is important, when forgiving and attempting to repair and sustain a relationship in which you were deeply hurt, that you do not jeopardize your physical or emotional well-being. The person you are forgiving must understand that you are not giving him or her license to repeat the hurtful behaviors.

If, however, you are afraid that to forgive is actually to be weak and not just to appear to be weak, then you would have to reassess your basic attitude toward forgiveness. It takes great courage and strength to go through the process. Remember that, in forgiving, you are not saying that you consent or deserve to be a doormat. You are maintaining your claim to dignity and just treatment even though you don't insist upon your full rights to act upon those claims. Just as the judge who tempers his justice with mercy is not acting from a position of weakness but of strength, so are you, in forgiving, tempering the justice due to you with empathy, mercy, and compassion.

The concern that to forgive is to condone injustice, or to be perceived as condoning it, is very legitimate. Perhaps one way to avoid seeming to condone injustice is explicitly to explain to those concerned that you are forgiving the offense, including the offender himself, but that you

are not condoning what he has done. It was wrong, he should repent, and if what he has done is not just a personal offense against you, but a crime as well, he will have to pay the penalty. When this is made clear, it will be safer to forgive without fear that it will be perceived as condoning. Just as to give someone “a second chance” is not to condone, but rather to hope for improvement, so too can your forgiveness be construed as a hope for improvement (Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990).

As for losing your victim status, it is probably healthier for you in the long run to have your status determined by who you really are; rather than by the offenses you have suffered. It is better for you to aspire to what you deserve because of your character, efforts, wisdom, or good deeds than to rely on having been someone's victim. Do not let the temporary benefits of victimhood prevent you from forgiving, even though forgiving would usually imply that you no longer claim the rights owed to you by having been your offender's victim.

In a case, a woman was murdered. When her son comes to know that “Mama's been murdered....” Mama had been beaten to death with a crowbar, her body (sexually) assaulted with a wine bottle. Rage bubbled up in me like lava. He heard himself saying, “I'd like to have that murderer alone in a room with just a baseball bat. I'd beat his brains out....” Then he imagined how two youths might feel as they prepared to rob a darkened house. Perhaps they had been caught at a robbery previously. This time, though, they wouldn't get caught. Standing in the street, they were keyed up. The house was dark, no car in the driveway.... They couldn't know that his Mama didn't drive. A quick rap of the crowbar and they were in, emptying drawers, dumping the contents on the floor. He imagined the intruder's shock when he heard a voice behind him. “What are you doing here?” Oh, no, he must have thought, I've been seen, I'll go to jail. She's ruining my life. He lashed out with the crowbar, slamming my mother three times.

Panicked, the youths went crazy, trashing the house, angry at having their plans ruined and overcome with the shame of having murdered.

The victim's son felt he understood better what had happened. The youth who murdered his mom did a terrible thing. Nothing will change that. Through empathy, he understood that he had lashed out in fear, surprise, guilt, and anger. His mind flashed back to hours earlier when he had talked about beating him to death with a baseball bat. He was willing to do what the youth did, only with more forethought, more naked malice than them. His decision and ability to forgive the murderer is formulated within mine specific Christian belief system. What would you say about forgiving to someone like him? I don't believe that Jesus Christ died so that I might be forgiven and be washed clean of the stains of my sins. I don't believe that the desire for revenge in such a situation is evil. It is a natural reaction which, however, has to be channeled through a judicial system, lest anarchy prevail. I do not think that my sins (and I confess that I have committed many) are in the same category as those of the youth who murdered his mother. I don't understand how one person's forgiveness of another sets the other free. From what is the murderer being set free? Is he free from sin, from guilt, from responsibility, from the need to repent? It places great importance on repentance while we encourage forgiveness in therapy. Moreover, for what is he forgiving the murderer? The murderer killed his mother but, in doing so, deeply injured son and many members of his family, and society as well, by breaching its rules of social order. He may have committed only one crime in the strictly legal sense, but he has committed multiple moral sins.

The assumption is that an unforgiving person has been neuro-biologically conditioned to experience many negative emotions about the offender. Especially fear, which leads to either avoidance or retaliatory behavior. Any stimulus that reminds the victim of the offense or the

offender will automatically trigger these responses. In order to forgive, the victim has to be re-conditioned to associate positive emotions with the offender. The most important way of doing this is by training him to empathize. What is particularly interesting and unique in this second step of the pyramid, is that it tries to create in the forgiver a state of empathy with the offender. This step involves more than just teaching him to think several general, empathetic thoughts about the person who injured him. In such a case the potential forgiver might be asked to: (Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990).

- Speculate about what the offender might have been thinking or feeling during the hurtful event.
- Write a letter of explanation, assuming reasonable motives on the offender's part.
- Recall good experiences with the offender.
- Actively imagine interacting with the offender during more pleasant times.
- Breathe deeply and slowly during the memory or imagery.

Empathic accuracy means being able to ascertain correctly what another person thinks or feels. Empathic identification is the ability to share with another person similar mental or emotional state. Empathic compassion combines empathic accuracy and empathic identification with feeling compassion for another person and caring for him or her (Tangney, 1991).

When we are hurt, we often have diffuse, undifferentiated negative thoughts and feelings. This fact makes it difficult for us to understand exactly what we are experiencing. But emotional self-understanding is a necessary first step toward dealing intelligently and constructively with our emotions, and McCullough's materials excel in providing people with insight into the psychology of their emotional reactions (McCullough, Rachal, & et al., 1997).

A case example of an adolescent is presented to illustrate the therapeutic value of encouraging exoneration and then forgiveness. Commonly, counselors find themselves working with adolescents who are angry and who exhibit volatile behavior. Such behavior is frequently influenced by difficulties surrounding the family of origin. Divorce, betrayal, abuse, deceit, racism, unreliability, neglect, and criticism are common experiences for many children. Even in functional families, a child may experience pain that is associated with low income, the death of loved one, or the chronic illness or disability of a family member, "all of which may predispose children" (Coleman, 1998, p. 86) to re-experience the hurt in adult relationships. Unless the pain is addressed, these volatile behaviors have the potential to become a vicious lifelong cycle. The challenge for counselors is to help clients break this cycle. I propose that forgiveness is one means to do so. The capacity for genuine forgiveness can be central to both spiritual development and psychological healing (Gartner, 1988).

Within the therapeutic community, forgiveness has been used as: an overt action for resolution in wounded relationships (Worthington & DiBlasio, 1990); as a necessary element for healing deep emotional wounds (Davenport, 1991; Moss, 1986; Ritzman, 1987); as an action that is associated with mercy or with giving a gift to the one who has inflicted deep hurt (Enright, Sarinopoulos, Al-Mabuk, & Freedman, 1992); as an opportunity to advance personality development (Enright, 1994; Wolberg, 1973). Furthermore, deficits in forgiveness may contribute to increased levels of psychopathology (Mauger et al., 1992) and difficulties in maintaining or restoring mental health (Brink, 1985).

Counseling literature indicates that forgiveness is integral in a variety of counseling settings. For example, forgiveness has been a part of individual (Brink, 1985; Hebl & Enright, 1993; Veenstra, 1992), couple (Finkelstein, 1991; Imber-Black, 1988; Worthington, 1991), and

family counseling (Boersma, 1989). Researchers speak of reconciliation and healing regarding painful experiences, such as severe trauma (Davenport, 1991), and debilitating emotions, such as bitterness, anger, and depression (Benvenuto, 1984; DiBlasio & Benda, 1993). Although relatively new as a body of research, much of the forgiveness literature focuses on the healing of peer relationships. In this dissertation, I broaden this focus by addressing the therapeutic role of forgiveness in sexual therapy. The process of forgiveness begins with an understanding of the dynamics of pain.

The theoretical construct of contextual therapy (see Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986; Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1984; Boszormenyi-Nagy & Ulrich, 1981) seems helpful in conceptualizing how relational damage originates and affects family members. The foundation of contextual therapy is the healing of human relationships through commitment and trust (Boszormenyi-Nagy & et al., 1984). According to this perspective, relationships exist in four dimensions that are intertwined in terms of their effect on the family (Boszormenyi-Nagy & et al., 1986). Three of these dimensions include objective facts or givens of individuals' lives, subjective integration of experiences and motivations, and family or systemic transactions that are the interaction patterns of relationships.

Although each of these dimensions significantly affects relationships, Boszormenyi-Nagy & et al., (1986) maintained that it is the fourth dimension, relational ethics that is the most powerful and potentially therapeutic. Relational ethics is rooted in the belief that humans have an innate sense of justice that demands they try to balance what they are entitled to receive from relationships with what they are obligated to give to maintain relational existence.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Incorporating forgiveness as part of a therapeutic plan in the healing requires that both counselor and client distinguish forgiveness from reconciliation and understand that it is possible to forgive without reconciling. However, it seems impossible to truly reconcile without forgiving. If there can be no reconciliation, forgiveness can be the process that enables the forgiver to move on with his or her life unencumbered by the pain of betrayal (Coleman, 1998).

In forgiveness, an individual who is hurt chooses to offer understanding to a perpetrator. If the goal is to reconcile, then forgiveness can provide a new context within which to nurture the relationship. Forgiveness comes first as a decision to understand, despite justification for assigning blame and guilt (Brink, 1985).

Forgiveness is not a denial of the wrong that was committed or the hurt experienced. It is a gift that is freely and consciously given by an individual who has been hurt so that the cycle of pain can be broken and healthy beginnings can be created (Simon, 1998).

Experiencing pain and emerging from it transformed, may be the definitive metaphor of human resilience. Yet the experiential dimensions of how we proceed from brokenness to resilience remain elusive. The difficulty of weathering deep emotional wounds while maintaining a strong sense of identity and relational connection is continually apparent in both clinical and personal settings. Clinically, the presenting problems of humanity may be characterized on a foundational level by unresolved wounds in significant relationships. The clinician who incorporates an understanding of the structure and dimensions of forgiveness may give clients

new and effective ways of confronting such unresolved wounds. A clinical understanding of forgiveness, when used in therapeutic intervention, may invite clients to a way of relating that preserves the integrity of the self as it promotes healthy connection to others (Enright, and the Human Development Study Group, 1991).

Hypothetical stories may better capture men's experiences by making fewer demands on self-disclosure and may, in turn, yield further clarity. This study would be enhanced by comparison of the Multidimensional Forgiveness Inventory. Further study is needed regarding measurement refinement related to sex therapy (further differentiation of the two constructs resulting in lower reported correlations). Finally, the distinction between adaptive and non-adaptive pride, as well as between adaptive and non-adaptive guilt, needs to be addressed in future studies.

This study raises potentially fruitful questions regarding the process of forgiveness. Understanding the role of empathy in the genesis and maintenance of anger, as well as the exploration of counseling interventions based on that understanding, would enhance and empower researchers and counselors in assisting clients in the process of forgiving. The process of detachment has received little attention in the literature but offers potentially useful counseling applications as it relates to forgiveness. Elaboration of the relationships among beliefs regarding forgiveness, gender role orientation, and age is also needed.

There is an obvious need to take an interdisciplinary approach. We cannot expect to understand human sexuality unless we consider both biology and culture (and it is important to stress culture, not just environment) and the interface between them as it affects the individual, the dyad, and the group. Yet at the same time we are in the midst of an epistemological crisis affecting much of the academic world: the apparently irreconcilable divide between positivist or

essentialist science and postmodernism. Sexual scholarship is particularly affected, with its need to integrate an understanding of biology, traditionally positivist in approach, with an understanding of culture. This integration has not yet been achieved. We have seen a major impact of gay, lesbian, and feminist studies, predominantly in the postmodern mode. And those of us in the positivist camp should not underestimate the importance of this impact. We are witnessing an influx of intellectual ability unprecedented in the history of sex research. But in the process we are seeing the field divide. We cannot expect to see into the next millennium without having some idea of how this crisis is to be resolved (Enright, and the Human Development Study Group, 1991).

There are grounds for optimism. This can be seen as a dialectic process. As the synthesis emerges, as it probably will over the next decade, the wilder forms of postmodern intellectual anarchy and the grosser forms of determinism from the positivists, should give way in a move towards an intellectually healthier field with a more humble and realistic approach to knowledge. We have a way to go, but we are moving.

In the more clinical aspects of sexual science, we find that sex therapy is also in crisis at the present time. In part this is because we in the field have not taken the task of demonstrating its efficacy and value seriously enough. And that, in turn, is because of the complexity of the task--just what is it that sex therapy strives to achieve? We tend to conceptualize this in terms of the treatment of sexual dysfunctions, while most of the time we focus our sex therapy on the sexual relationship. This issue has been brought into sharper focus as a consequence of the Viagra phenomenon. What is the difference between treatment with Viagra and sex therapy? A close look at sex therapy finds considerable potential efficacy when dealing with communication problems, emotional insecurity, unresolved resentment, and inappropriate sexual meanings. In

some cases, that is all the therapist needs to do for worthwhile benefits to ensue.

Having, at the very beginning of my career, passed through a phase of enthusiasm for psychoanalysis first; and then, by means of some reaction formation, modern learning theory, I have spent most of my career as a researcher disillusioned with theory, behaving much as a typical positivist. The most important factor in my return to theory has been the growing sense of being overwhelmed by complexity at both ends of the spectrum, from molecular and cell biology to the complexity of socio-cultural determinants. I came to realize that if I was going to take the interdisciplinary approach seriously, I needed to simplify the complexity. That is how I see theory: as generating models of reality which are simplified and manageable. There is room for many such models, varying in where their usefulness lies. Some are restricted to a narrow focus, while others have a broad, integrative picture. But they are all models of reality. That is not a reason to abandon scientific method in the Popperian sense--its value remains unchallenged.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Althof, S. E. (1995). Pharmacologic treatment of rapid ejaculation. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 18, 85-94.
- Annon, J. (1974). *The behavioral treatment of sexual problems*. Honolulu, HE Enabling Systems.
- Assalian, P. (1988). Clomipramine in the treatment of premature ejaculation. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 24, 213-215.
- Balon, R. (1996). Antidepressants in the treatment of premature ejaculation. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 22, 85-96.
- Barbach, L. G. (1975). *For yourself. The fulfillment of female sexuality*. New York: Doubleday.
- Baumeister, R. F., Stillwell, A. M., & Heatherton, T. F. (1994). Guilt: An interpersonal approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 115, 243-267.
- Beck, J. G. (1995). Hypoactive sexual desire disorder: An overview. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 63, 919-927.
- Becker, J. V. (1989). Impact of sexual abuse on sexual functioning. In S. R. Leiblum & R. C. Rosen (Eds.), *Principles and practice of sex therapy: Update for the 1990s* (pp. 298-318). New York: Guilford.
- Benvenuto, S. (1984). The strategy of forgiveness: The theory of melancholia of S. Rado and O. Fenichel. *Giornale Storico Di Psicologia Dinamica*, 8, 138-158.
- Boersma, F. J. (1989). Gifts from the unconscious: Spiritual healing and forgiveness within a family. *Medical Hypnoanalysis Journal*, 4, 6-10.

- Boszormenyi-Nagy, I., & Krasner, B. (1986). *Between give and take: A clinical guide to contextual therapy*. New York Bruner/Mazel.
- Boszormenyi-Nagy, I., & Spark, G. (1984). *Invisible loyalties*. New York: Bruner/Mazel.
- Boszormenyi-Nagy, I., & Ulrich, D. H. (1981). Contextual family therapy. In A. S. Gurman & D. P. Kniskern (Eds.), *Handbook of family therapy* (pp. 159-186). New York: Bruner/Mazel.
- Brink, R. L. (1985). The role of religion in later life: A case of consolation and forgiveness. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 4, 22-25.
- Carter, B., & McGoldrick, M. (Eds.). (1999). *The expanded family life cycle*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Cerney, M. S. (1988). "If only ..." remorse in grief therapy. *Psychotherapy Patient*, 5, 235-248.
- Coleman, P. W. (1998). The process of forgiveness in marriage and the family. In R. D. Enright & J. North (Eds.), *Exploring forgiveness* (pp. 75-94). Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Coleman, E. (1991). Compulsive sexual behavior: New concepts and treatment. *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality*, 3, 37-52.
- Comer, R. J. (1995). *Abnormal psychology* (2nd ed.). New York: W. H. Freeman.
- Davenport, D. S. (1991). The functions of anger and forgiveness: Guidelines for psychotherapy with victims. *Psychotherapy*, 28, 140-144.
- Davis, M.H. (1994). *Empathy: A social psychological approach*. Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark.
- Denton, R. T., & Martin, M. W. (1998). Defining forgiveness: An empirical exploration of process and role. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 26, 281-292.

- DiBlasio, F. A. (1988). Integrative strategies for family therapy with evangelical Christians. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 16, 127-134.
- DiBlasio, F. A., & Benda, B. B. (1993). Practitioners, religion and the use of forgiveness in the clinical setting. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 10, 166-172.
- DiBlasio, F. A., & Proctor, J. H. (1993). Therapists and the clinical use of forgiveness. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 21, 175-184.
- Enright, R. D. (1994). Piaget on the moral development of forgiveness: Reciprocity or identity? *Human Development*, 37, 63-80.
- Enright, R. D., Gassin, E. A., & Wu, C. (1992). Forgiveness: A developmental view. *Journal of Moral Education*, 21, 99-114.
- Enright, R. D., & the Human Development Study Group. (1991). The moral development of forgiveness. In W. Kurtines & J. Gewirtz (Eds.), *Handbook of moral behavior and development* (Vol. 1, pp. 123-152). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Enright, R. D., Eastin, D. L., Golden, S., Sarinopoulos, I., & Freedman, S. (1992). Interpersonal forgiveness within the helping professions: An attempt to resolve differences of opinion. *Counseling and Values*, 36, 84-103.
- Enright, R. D., Sarinopoulos, I., Al-Mabuk, R. H., & Freedman, S. (1992). Interpersonal forgiveness within the helping professions: An attempt to resolve differences of opinion. *Counseling and Values*, 36, 84-103.
- Enright, R. D., and the Human Development Study Group. (1991). The moral development of forgiveness. In W. Kurtines & J. Gerwitz (Eds.), *Handbook of moral behavior and development* (Vol. 1, pp. 123-152). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Enright, R. D., and the Human Development Study Group. (1996). *Counseling with the*

- forgiveness triad: On forgiving, receiving forgiveness, and self-forgiveness. *Counseling and Values*, 40, 107-126.
- Enright, R. D., & Zell, R. L. (1989). Problems encountered when we forgive one another. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 8, 52-60.
- Finkelstein, L. (1991). Moral issues and superego problems in marital therapy. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, 2, 53-78.
- Fitzgibbons, R. P. (1986). The cognitive and emotive use of forgiveness in the treatment of anger. *Psychotherapy*, 23, 629-633.
- Fitzgibbons, R. P. (1998). Anger and the healing power of forgiveness: A psychiatrist's view. In R. D. Enright & J. North (Eds.), *Exploring forgiveness* (pp. 63-74). Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Flanigan, B. (1987). Shame and forgiving in alcoholism. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 4, 181-195.
- Ferch, (1998). Letting Go: Forgiveness in Counseling Rotter. *The Family Journal*, 2001; 9:174-177.
- Freedman, S. R., & Enright, R. D. (1996). Forgiveness as an intervention goal with incest survivors. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 64, 983-992.
- Gartner, J. (1988). The capacity to forgive: An object relations perspective. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 27, 313-320.
- Geach, Peter. (2001). God and Soul. *Key Text: Classic Studies in the History of Ideas*. (pp. 65-89).
- Goodman, A. (1993). Diagnosis and treatment of sexual addiction. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 19, 225-251.

- Hargrave, T. D. (1994). Families and forgiveness: Healing wounds in the intergenerational family. New York: Bruner/Mazel.
- Hargrave, T. D., & Sells, J. N. (1997). The development of a forgiveness scale. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 23, 41-62.
- Hawton, K. (1982). The behavioural treatment of sexual dysfunction. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 140, 94-101.
- Hawton, K. (1992). Sex therapy research: Has it withered on the vine? *Annual Review of Sex Research*, 3, 49-72.
- Hebl, J. H., & Enright, R. D. (1993). Forgiveness as a psychotherapeutic goal with elderly females. *Psychotherapy*, 30, 658-667.
- Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., Voci, A., McLernon, F., Niens, U., & Noor, M. (2004). Intergroup forgiveness and guilt in Northern Ireland: Social psychological dimensions of "The Troubles". In N.R. Branscombe & B. Doosje (Eds.), *Collective guilt: International perspectives* (pp. 193-215). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hope, D. (1987). The healing paradox of forgiveness. *Psychotherapy*, 24, 240-244
- Imber-Black, E. (1988). Ritual themes in families and family therapy. In E. Imber-Black, J. Roberts, & R. Whiting (Eds.), *Rituals in family and family therapy* (pp. 47-83). New York: Norton.
- Jehu, D. (1979). *Sexual dysfunction: A behavioural approach to causation, assessment, and treatment*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.
- Kant, I. 1996. On the Right to Punish'. Schauer, F. and W. Sinnott-Armstrong, Ed. *The Philosophy of Law: Classic and Contemporary Readings with Commentary*. Harcourt

- Brace and Company, 701-705.
- Kaplan, H. S. (1974). *The new sex therapy: Active treatment of sexual dysfunctions*.
New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Kaplan, H. S. (1979). *Disorders of sexual desire*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Kilmann, P. R., Boland, J. P., Norton, S. P., Davidson, E., & Caid, C. (1986).
Perspectives of sex therapy outcome: A survey of AASECT providers. *Journal of
Sex & Marital Therapy*, 12, 116-138.
- Kohlberg, L., & Power, C. (1981). Moral development, religious thinking, and the
question of the seventh stage. In L. Kohlberg, *The philosophy of moral development*
(pp. 311-372). San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*. N.J: Prentice-Hall.
- Lazarus, A. A. (1971). *Behavior therapy and beyond*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Leiblum, S. R., & Pervin, L. A. (Eds.). (1980). *Principles and practice of sex therapy*.
New York: Guilford.
- Leiblum, S. R., & Rosen, R. C. (Eds.). (1988). *Sexual desire disorders*. New York:
Guilford.
- Leiblum, S. R., & Rosen, R. C. (1989). Introduction: Sex therapy in the age of AIDS. In
S. R. Leiblum. & R. C. Rosen (Eds.), *Principles and practice of sex therapy: Update
for the 1990s* (pp. 1-16). New York: Guilford.
- Leiblum, S. R., & Rosen, R. C. (1991). Couples therapy for erectile disorder: Conceptual
and clinical considerations. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 17, 147-159.
- Leiblum, S. R., & Rosen, R. C. (1995). The changing focus of sex therapy. In R. C.
Rosen & S. R. Leiblum (Eds.), *Case studies in sex therapy* (pp. 3-17). New York:

Guilford.

Leith, K. P., & Baumeister, R. F. (1998). Empathy, shame, guilt, and narratives of interpersonal conflicts: Guilt-prone people are better at perspective taking. *Journal of Personality*, 66,1-37.

LoPiccolo, J., & Lobitz, W C. (1972). The role of masturbation in the treatment of orgasmic dysfunction. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2, 163-171.

LoPiccolo, J., & Stock, W. E. (1986). Treatment of sexual dysfunction. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 54, 158-167.

LoPiccolo, J. (1992). Postmodern sex therapy for erectile failure. In R. C. Rosen & S. R. Leiblum (Eds.), *Erectile disorders: Assessment and treatment* (pp. 171-197). New York: Guilford.

LoPiccolo, J. (1994). The evolution of sex therapy. *Sexual and Marital Therapy*, 9, 5-7.

Masters, W. H., & Johnson, V. E. (1970). *Human sexual inadequacy*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Mauger, P. T., Freeman, T., McBride, A. G., Perry, J. E., Grove, D. C., & McKinney, K. E. (1992). The measurement of forgiveness: Preliminary research. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 11, 170-180.

McCullough, M. E., Rachal, K. C., & Worthington, E. L. (1997). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 321–336.

McCullough, M.E. & Worthington, Jr., E.L. (1999). Religion and the Forgiving Personality. *Journal of Personality*, 67(6), 1141-1162.

Mendelson, E. (1999). *Auden's poetry and his last year*. New York.

Moore, M. (1987). *The Moral Worth of Retribution in Responsibility, Character, and the*

- Emotions, ed. Ferdinand Shoeman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 179-219.
- Moss, D. B. (1986). Revenge and forgiveness. *American Imago*, 43, 191-210.
- Murray, R.J. (2002). The Therapeutic Use of Forgiveness in Healing Intergenerational Pain. *Counseling and Values*, 46, 188 – 198.
- Nietzsche, F. Definitions and much more: The Quotable Friedrich Nietzsche. Retrieved on March 2, 2007 from: <http://www.answers.com/topic/friedrich-nietzsche>
- Obler, M. (1973). Systematic desensitization in sexual disorders. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 4, 93-101.
- Patterson, C. H., & Watkins, C. E. (1996). Theories of psychotherapy (5th ed.). New York: HarperCollins.
- Petrak, J. (1995). Current trends in the psychological assessment and treatment of victims of sexual violence. *Sexual and Marital Therapy*, 11, 37-45.
- Phillips, L. J., & Osborne, J. W. (1989). Cancer patients' experience of forgiveness therapy. *Canadian Journal of Counseling*, 23, 236-251.
- Pingleton, J. P. (1997). "Why we don't forgive: A biblical and object relations theoretical model for understanding failures in the forgiveness process." *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 25/4, 403-413.
- Rawls, J. (1996). *Political Liberalism* New York: Columbia University Press, x1.
- Ritzman, T. A. (1987). Forgiveness: Its role in therapy. *Medical Hypnoanalysis Journal*, 2, 4-13.
- Romig, C. A., & Veenstra, G. (1998). Forgiveness and psychosocial development: Implications for clinical practice. *Counseling and Values*, 42, 185-199.

- Roscoe, B., Cavanaugh, L. E., & Kennedy, C. A. (1988). Dating infidelity: Behaviors, reasons, and consequences. *Adolescence*, 23, 35-43.
- Rosen, R. C. (1991). Alcohol and drug effects on sexual response: Human experimental and clinical studies. *Annual Review of Sex Research*, 2, 119-179.
- Rosen, R. C., & Ashton, A. (1993). Prosexual drugs: Empirical status of the "new aphrodisiacs." *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 22, 521-543.
- Rosen, R. C., & Leiblum, S. R. (Eds.). (1992). *Erectile disorders: Assessment and treatment*. New York: Guilford.
- Rosen, R. C., & Leiblum, S. R. (1995). Treatment of sexual disorders in the 1990s: An integrated approach. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 63, 877-890.
- Rosen, R. C., Leiblum, S. R., & Spector, I. (1994). Psychologically-based treatment for male erectile disorder: A cognitive-interpersonal model. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 20, 67-85.
- Rosen, E., & Weinstein, E. (1988). Introduction: Sexuality counseling. In E. Weinstein & E. Rosen (Eds.), *Sexuality counseling: Issues & complications* (pp. 1-15). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Rugh Winter, Bonnie Eaker-Weil, (1994) *Adultery, the Forgivable Sin*; Hastings House Book Publishers
- Sandage, S.J., Worthington Jr., E.L. & Hight, T.L. (2000). Seeking Forgiveness: Theoretical Context and an initial empirical study. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 28 (1).
- Schiavi, R. C., & Seagraves, R. T. (1995). The biology of sexual function. *Psychiatric*

Clinics of North America, 18, 7-23.

Schreiner-Engel, R., Schiavi, R. C., White, D., & Ghizzani, A. (1989). Low sexual desire in women: The role of reproductive hormones. *Hormones and Behavior*, 23, 221-234.

Schover, L. R., & Leiblum, S. R. (1994). Commentary: The stagnation of sex therapy. *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality*, 6(3), 5-30.

Seagraves, R., Saran, K., Seagraves, K., & Maguire, E. (1993). Clomipramine versus placebo in the treatment of premature ejaculation: A pilot study. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 19, 198-2001.

Shah, D. (1996). Critical review of group interventions for sexual dysfunction: Advances in the last decade. *Sexual and Marital Therapy*, 11, 187-195.

Simon, S. (1998). Role of Family Therapy in Healing Wounds, 55 – 57,
Paramount Publishers UK.

Schimmel, S. (2002), Wounds Not Healed By Time, P-65, Oxford University
Press 2002.

Subkoviak, M.J., Enright, R.D., Wu, C., Gassin, E.A., Freedman, S., Olson, L.M., & Sarinopoulos, I. (1995). Measuring interpersonal forgiveness in late adolescence and middle adulthood. *Journal of Adolescence*, 18, 641.

Tangney, J. P. (1991). Moral affect: The good, the bad, and the ugly. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61, 598-607.

Tangney, J. P. (1994). The mixed legacy of the super-ego: Adaptive and maladaptive aspects of shame and guilt. In J. M. Masling & R. F. Bornstein (Eds.), *Empirical perspectives on object relations theory* (pp. 1-28). Washington, DC: American

Psychological Association.

- Tangney, J. P. (1995). Shame and guilt in interpersonal relationships. In J. P. Tangney & K. W. Fischer (Eds.), *Self-conscious emotions: Shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride* (pp. 114-139). New York: Guilford Press.
- Tangney, J. P., Burggraf, S. A., & Wagner, P. E. (1995). Shame-proneness, guilt-proneness, and psychological symptoms. In J. P. Tangney & K. W. Fischer (Eds.), *Self-conscious emotions: Shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride* (pp. 343-367). New York: Guilford Press.
- Tangney, J. P., Fee, R., Reinsmith, C., Boone, A. L., & Lee, N. (1999). Assessing individual differences in the propensity to forgive. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Boston.
- Tiefer, L. (1994). Three crises facing sexology. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 23, 361-374.
- Urbach, E. E. (1975). *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs and Practices*, translated by Israel Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes Press.
- Veenstra, G. (1992). Psychological concepts of forgiveness. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 11, 160-169.
- William, T. (1994). *Felicia's Journey*. Penguin Putnam, Inc: USA
- Wincze, J. P., & Carey, M. P. (1991). *Sexual dysfunction: A guide for assessment and treatment*. New York: Guilford.
- Wolberg, A. R. (1973). *The borderline patient*. New York: Intercontinental Medical Book Co.
- Wolpe, J. (1958). *Psychotherapy by reciprocal inhibition*. Stanford, CA: Stanford

University Press.

Worthington, E. L. (1991). A primer on intake interviews with couples. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 19, 344-350.

Worthington, E. L., & DiBlasio, F. A. (1990). Promoting mutual forgiveness within the fractured relationship. *Psychotherapy*, 27, 219-223.

Wyatt, G. E. (1991). Child sexual abuse and its effects on sexual functioning. *Annual Review of Sex Research*, 2, 249-266.

Zilbergeld, B. (1978). *Male sexuality*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Zilbergeld, B., & Evans, M. (1980). The inadequacy of Masters and Johnson. *Psychology Today*, 14, 29-43.

Zilbergeld, B., & Kilmann, P. R. (1984). The scope and effectiveness of sex therapy. *Psychotherapy*, 21, 319-326.