Goals

• Discuss Forgiveness
  – Define
  – Illustrate

• Discuss Self-Forgiveness
  – Define
  – Illustrate

• Answer Your Questions
Nelson Mandela

A great inspirational leader with policies and procedures that organized societal interactions in a way that might lead to more forgiveness, reconciliation, peace, and healing.
Immaculée Ilibagiza

A Rwandan woman with a powerful story
Forgiveness
I Know that Forgiveness Is Very Difficult
1. It’s not fair!!

- We have a strong justice motive
- Fehr et al. (2005): When people are given the chance to hurt an offender, they will—even though it is costly to them.
- We must also be hardwired in some way for reconciliation as well.
“Injustice Gap”

(Definition) the gap between my ideal and the way that I perceive that things currently stand

How we respond to being hurt

• Blame other
• Blame God
• Blame self

“Someone owes me. Someone must pay for this … in terms of suffering.”
We Have Options

• There are many ways to deal with injustice


c. Turn it over to God

- South Africa (St. James Church)
He turned it over to God
d. Forbearance


- Effortful attempts to ignore or accept the transgression without making a negative response
- Involves effortfully controlling negative motivations
- Involves effortfully controlling negative feelings
e. Accept and move on

- Stuff happens

"Sure, I can learn to accept things as they are. How are they?"
4. Forgive

• One of those options is to forgive
a. Historically, there has been a lot of conflict over how forgiveness is defined.
Historically, there has been a lot of conflict over how forgiveness is defined. Here are two forgiveness researchers discussing their definitions.
b. What Forgiveness Is NOT

- Not Forbearance
- Not Condoning
- Not Reconciling
- Not Forgetting
- Not Justifying
- Not Getting Justice
- Not Excusing
An intention statement stating one’s intent to forswear revenge or avoidance and to treat the person as a valuable and valued person.

A complex combination of negative emotions (i.e., resentment, bitterness, hostility, hatred, anger, and fear).

“Sure, I’ve forgiven him—completely.”
d. Emotional Forgiveness

Emotional forgiveness is defined as the emotional replacement of negative unforgiving emotions by positive other-oriented emotions.

This might lead to neutralization of negative emotions (particularly in stranger dyads) and eventual replacement by net positive emotions (usually desired in continuing intimate dyads).
f. What are the Positive other-oriented emotions?

- Empathy
- Sympathy
- Compassion
- Agape (altruistic) love
- Romantic love
5. NOT, I’LL FORGIVE HIM WHEN HE HAS PAID BACK THE LAST CENT

- Don’t wait for apology, restitution, remorse
- That is justice, not forgiveness
- Forgive unilaterally
7. Don’t Confuse DF, EF, and Reconciliation

Reconciliation: restoration of trust in a relationship where trust has been violated

DF=decision
EF=emotional experience
Both occur within our skin

Forgiveness can promote reconciliation
8. A Method for Forgiving Faster

- REACH Forgiveness
  (Very fast overview)
The 5 Steps to REACH Emotional Forgiveness

R=Recall the Hurt
E=Empathize (Sympathize, feel Compassion for, Love) the Transgressor
A=Give an Altruistic Gift of Forgiveness
C=Commit to the Emotional Forgiveness One Experienced
H=Hold on to Forgiveness When Doubts Arise
Five Steps to REACH Emotional Forgiveness

Want to lead a group: *I have secular and Christian training tapes—FREE.*
Want to work through a workbook: Go to [www.EvWorthington-forgiveness.com](http://www.EvWorthington-forgiveness.com)
Meta-analysis


- **Meta-Analysis of Interventions Show That They Work in Small Groups or With Individuals in Workbooks**
- **ES=0.1 per hour of intervention**
Can People Be Helped to Forgive?

- REACH Forgiveness (n=22) = Process (n=23) = All others (n=22)
- Efficacy is proportional to time in treatment.

Forgiveness in psychoeducational groups: Hour for hour, all forgiveness treatments that have been investigated have been found to be equal.

Hour for hour about 0.1 SD change per hour of group treatment; a little more for individual treatment. This is for people SEEKING treatment. Expect less for those just “exposed” to treatment.
Studies in the meta-analysis

Big Effect Size → longer.

Treatment better than none; treatment better than alternatives.

Figure 2. Forgiveness interventions: Treatment–control comparisons. Tx = treatment model; W = Worthington, E = Enright, and O = other treatment model. Mode = treatment modality; g = group, c = couples, and i = individual therapy modality. NTgrp = no-treatment control group; Y = yes and N = no. Sev = offense severity. Hrs = hours; CI = confidence interval; RE = random effects.

Table 1
Omnibus Effect Sizes and Heterogeneity Tests With Forgiveness as a Dependent Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>k</th>
<th>( \Delta_s )</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>Q</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>( F^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No treatment</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>[0.43, 0.68]</td>
<td>188.91</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative treatment</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>[0.21, 0.69]</td>
<td>72.39</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Studies were modeled as random effects. k = number of studies; \( \Delta_s \) = effect size (standardized mean difference controlling for pretreatment scores; Becker, 1988); CI = confidence interval; Q = homogeneity test; p = probability value for Q statistic under \( H_0 \) (df = k – 1); \( F^2 \) = percentage of variance in effect sizes that is attributable to systematic variation.
Main Analysis

- Dosage (p < .002)
- Treatment Model
  - W v E (p = .27)
  - E v Other (p = .15)
- Modality
  - I > G (p = .021)
  - I = C (p = .251)

Table 4
Multiple-Moderator Analyses—Significant Single Predictors Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment—no treatment comparisons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.92*</td>
<td>[0.15, 1.70]</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dosage (hours)</td>
<td>0.033*</td>
<td>[0.012, 0.055]</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offense severity</td>
<td>−0.001</td>
<td>[−0.013, 0.012]</td>
<td>.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthington vs. Enright</td>
<td>−0.19</td>
<td>[−0.52, 0.14]</td>
<td>.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vs. Enright</td>
<td>−0.25</td>
<td>[−0.58, 0.09]</td>
<td>.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group vs. individual</td>
<td>−0.57*</td>
<td>[−1.05, −0.08]</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple vs. individual</td>
<td>−0.31</td>
<td>[−0.84, 0.22]</td>
<td>.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment—alternative treatment comparisons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>−0.25</td>
<td>[−2.77, 2.28]</td>
<td>.849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dosage (hours)</td>
<td>−0.01</td>
<td>[−0.057, 0.036]</td>
<td>.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offense severity</td>
<td>0.045*</td>
<td>[−0.003, 0.093]</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthington vs. Enright</td>
<td>−0.03</td>
<td>[−0.69, 0.63]</td>
<td>.923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vs. Enright</td>
<td>−0.14</td>
<td>[−1.32, 1.03]</td>
<td>.810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group vs. individual</td>
<td>−0.79</td>
<td>[−2.00, 0.42]</td>
<td>.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vs. Enright</td>
<td>−1.27*</td>
<td>[−2.63, 0.09]</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Overall tests of model significance were $Q(6) = 35.74$ and 17.82; $p = < .0001$ and = .007; $k = 46$ and 21 for no-treatment and alternative-treatment comparisons, respectively. CI = confidence interval.
* Marginally significant (.05 < $p$ < .10).
* $p < .05$. 

Take home point: Time counts more than model or modality!!
Other Outcomes Besides Forgiveness

- Depression ($k = 10$), ES = 0.34, 95% CI [0.17, 0.52]. Compare forgiveness in this same group of studies, ES = 0.60, 95% CI [0.26, 0.94] ($p = .09$).

- Anxiety ($k = 7$), the aggregate effect size for anxiety was 0.63, 95% CI [0.0003, 1.26]. Compare forgiveness ES = 1.34, 95% CI [0.55, 2.12] ($p = .21$).

- Hope ($k = 6$), the aggregate effect size for hope was 1.00, 95% CI [0.38, 1.62]. Compare forgiveness ES = 0.94, 95% CI [0.16, 1.73] ($p = .96$).

Conclusion
- When people participate in forgiveness interventions, their depression and anxiety get better but at a reduced rate relative to the forgiveness experienced (about half the effect size), but hope gets better about the same rate (equal effect size).
Workbooks

- SECULAR GROUPS: ES = 0.1/hour
- WORKBOOKS
  - Harper et al. (in press, J Cl P). ES = 0.5/6 hours = 0.08/hour
  - Greer et al. (under review) (Christian) ES = 1.3/6.7 hours = 0.2/hour
  - Lavelock et al. (under review) ES (trait) = 0.5/6 hours = 0.08/hour


**The Path to Forgiveness:**
*Six Practical Sections for Becoming a More Forgiving Person*

Self-Directed Learning Workbook

*An Intervention to Promote Forgiveness*
Quick Birds-Eye View of the REACH Forgiveness Method
Definition

• Define Decisional and Emotional Forgiveness
Invite Decisional Forgiveness

Decision to Forgive
Lima Peru, Oct 29, 2011
Five Steps to REACH Emotional Forgiveness of the Partner
REACH

• R = Recall the hurt
• Technique: not victimization, not blame; instead objective
REACH

E = Empathize with the one who hurt you

• **Techniques:**
  - Letter from other’s point of view
  - Talk about other’s experiences
    – Empty chair
    – Multiple repetitions with sympathy, compassion, altruistic (agape) love, romantic love
FREE

REACH

A = Altruistic
gift of forgiveness
FREE

REACH

• C = Commit to forgive
• Techniques: certificate, letter, washing the hands of the transgression, (for Christians) nail the transgression to the cross
• Hand-washing
FREE

REACH

• H = Hold onto forgiveness during doubts

• Technique: hurt does not equal unforgiveness, white bears
Control Rumination or Worry
3. Important Example

- Burned by a hot stove eye
- Hurt does not equal unforgiveness
Practical advice on running groups

  – Updates: DVD training group is available for Christian and Secular groups
  – Manuals posted on www.EvWorthington-forgiveness.com
Best Practices in Running Psychoeducational Groups

- Begin with an ice-breaker that asks people to do something fun, like identify their favorite dessert, and then tell the hardest thing they successfully forgave.
- Set ground rules.
- Get common definition by suggesting one, not using an open-ended discussion.
- Most discussion happens in pairs.
- Whip around (starting in different places each time) to get feedback on what was discussed.
- Use exercises that involve all modalities, not just talking and listening.
- Try to discern who is likely to have forgiven the most in a group.
- Involve people in applying the REACH Forgiveness steps in many instances.

“I forgave thissss much!”

Most talk happens in pairs.
Practical Advice for Dealing with Forgiveness of Others

- Promote forgiveness in every *willing* heart, home, and homeland. They need to be willing. It does not work to coerce people to forgive if they don’t want to.
- There are many legitimate options to deal with injustices; forgiveness is just one.
- Understanding the “injustice gap” can be a real key to helping people understand why they might be having difficulty forgiving.
- People can make a sincere decision to forgive, but still be upset (emotional unforgiveness).
- Saying, “I forgive you” is not the same as forgiving.
- Forgiveness can be done without reconciling.
- Forgiveness takes time—one hour per 0.1 SDs of change.
- You can help in individual counseling, couples, groups, and individual-do-it-yourself workbooks.
9. A Method for Reconciliation

- Processes to build reconciliation
  - Decision
  - Discussion
  - Detoxification
  - Devotion

Summary

• You will often be involved not just with an individual forgiving someone, but about forgiveness in local individuals, social relationships, families and communities. It is about forgiving between and among people—just folks. This involves far more than forgiveness. It involves talking about transgressions, saying “I forgive you,” and acting toward reconciliation.
It is essential to be able to forgive others and oneself

- Oneself also because wrongs are rarely one-sided. We do harmful, guilt-producing, shameful things, too.
- That can lead to self-condemnation.
Dealing with the Dark Side: Self-Condemnation

• Let’s talk about dealing with self-condemnation
A True Story

The Mission (1986 film), 1986 film by Roland Joffé

1750s in Paraguay. Rodrigo Mendoza and the Guarani tribe.
What does this movie teach?

• When people wrong others, they often inflict moral injuries on themselves.
• People cannot (perhaps should not) forgive themselves until some moral repair is experienced.
  – Making Amends
  – Forgiveness from God
  – Forgiveness from Others
What is self-forgiveness?

- “Willingness to abandon self-resentment in the face of one’s own acknowledged objective wrong, while fostering compassion, generosity and love toward oneself.” (Enright et al., 1996)
- “Motivational changes whereby one becomes increasingly motivated to avoid stimuli associated with the offense, decreasingly motivate to retaliate against the self, and increasingly motivated to act benevolently toward the self.” (Hall & Fincham, 2008)
- Two-factor Model of Self-forgiveness
  - Self-forgiveness = Reaffirmation of Values + Positive Self-regard (Griffin et al., 2015)
Self-forgiveness: A Stress-and-Coping Model (Worthington, 2013)
Coping with Self-condemnation—Many Ways (Not All Are Adaptive)

Two-Factor Model of Self-forgiveness

- **Conservative coping** - intended to return one’s life or self-representation to a pre-offense state

- **Transformative coping** - intended to incorporate the offense into a new lifestyle or self-representation

(Pargament, 1997)
Correlates of Self-forgiveness (Davis et al., 2013)

• Davis et al. (2013) meta-analyzed 118 unique samples \( (N = 32,103) \)

• Selected associations with Emotional Responses to Appraised Stressors (Stress Reactions)
  – General Positive \( (r = 0.40) \) and Negative \( (r = -0.46) \) Emotion
  – Trait Anger \( (r = -0.27) \), Guilt \( (r = -0.19) \), and Shame \( (r = -0.44) \)

• Selected associations with Physical/Mental Health (Outcomes)
  – General Physical \( (r = .30) \) and Mental \( (r = .39) \) Health
  – Trauma \( (r = -0.44) \), Depression \( (r = -0.40) \), Rumination \( (r = -0.48) \), Suicide \( (r = -0.29) \), Substance Use \( (r = -0.19) \)
  – Well-being \( (r = 0.34) \)
Self-forgiveness Interventions

- **Griffin et al., 2015**
  - Over 200 students with relationship failures
- **Cornish & Wade, 2015**
  - Community members in individual psychotherapy
- **Scherer et al., 2011**
  - Clients at Out-patient Substance Use Treatment Facility
  - 4-hour Psycho-educational Group
- **Campana, 2010**
  - Undergraduate Women after Break-up of Romantic Relationship
  - 6-hour Workbook
- **Fisher, 2009**
  - Undergraduates
  - 1.5 hour online module
Self-Forgiveness: Responsible Response to Self-Condemnation or Trying to Let Yourself Off the Hook?

Six Steps to Self-Forgiveness


- **Responsibility**
  - Step 1: Receive God’s Forgiveness (or Humanity, or Nature)
  - Step 2: Repair Relationships
  - Step 3: Reduce Rumination (Rumination, Expectations, Standards)

- **REACH Emotional Self-Forgiveness**
  - Step 4: REACH Emotional Self-forgiveness

- **Repair of Self**
  - Step 5: Realize Self-Acceptance
  - Step 6: Resolve to Live Virtuously

Six Steps to Self-Forgiveness and Decisional Plus Emotional Self-Forgiveness

- **Responsibility**
  - Step 1: Receive God’s Forgiveness (or Humanity, or Nature)—*Moral repair (Decisional)*
  - Step 2: Repair Relationships—*Moral repair (Decisional)*
  - Step 3: Reduce Rumination (Rumination, Expectations, Standards)—*Internal condemnation (Emotional)*

- **REACH Emotional Self-Forgiveness**
  - Step 4: Explicit Decision plus REACH Emotional Self-forgiveness)—*Moral Repair (Decisional) plus Internal condemnation (Emotional)*

- **Repair of Self**
  - Step 5: Realize Self-Acceptance—*Internal condemnation (Emotional)*
  - Step 6: Resolve to Live Virtuously—*Moral Repair (Decisional)*


Workbook to Promote Self-Forgiveness

- 6 to 7 hours
- Do it yourself workbook

Offense-related Outcomes

• Initial equivalence of conditions.
• Participants’ rated self-perceived severity of the target offense ($M = 17.53, SD = 3.02$).
  – When included in the final models, transgression severity did not predict differences between individuals in time-related change in self-forgiveness.
• But who are the victims of these offenses and when did they occur?
Victims of Reported Offenses

- Family Member: 40%
- Romantic Partner: 35%
- Friend: 25%
- Unknown Person: 15%
- Other: 10%

Who do we hurt? Those closest to us!

Time: Half of the people reported having felt self-blame and suffering for more than a year!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betrayal of a Romantic Partner</td>
<td>“To this day I feel bad about cheating on my ex boyfriend. Its been two years and while I can move on from him I cant move on from how I made him feel.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betrayal of a Friend</td>
<td>“In my freshman year of high school I was best friends with a girl and she told me many of her secrets. I told one of her secrets to my brother, then he told his friends, then everything went downhill.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Aggression</td>
<td>“I was experiencing a manic episode of Bipolar disorder. My father made me feel upset for showing my emotions and I got angry with him and told him how hated he was.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression</td>
<td>“Me and my mom got in a huge fight and it got physical. It was both of our faults, because we both had built up anger but i regret letting it get that far.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonesty</td>
<td>“About a month ago my mother caught me in a lie. She was super mad at me and I hurt her feelings because now she feels like she can't trust me. I think about it very often and try not to lie to her anymore.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Time with Loved One</td>
<td>“My dad was an alcoholic my entire childhood. He sobered up for almost 2 years. When he relapsed I stopped communicating with him, until he had a horrific accident.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>“At a low point in my life, I was dating a guy who got me pregnant. I had to decide what to do about it and he offered no support. I ended up getting an abortion and still feel really bad about it today.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Waiting List Design


- **IT** = Immediate Treatment
- **WC** = Wait Condition

*Figure 3. Genuine Self-forgiveness Scores by Individual-level Predictors*

*Figure 4. Depiction of time-related changes in participants' self-forgiving feelings and actions ratings by treatment condition. Participants in the immediate treatment condition (IT) completed the intervention between time 0 and 1; whereas, participants in the wait-list control condition completed the intervention between time 1 and 2.*

*Figure 5. Self-forgiving Beliefs by Treatment Condition*

*Figure 6. Depiction of time-related changes in participants' self-forgiving beliefs ratings by treatment condition. Participants in the immediate treatment condition (IT) completed the intervention between time 0 and 1; whereas, participants in the wait-list control condition completed the intervention between time 1 and 2.*
Summary of Results


- Six Steps to Self-Forgiveness Workbooks involved 6-7 hours (on the average) and resulted in a restoration of moral status (or moral repair or responsibility, including new beliefs and behaviors) and change in self-forgiving view or self (including new feelings of self-forgiveness).
  - Participants’ ratings on all three measures of self-forgiveness improved as a function of treatment.
  - The effect of treatment depended upon self-administered dose and upon dispositional levels of self-compassion, but the nature of the moderation differed for specific outcome measures.
Take Home Points

• We can help people understand forgiveness.
• We can help people forgive others using REACH Forgiveness.
• We can promote responsible self-forgiveness using six steps resulting in changes in one’s moral self-evaluation and also their beliefs and feelings that they have forgiven themselves.
Check out this website with lots of free materials to help you and others be able to forgive yourself or others better.