

6	Developmental and Cognitive Points of View on Forgiveness <i>Étienne Mullet and Michèle Girard</i>	111
7	Expressing Forgiveness and Repentance: Benefits and Barriers <i>Julie Juola Exline and Roy F. Baumeister</i>	133
8	Personality and Forgiveness <i>Robert A. Emmons</i>	156
III. APPLICATIONS IN COUNSELING, PSYCHOTHERAPY, AND HEALTH		
9	Forgiveness as a Process of Change in Individual Psychotherapy <i>Wanda M. Malcolm and Leslie S. Greenberg</i>	179
10	The Use of Forgiveness in Marital Therapy <i>Kristina Coop Gordon, Donald H. Baucom, and Douglas K. Snyder</i>	203
11	Group Interventions to Promote Forgiveness: What Researchers and Clinicians Ought to Know <i>Everett L. Worthington, Jr., Steven J. Sandage, and Jack W. Berry</i>	228
12	Forgiveness and Health: An Unanswered Question <i>Carl E. Thoresen, Alex H. S. Harris, and Frederic Luskin</i>	254
13	Forgiveness in Pastoral Care and Counseling <i>John Patton</i>	281
IV. CONCLUSION		
14	The Frontier of Forgiveness: Seven Directions for Psychological Study and Practice <i>Kenneth I. Pargament, Michael E. McCullough, and Carl E. Thoresen</i>	299
	Author Index	321
	Subject Index	329

CHAPTER 1

The Psychology of Forgiveness

History, Conceptual Issues, and Overview

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We are awash in public apologies and expressions of forgiveness. In the news magazines, we read stories of men's organizations that have offered apologies to "Women" on behalf of "Men" for failing to live up to their responsibilities as husbands and fathers. In the newspaper, we read that a community in Kentucky offers forgiveness to a young man who has shot and killed several of his classmates. The host of a daytime television show gives contestants the opportunity to offer public apologies to relationship partners whom they have betrayed or offended in some way, and urges the recipients of these apologies to forgive. And of course, we know from all media that President Clinton has apologized to his family, Monica Lewinsky, and the entire nation for his lack of honesty in the aftermath of being caught in an extramarital affair. Clearly, apologies and expressions of forgiveness are in vogue. Right or wrong, genuine or contrived, they seem to have an irresistible human interest and political cache.

Does the current deluge of apologies and expressions of forgiveness indicate that the citizens of the world really are becoming more forgiving? Are women (and men) becoming any more adept at forgiving their fathers and husbands (or mothers and wives)? Are historically disadvantaged ra-

cial groups learning to forgive groups that have historically oppressed them? Are people any more adept today at forgiving their close relationship partners? Are we more willing to forgive an apologetic and apparently contrite President, despite character defects?

These issues raise other questions in the minds of laypersons: Are our own, private transactions of apology and forgiveness taking us anywhere? Are relationships being restored? Are racial groups learning to trust one another more effectively? Is violence being reduced? Are families happier? Are marriages more stable? Are people coping with their lives better? In short, does forgiveness deliver what it promises? People apologize—both publicly and privately—because apologies are supposed to do something. People hope that these expressions of forgiveness are effective in making the world (or at least the part of the world in which each of us lives) a slightly better place to be.

Social scientists are asking the same questions in slightly more subtle ways: What psychological factors are involved in forgiveness? What are its personality and biological substrates? How does the capacity to forgive develop across the life span? Is it largely guided by individual factors, situational factors, or the interaction of personality and situation? Does forgiveness have consequences that are relevant for mental health, physical health, and social relationships? Can forgiveness be effectively encouraged in counseling and psychotherapy? If so, to what ends? Is forgiveness an unmitigated psychological and social good, or does it involve costs to the forgiver, the person forgiven, or society?

Scientific research on forgiveness has never been more relevant. Perhaps this is why many psychologists have had an increased scientific interest in the concept of forgiveness during the last decade. The scientific foundation that has begun to be poured in recent years could lead to wonderful scientific advancements in the years to come, helping us to understand more about the basic nature of forgiveness, how it develops, and its consequences for human health, well-being, and relationships. This volume is designed to review these developing foundations and help the forgiveness researchers of the present and future to steer a scientifically productive course.

In this introductory chapter, we take on three tasks. First, we present a brief history of scientific inquiry into the psychology of forgiveness. Second, we briefly discuss the definitional status of the forgiveness construct, and offer a metadefinition that is intended to highlight the commonalities among the various approaches that researchers are using to define and operationalize forgiveness. Third, we comment on the major threats to the development of a self-sustaining psychology of forgiveness and introduce the collection of chapters that appear in the remainder of this volume.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FORGIVENESS: A BRIEF HISTORY

The concept of forgiveness received no systematic attention from scientific psychologists for most of the discipline's short history. Given Freud's prolific scholarly output and his ability to shed light on nearly everything psychological, it is altogether striking that he wrote nothing about forgiveness. The same could be said of innovators such as William James, G. Stanley Hall, E. L. Thorndike, Lewis Terman, and Gordon Allport. Nothing seemed entirely off limits to these innovators, so why nothing about forgiveness? In the fields of mental health, we also find little attention to the phenomenon of human forgiveness from leaders such as Carl Jung, Karen Horney, Alfred Adler, or Viktor Frankl. On one hand, we might simply conclude that these scholars had other projects to attend to and thus were not able to focus attention on many important human phenomena (including forgiveness).

On the other hand, substantive reasons might exist for the relative neglect of forgiveness in the early decades of scientific psychology. One might point to the fact that forgiveness seems to have been neglected throughout all of academia, not just the social sciences (Enright & North, 1998). One might also point to traditional links between forgiveness and religious belief, and to the social sciences' aversion to religious matters (e.g., Gorsuch, 1988). One might point to the difficulties that might be associated with gathering reliable data about forgiveness, particularly during the era when scientific psychology insisted on the analysis of observable behaviors. Finally, one might point to the fact that the 20th century has been the bloodiest and probably the most unforgiving century in human history, perhaps leading people to conclude that forgiveness constituted little more than a nice sentiment. All of these factors might have played a role in discouraging systematic inquiry into the psychology of forgiveness. In any case, the concept of forgiveness would have to wait many decades for sustained, systematic attention.

It would be pointless to dwell on the neglect of forgiveness by the major leaders and innovators in psychology, but it would be naïve to assume that the social scientists who have been investigating forgiveness during the last 15 years invented the concept *ex nihilo*. There is a history of forgiveness in the psychological sciences, albeit a short and skimpy one. The history of forgiveness in psychology and the social sciences can be divided into two periods. The first of these periods, roughly spanning the five decades between 1932 and 1980, consisted of many theoretical papers and modest empirical work designed to shed light on aspects of forgiveness. A second period, roughly spanning the two decades from 1980 to the present, reflects more intensive and serious consideration of the concept of forgiveness.

Early Forgiveness Inquiries: 1932–1980

As far back as the 1930s, psychologists and mental health professionals in the United States and Europe did from time to time discuss the human phenomenon of forgiveness. For example, Piaget (1932) and Behn (1932) all discussed how the capacity to forgive grew out of the development of moral judgment. Litwinski (1945) also made an early attempt to describe the affective structure of the capacity for interpersonal forgiving.

Forgiveness in Pastoral Care

Also, pastoral counselors and mental health experts with religious interests made early attempts to articulate the role that forgiveness might play in helping people to achieve mental health (e.g., Beaven, 1951; Bonell, 1950; Johnson, 1947; Rusk, 1950). Andras Angyal (1952) was one of the champions of the view that helping psychotherapy clients to experience forgiveness from God was an important antidote to the pathological guilt that was thought to underlie much psychopathology. Effective psychotherapy would, in Angyal's view, create an environment in which clients experience opportunities (1) to feel forgiven for their ethical or moral failures and (2) to forgive others.

Other scholars from the field of pastoral care also addressed the potential salutary benefits of forgiveness. One of the most noteworthy is Emerson (1964). In his largely theoretical book, Emerson also reported the results of a study using a *Q*-sort method that was designed to examine the associations between forgiveness and psychological well-being. Despite its lack of sophistication and a failure to use modern inferential statistics, this study was probably the first scientific inquiry into the association of forgiveness with mental health and well-being.

Forgiveness in Heider

In a chapter on benefit and harm in *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*, Heider (1958) outlined a variety of attributional principles that underlie the quest for revenge after one has incurred an interpersonal transgression. In this context, Heider described forgiveness as foregoing vengeful behavior, which he posited to be an implicit expression of the victim's self-worth or an attempt to be faithful to an ethical standard. However, Heider did not elaborate on these concepts very much, and the concept of forgiveness received no explicit theoretical attention. Although Heider's work was absolutely seminal to the field of social psychology, the short shrift given to forgiveness was clearly not sufficient to stimulate scientific imagination.

Forgiveness and Human Values

One of the more systematic forays into the psychology of forgiveness arose out of the work of Milton Rokeach, whose investigations into the nature of human values (e.g., Rokeach, 1973) were guided by several versions of the Rokeach Value Survey (e.g., Rokeach, 1967). The Rokeach Value Survey consists of two sets of human values. The "instrumental" set refers to preferred modes of conduct. The "terminal" set refers to preferred end states for life. Participants complete the form by ranking each of the 18 values within the instrumental values and the terminal values. The value of being "forgiving" is one of the 18 instrumental values. Given the huge number of studies that have employed Rokeach's tools for studying human values, it is surprising that more is not made of this work in modern discussions of forgiveness, since it probably reveals much about (1) differences in how various groups of people value forgiveness, and (2) how the value of being forgiving fits into wider systems of human values.

Forgiveness and the Prisoner's Dilemma

Forgiveness was made the topic of a limited amount of theoretical and empirical attention through the work of Tedeschi and others (e.g., Gahagan & Tedeschi, 1968; Horai, Lindskold, Gahagan, & Tedeschi, 1969) who conceptualized forgiveness as a cooperative response following a competitive response in the Prisoner's Dilemma Game. In this mixed-motives game, two players are repeatedly faced with the dilemma of choosing either a competitive or a cooperative strategy. The object is to win as many points as possible. If both partners cooperate, they might each win, for example, 3 points. If one defects while the other cooperates, the defector might win 5 points while the cooperator receives 0 points. If both defect, then each might win 1 point. Thus, there are certain advantages to cooperating (depending on one's partner's willingness to cooperate) and to competing (depending on one's partner's disposition to compete). When a partner cooperates even after the opponent has made a competitive move, this has been called a "forgiving" response, and it has been shown to lead to beneficial outcomes in certain game-playing environments (e.g., Axelrod, 1980a, 1980b). Despite this innovative approach to conceptualizing forgiveness (and the number of studies that have used variants of the Prisoner's Dilemma Game protocol), it has not yet been used to produce fundamental insights about the nature of forgiveness.

Clearly, the professional literature through 1980 reveals that thinking about forgiveness is not something that just "happened" in the final decades of the 20th century. Many scholars have considered forgiveness over the years, and it would be a mistake not to examine their work closely. Nevertheless, the attention paid to forgiveness in the years 1932–

1980 was piecemeal. Researchers did not begin to devote serious, sustained energy to the concept of forgiveness until the last 20 years of the 20th century.

Increased Interest in the Psychology of Forgiveness: 1980–Present

By the 1980s, the number of papers and book-length treatments of forgiveness began to increase substantially. By the end of 1998, in developmental psychology, counseling/clinical psychology, and social psychology, important papers had appeared that dealt explicitly with the phenomenon of forgiveness. The appearance of these theoretical and empirical treatments seemed to suggest that forgiveness was a concept whose popularity was on the rise.

Forgiveness and Moral Development

Enright, Santos, and Al-Mabuk (1989) linked the development of reasoning about forgiveness explicitly to Kohlberg's theorizing about the development of reasoning about justice. Enright and his colleagues adduced data to demonstrate that the capacity to reason in a complex way about forgiveness was associated with more complex reasoning about justice, and also found evidence that reasoning about forgiveness became more complex with age. Enright and his colleagues (e.g., Enright & the Human Development Study Group, 1994), and other developmentalists such as Girard and Mullet (1997) and Spidell and Liberman (1981) have examined theoretically and empirically how the capacity to forgive (and the inclination to seek forgiveness) unfolds across the life span.

Forgiveness in Counseling and Clinical Psychology

One difference between the theoretical and conceptual treatments of forgiveness that appeared in the 1980s and those from earlier years was the heavy speculative focus on the potential links of forgiveness to mental health and mental health treatment in this second historical period. Indeed, most conceptual papers that discussed forgiveness during the 1980s were written by clinicians and/or published in journals typically read by clinicians (McCullough & Worthington, 1994). Influential papers by Fitzgibbons (1986), Hope (1987), and Jampolsky (1980), and trade books by Smedes (1984), and Linn and Linn (1978) pointed to the potentially salutary effects of forgiveness on mental health. Also, research by DiBlasio (1993; DiBlasio & Proctor, 1993) highlighted that many practitioners were open to the use of forgiveness in clinical settings.

By the mid-1990s, bona fide empirical research on the uses of strate-

gies for encouraging forgiveness in counseling and psychotherapy began to appear in scientific journals (e.g., Hebl & Enright, 1993; McCullough & Worthington, 1995). Papers in the leading journal in clinical psychology (e.g., Coyle & Enright, 1997; Freedman & Enright, 1996) demonstrated the potential relevance of forgiveness to clinical work with a variety of populations.

Forgiveness in Personality and Social Psychology

In the 1980s and 1990s, a variety of researchers explored the social-psychological principles underlying forgiveness. Most notable among these were papers by Boon and Sulsky (1997), Darby and Schlenker (1982), and Weiner, Graham, Peter, and Zmuidinas (1991). These studies found that people's willingness to forgive an offender can be explained by variables of a social-cognitive nature, such as the offender's perceived responsibility, intentionality, and motives (Darby & Schlenker, 1982), and the severity of the offense (Boon & Sulsky, 1997). New theory and research designed to integrate multiple theoretical perspectives on forgiveness also began to appear in personality and social psychology journals during these latter years (e.g., McCullough & Worthington, 1999; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; McCullough et al., 1998).

The most consequential event for the scientific study of forgiveness to date might have been a request by the John Templeton Foundation for proposals for scientific research on forgiveness. Following a 1-day research workshop (the proceedings of which are published in Worthington, 1998b), over 100 research teams submitted proposals as part of the Foundation's initiative to fund innovative scientific research on forgiveness. Ultimately, nearly 30 research laboratories were granted funding to conduct 3-year research programs on forgiveness. Still others may receive funding in the future as a part of this effort. It is too early to assess what this financial backing will ultimately accomplish for the field of forgiveness, but it seems clear that, as a result, psychology will possess much more scientific information about forgiveness in the next decade than it currently possesses.

THE DEFINITION PROBLEM

Clearly, scientific research on forgiveness is on the rise. However, at the time of this writing, individual researchers' conceptualizations of forgiveness are quite diverse. In particular, no consensual definition of forgiveness exists (Worthington, 1998a). Indeed, some interpret the lack of consensus in definition to be one of the most pernicious problems in the field today (Elder, 1998; Enright & Coyle, 1998; Enright, Freedman, &

Rique, 1998; Enright, Gassin, & Wu, 1992). It appears that most theorists and researchers now agree with Enright and Coyle (1998) that forgiveness should be differentiated from "pardoning" (which is a legal term), "condoning" (which implies a justification of the offense), "excusing" (which implies that the offender had a good reason for committing the offense), "forgetting" (which implies that the memory of the offense has simply decayed or slipped out of conscious awareness), and "denying" (which implies simply an unwillingness to perceive the harmful injuries that one has incurred). Most also seem to agree that forgiveness is distinct from "reconciliation" (which implies the restoration of a relationship). The fact that no scholars have offered serious disputations of these distinctions in recent years suggests that real conceptual progress has been made in understanding forgiveness.

Remaining Definitional Differences

However, other definitional issues remain. Agreeing on what forgiveness *is* does not necessarily mean that researchers agree on what forgiveness *is*. For example, Enright and his colleagues (e.g., Enright & Coyle, 1998; Enright et al., 1998) define forgiveness as "a willingness to abandon one's right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly hurt us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her" (Enright et al., 1998, pp. 46-47). McCullough and colleagues (McCullough et al., 1997, 1998) define the essence of forgiveness as prosocial changes in one's motivations toward an offending relationship partner (although these motivational changes would most likely result in many of the cognitive and behavioral changes that Enright and colleagues conceptualize as part of forgiveness *per se*). Working from the perspective of marital and family therapy, Hargrave and Sells (1997) define forgiveness as (1) allowing one's victimizer to rebuild trust in the relationship through acting in a trustworthy fashion, and (2) promoting an open discussion of the relational violation, so that the offended partner and the offender can agree to work toward an improved relationship.

Still other researchers and theorists offer other definitions. The many definitions of forgiveness that have been proposed share some similarities but are different in some substantial ways. For example, some researchers who have offered definitions of forgiveness emphasize that it can best be conceptualized as a stage-like unfolding of a sequence of events over time. Others remain agnostic on issues of whether forgiveness has, by definition, a stage-like or developmental character. Similarly, some have emphasized that effort and intentionality are intrinsic elements of an adequate definition (i.e., forgiveness requires conscious effort) even though others are agnostic regarding the essentiality of awareness or volition to forgiveness.

In spite of the many differences among the definitions of forgiveness that various researchers are currently using, a consensual definition might be more feasible than one might initially imagine. All of the existing definitions seem to be built on one core feature: When people forgive, their responses toward (or, in other words, what they think of, feel about, want to do to, or actually do to) people who have offended or injured them become more positive and less negative. Although a specific interpersonal offense (or series of offenses) caused by a specific person (or groups of persons) once elicited negative thoughts, feelings, motivations, or behaviors directed toward the offender, those responses have become more prosocial over time. Therefore, we propose to define forgiveness as *intraindividual, prosocial change toward a perceived transgressor that is situated within a specific interpersonal context*.

When someone forgives a person who has committed a transgression against him or her, it is the forgiver (specifically, in his or her thoughts, feelings, motivations, or behaviors) who changes. In this sense, forgiveness is a *psychological* construct. However, forgiveness has a dual character; it is interpersonal as well as intrapersonal. Forgiveness occurs in response to an interpersonal violation, and the individual who forgives necessarily forgives in relation to someone else. Thus, even while being a psychological phenomenon, forgiveness is interpersonal in the same sense that many other psychological constructs are interpersonal in nature (e.g., trust, prejudice, empathy): Each construct has other people as its point of reference. Although someone might be said to possess trust, prejudice, or empathy, each of these constructs attempts to describe dimensions of persons that are inescapably social in nature. Both the intrapersonal and social aspects of forgiveness are "real"; thus, to intrapersonally and interpersonally conceptualize forgiveness is an eminently reasonable thing to do. Perhaps it is most comprehensive to think of forgiveness as a *psychosocial* construct.

If considered acceptable to the academic community, such a consensual definition of forgiveness would not only enable researchers to be sure that they are discussing the same phenomenon (forgiveness) when using the same language ("forgiveness") but it would also allow other conceptual features that might otherwise be associated definitionally with forgiveness (e.g., stage-like, developmental course; intentionality; primacy of motivational or affective systems; etc.) to be freed from the moorings of definition and transformed instead into researchable hypotheses about the nature of forgiveness. If all researchers can agree that forgiveness is (at the very least) "intraindividual, prosocial change toward a transgressor that is situated within an interpersonal context," then they can proceed to examine empirically whether such change (i.e., forgiveness) is necessarily developmental in nature, whether intentionality is indispensable, and so on, thereby giving these ancillary hypotheses about forgiveness the empirical examinations that they merit. The reader is invited to test this mini-

malist conceptualization of forgiveness against his or her own definition, and also those definitions provided by contributors to the present volume. Obviously, our goal here is conceptual progress, so we welcome reactions and responses to this proposal.

THE PRESENT VOLUME

Amid the enthusiasm in the concept of forgiveness that appears to be building among many researchers and practitioners in scientific and professional psychology, many problems must be addressed and adequately solved before this initial enthusiasm can be applied to create a solid, coherent base of scientific knowledge regarding forgiveness. Unless these problems are addressed with scientific rigor, the emerging interest in the science and practice of forgiveness is likely to be marginalized from mainstream psychological research and practice.

A first set of problems is largely conceptual and methodological. We have already discussed the definitional problem, but other problems exist as well. For example, the field still lacks a thorough understanding of the influences of religion, culture, and life situation on people's understandings and experiences of forgiveness. Without addressing religious, cultural, and situational variations, scientific notions of forgiveness are likely to be disconnected from lived human experience. Also, initial attempts at developing measures of forgiveness are well under way, but it is not yet clear how forgiveness should be operationalized to maximize scientific progress. A variety of thorny methodological problems exist in operationalizing forgiveness, and these problems must be addressed to create dependable measures of forgiveness constructs.

A second set of problems is largely substantive. Few researchers from mainstream areas of psychological research have offered critical appraisals of the concept of forgiveness and outlined prospects for integrating the concept of forgiveness into our existing knowledge about the basic neurobiological, developmental, social, and personality processes that govern human behavior and mental processes. Moreover, it is not clear what steps should be taken to systematically explore the neurobiological, developmental, social, and personality substrates of forgiveness.

A third set of problems is predominantly related to research on the practical application of forgiveness in counseling, psychotherapy, and prevention. To date, only a few researchers in counseling, psychotherapy, or prevention have explored the possibilities for integrating the concept of forgiveness into the practice of professional psychology and related mental health fields. Additionally, few theorists or researchers have even explored the possibility that forgiveness might, in some instances, lead to clinical harm rather than benefit for the recipients of psychological ser-

vices. Finally, few researchers have outlined research protocols by which the efficacy of techniques to encourage forgiveness in applied settings might be systematically developed and evaluated.

If these three sets of problems are not addressed as a preparation for creating a "psychology of forgiveness," it is likely that the concept of forgiveness will not be fully integrated into the theory, research, and practice of psychologists. Instead, researchers interested in the concept of forgiveness might find themselves talking only to each other rather than helping to integrate the grammar of forgiveness into mainstream understandings of human psychology and psychological change. Conversely, if such initial field-building steps are taken, the concept of forgiveness could have a rich future in the fields of scientific and professional psychology.

In the present volume, we have drawn together over a dozen chapters that (1) review existing psychological thought and research on forgiveness and (2) outline the conceptual, methodological, and substantive issues that should be addressed to build a strong body of research and practice on forgiveness in the years to come. While the book is optimistic about the possibilities for a psychology of forgiveness, it is also written critically, with a focus on the shortcomings and pitfalls that must be addressed to build a healthy, well-integrated psychology of forgiveness.

Part I of the book tackles conceptual and measurement issues in the psychology of forgiveness. Chapter 2, written by Mark S. Rye, Kenneth I. Pargament, and six religion scholars, compares the views regarding forgiveness embodied in five world religions. This comparative study was designed to illuminate the commonalities and differences in how forgiveness is understood within these great religious traditions. Chapter 3, written by Lydia R. Temoshok and Prabha S. Chandra, examines the contours of forgiveness from within a specific cultural and situational context: that of people living with HIV/AIDS in India. This is a different portrayal of forgiveness than what American theorists and researchers are accustomed to considering, and it is presented here to illustrate exactly how culturally and situationally specific our notions of forgiveness actually can be. Chapter 4, written by Michael E. McCullough, William T. Hoyt, and K. Chris Rachal presents a taxonomy for organizing the possibilities for measuring forgiveness empirically, and then presents a generalizability framework for evaluating the psychometric adequacy of existing measures and those to be developed in the future.

Part II consists of four chapters designed to review and integrate data, and present new theorizing on the psychology of forgiveness from within four domains of basic psychological research. In Chapter 5, Andrew B. Newberg, the late Eugene G. d'Aquili, Stephanie K. Newberg, and Verushka deMarici present new theorizing about the neuroevolutionary basis for the capacity to forgive. In Chapter 6, Étienne Mullet and Michèle Girard review an impressive set of studies examining how the cognitive ca-

capacity to forgive develops across the life span, and how people integrate social information in making decisions about whether to forgive an interpersonal transgressor. In Chapter 7, Julie Juola Exline and Roy F. Baumeister discuss how the costs and benefits of forgiveness might be productively and systematically investigated within the field of social psychology. In Chapter 8, Robert A. Emmons presents a framework for how forgiveness might be best studied within the field of personality psychology.

Part III is focused on a critical appraisal of how forgiveness is (and should be) studied and applied in the context of counseling and psychotherapy. In Chapter 9, Wanda M. Malcolm and Leslie S. Greenberg discuss the existing research on the applications of forgiveness to individual psychotherapy, and demonstrate how task analytic methods can be used to determine whether forgiveness itself is a curative factor in forgiveness-based psychotherapies. Chapter 10, by Kristina Coop Gordon, Donald H. Baucom, and Douglas K. Snyder, integrates a variety of approaches to forgiveness in marital therapy and proposes a systematic agenda for studying (and applying) forgiveness-based intervention strategies in that therapeutic context. In Chapter 11, Everett L. Worthington, Jr., Steven J. Sandage, and Jack W. Berry use meta-analytic methods to draw some innovative conclusions about the efficacy of group approaches to encouraging forgiveness. They also present a broad set of guidelines for the application of forgiveness-based strategies in group counseling, psychoeducation, and psychotherapy. In Chapter 12, Carl E. Thoresen, Alex H. S. Harris, and Frederic Luskin describe the need and possibilities for studying forgiveness in the context of health psychology and behavioral medicine—fields interested in basic research and practical interventions for improving physical health. In Chapter 13, John Patton discusses his own therapeutic approach to “using” forgiveness (a phrase that he himself would eschew) in the context of pastoral care and counseling.

Finally, we conclude with a summary of the entire collection. In Chapter 14, we address the major themes that have arisen from the book and what we believe to be the major “frontiers of forgiveness” that should be the priorities for future research and theorizing.

SUMMARY

Like psychology itself, the psychology of forgiveness has a short history. Researchers and theorists have considered this construct many times during psychology's short history, but only recently has forgiveness become a focal topic for scientific research; thus, only in the last few decades has it been possible to write a “history” of forgiveness in scientific psychology. The chapters that constitute the remainder of this volume are presented

not to examine the history of forgiveness, but to explore the frontiers of forgiveness. They articulate the cutting edge of theory and research on forgiveness, pointing out the perils and promise of studying and applying forgiveness in theory, research, and practice. The last 20 years were important for the burgeoning psychology of forgiveness, and the next few decades should present interesting, exciting possibilities for scientific discovery. Read on for a tour of the interesting developments to date and for a glimpse of the great things that are still to come.

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PART I

Conceptual and Measurement Issues